

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 22 July 2018
Talk: 3
Occasion: Ridley college – ordinands’ conference
Book: 2 Timothy
Passage: Various
Title: How will you respond when the gospel is under threat?
Outline: **More joys and privileges of ministry**
What you heard from me – keep!
Guard the good deposit
What you heard from me – pass on!
Entrust to those qualified to teach
What you’ve been given – preach!
Correctly handle the word of truth

1. More joys and privileges of ministry

- How I got to Noosa....
- The gospel in our nation is under threat
- So the final talk this morning – how will you respond when the gospel is under threat? First -

2. What you heard from me – keep!

- save a look with me - Paul says – 1:13-14 : *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*
- Keep the sound teaching or sound words... or some – follow... or hold fast...
- Keep to what you have heard from me...
- Sound words – solid – reliable – true...
- Keep as the pattern of YOUR teaching – your ministry...
- Follow in the sense of those words impacting your life!
- But not only is Paul keen to ensure Timothy sticks to the Gospel as Paul has received it and passed it on... he’s concerned about *how* that is done... - namely – in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus...
- Says Hughes and Chapell – “the attitude with which Timothy maintained his orthodoxy was almost as important as the orthodoxy itself.”
- They go on “how different church history would have been if the church in succeeding generations had taken this to heart. How different the church would be if this were true today”.
- Brothers and sisters... how will you ensure that you stick to the sound words we have here in God’s word?
- Sadly, I could point you to people who were orthodox during their college years, yet somewhere along the line... they gave up sound teaching...
- Often (not always) as a result of some moral failing or a family member who had gone astray... and they worked to change their theology to fit their situation and the prevailing culture!

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- Keep it, follow it, hold fast to it...
- Continue to read and study and discuss with other like-minded people who will hold you accountable...
- Back in 1 Timothy he said to Timothy – watch your life and doctrine closely...! Both are important – as significant.
- And when you have discussions with those who think differently – when you fight for orthodoxy – do in *the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus*. Don't let it become personal... don't attack the person but their position...!
- But the second way is to pro-actively guard it
- This goes a step further. We see it again in Paul's first letter – chapter 6 v20ff – *Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21 which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.*
- We have to be alert... on guard. Must be strong. Bold. Clear.
- best way to guard the gospel is to ensure that you know it through and through... that it defines you, drives you, motivates you... that it shapes your ministry, determines your agenda, helps you plan your calendar, guides your planning!!
- But like every aspect of the Christian life – you're not doing it in your own strength!
- *Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us*
- When was the last time you prayed, "Lord by your Spirit, help me to guard the gospel"?
- what safeguards will you build in to your life and ministry to ensure you 'guard the gospel'?
- what you have heard from me – **keep** – AND:

3. What you heard from me – pass on!

- Look with me at ch 2:1 *You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*
- Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus....
- he'd just spoken about the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus – in Ch 1 – do you recall? ... *He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*
- Now he says – be **strong** in that **grace**...
- it's that grace which will inspire you – give you a heart of thankfulness...
- It's that **grace** – telling of God's unconditional love – which will shape and inspire ministry
- It's that grace which we'll celebrate and give thanks for in the communion this morning...
- It's that grace which causes us to give ourselves **unreservedly** in Christ's service...
- Sisters and brothers – I urge you again to be strong in this grace.

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- Clear, bold, encouraged, excited.... Driven... fuelled.... By the precious grace of God to you...
- But now I want to ask you – are you committed to multiplying yourself in ministry?
- You can't possibly do all that's required of you...
- You will need to multiply yourself by training others in ministry... read v2...
- (I find this hard! One of my biggest failings. Teaching kids to drive... how do I teach them to do something I've just been doing intuitively most of my life? How do I train others in ministry?? It's something I do intuitively a lot of the time!)
- Training up others to lead small groups;
- teach Sunday school;
- training up others to go into schools;
- to visit homes;
- to help as LAs...
- this multiplying will take many forms...
- taking people with you on pastoral visits...
- one minister I knew never did anything on his own – always took someone with him....
- Note emphasis here on teaching ministry... what you've heard me say – entrust to others who will be qualified to TEACH
- because it's as other people **teach** the gospel and **explain the Bible** – that others will grow keen and clear in **their** trust!
- Training and equipping others – may not have much time for this in a student placement – but do what you can now – establish it as part of your approach to ministry... because it will be a great pattern to take up when you go full time...
- And it will form part of how you both keep and guard the gospel – the theme of our previous section... part of how you keep it and guard it is to entrust to others who will faithfully keep and guard it and entrust it others!!!
- But there will be a cost to this!!! You'll have to put aside other distractions – just like someone who serves in the defence forces or competes in the Olympics... you have to prioritise... work out what is **best** from all that is **good** that you could be doing!
- But like a hardworking farmer – you will be able to rejoice in the **fruit** of your labours as you **share** ministry and see others **grow** because of it!!
- **So**
- What you heard from me – keep
- What you heard from me – pass on
- And finally

4. What you've been given – preach!

- Why would you be committing yourself to ministry in the 21st century?

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- Perhaps your family has asked that – is still asking that!
- “Why is my brother – my sister – son, daughter – my mother – my father - nephew – cousin – my old mate – my school friend – taking this enormous **step**?”
- “What is it that has led them to leave a good **career** – or leave behind their former **studies** – and take this new path...?” //
- It’s not about the **money** – though we clergy *are* very well looked after...!
- It’s not about **prestige** – long gone are the days when clergy were upheld as pillars of society... in fact – tragically - quite the opposite!
- It’s not about **future employment prospects**... there’s no real career path or corporate ladder to climb set before clergy...
- So what is it? ///
- It’s because you have the **best news imaginable** for a **world in need**!
- For a world that’s **lost** its way – you **know** the **Way**
- For a world with many questions about what **truth** is you, **know** the **Truth**
- For world that’s looking for a way to make sense of life, – you **know Life**!
- We could go on –
- ...for a world that’s floundering about in the **dark** – you have **Light**
- For a world which in many places and in many ways is hope-less, you have **Hope**
- In a world that likes to say – “look – if God just turned up in person, I’d believe” – you know that in the person of Jesus Christ – **God did just that!!** – turned up to reveal himself and show us the brilliance and depth of his love...! //
- Yes – you have **great** news – life-giving – life-changing news for a world in **need**... -
- And here’s the verse I want you to leave **here** with it ringing in your ears – and never forget it all the days of your ministry –
- *“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”*
- When he says ‘preach the Word’ - you could argue that for us this means the whole Bible... because **that** is where we find this life-changing word of hope for the world...
- “Preach the word” – this word which has come **FROM** God - **TO us** in the **Bible**...
- Because brothers and sisters it is as people understand the Word of God - that their lives will be turned **right way up**. //
- In Brisbane a couple of year back, our Archbishop shared some priorities he had set himself to encourage in the diocese
- One was *“making disciples and teaching the faith”*...
- The Archbishop wanted every Christian to “encounter God in Christ in ways that **transform** them and strengthen their **confidence** in the **gospel**”
- He wanted every Christian to “**deepen** their encounter with God in Christ and deepen their **knowledge**

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and **understanding** of the faith" //

- Great aims!
- **How** will this happen? /
- My brothers and sisters: – these **great** things will happen – as **YOU** preach the **word**!!
- You must give of yourself to that task.
- It might be through Sunday preaching, it might be one on one; it may be in a small group... it may be in a pastoral context... it may when you're out and about in the community... but **preach** the word... proclaim the good news... help people to understand God's word... //
- Of **course** other aspects of ministry will be important – such as the celebration of the sacraments... and acts of kindness and love...
- ...but it is as people understand the **Word**... as you **inspire** them to read it for themselves... as **you** give them the **tools**... that they will be transformed, that their confidence in the gospel will grow and the knowledge and understanding will deepen! ///
- Brothers and sisters... preach the word!!! Your people will love it... and you'll find they're hungry for it! //
- Let me ask though - why does Paul add "in season and out of season"?
- Because there will be times when you **feel** like doing it and times when you **don't**.
- There'll be times when people are **keen** and **interested** and times when they're **not**.
- There'll be times when people **agree** with you and get on board – and times when they **don't**!
- But you have to press on – even when it's hard... /
- And what will be the **purpose** of this preaching?
- - to **correct, rebuke** and **encourage**
- Unsurprisingly - **precisely** the role of Scripture **itself** which we saw yesterday at the end of ch 3!!
- Brothers and sisters – teach and equip people; inspire and encourage people – through the Word - **in** season and **out** of season... //
- Why **will** this be important? //
- Well – it's not just a church growth strategy – though people **will** grow by this means...
- It's not just how to fill up your time... /
- Two reasons that the passage itself says it's important – one given **before** the exhortation and one given **after**
- It matters, because Jesus will one day appear and will judge the living and the dead!
- Now – that's a **great** thing because Jesus' appearing will bring **justice** and right **wrongs** and end **evil**! That is our great hope!
- And the way you will prepare your people for Jesus' return, is to **preach the word**: ground them in the glorious news that we're forgiven and reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus...
- ...and as people turn to him saying 'sorry' and submit to Jesus as their King – then **when** he returns, they will meet him **without fault** and with great **joy** (Jude 24)!

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- The other reason it matters, is because we're told that there'll come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine... and they'll just gather around them people who say what they want to hear...
- Let me assure you – that time is here!
- Here's an article from the Dean of the Brisbane Cathedral... Peter Catt – member of Progressive Christians and Equal voices, campaigner for SSM and full endorsement of LGBTI people not just in our churches but in leadership.... Headline - **It is time for churches to formally recognise same-sex relationships and marriages** and the article goes on to say that people in the church and God are already blessing same sex marriages and it's about time we caught up with what God is already doing!
- Plus – all those aspects which I raised yesterday – where the truth of the Bible is denied because well – frankly – we know better now!
- It's so important then, that you ground your people in **sound** doctrine so they are not easily led astray by - and indeed have no desire for - **false** doctrine!
- brothers and sisters: **preach the word** - so that your people are ready to meet Jesus when he comes; and
- ...so that they are not easily led astray by what their itching ears want to hear! ///
- **How** might a priest or deacon go about this important task?
- What should be our approach?
- Well – the passage tells us: “*with **great patience and careful instruction.**”*”
- That is – our approach should never be as a **tyrant**; never with **arrogance**; never as it were from **on high**...
- ...but by coming alongside people with **love, gentleness... slowly but surely... methodically and systematically**...
- And when it gets hard? – when people no longer **want** your sound doctrine... when they prefer their **own** way? When they want to do their **own thing**?
- Again the passage tells us - *keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*
- Keep your **head** – don't lose the plot... stay steady...
- **Endure** hardship – don't walk away... press on
- ...do the work of an **evangelist**... why does he say that?
- Because passion for the gospel will easily be sucked away by people who want to compromise on the truth... So no matter what happens - keep sharing the wonderful news of God's love and forgiveness...!
- And perhaps he is saying it because those who no longer put up with sound doctrine may in fact, not be Christian – so – evangelise them!! //
- And discharge *all* the duties of your ministry... when the going is hard – be diligent... don't lose heart... don't neglect your people...
- Think of the Apostle Paul himself and all he endured... and yet he could say at the end 'I have fought the good fight... I have finished the race... I have kept the faith'...
- That's what **you** want to be able to say as well!! – so – **Preach the Word** – with love, patience and endurance!

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- What a great future lies ahead for all of you...
- To be involved in the very work of God in bringing life and hope and love and forgiveness... what a **joy!**
- To be used by him to make new disciples of Jesus and equip them in the faith – what a **privilege!**
- So my brothers and sisters as you as you continue your path toward ordination... as you study, as you learn, as you pray, as you continue your student placements... as you consider the future.... As you explore possibilities... I want to say to you...
- What you've been given – preach!!

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.