

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## A Study of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy – Part 12

### I. Exposition of Chapter Four (Continued).

A. Verse 3 – **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;”**

1. **“For the time will come...”** – This is stated in such a way to suggest that, even though it was the case when Paul wrote it, the things he’s about to mention will get worse as the last days go forward.

Dr. Gordon Fee writes:

**“As with 3:1–5 and 1 Timothy 4:1–2, the present reality is seen as a future event as well. This is again related to the concept of the increase of evil with the approach of the End, which, as evidenced by the situation in Ephesus, has already begun.”<sup>1</sup>**

2. **“...when they will not endure sound doctrine...”** – Here, Paul gives a reason why Timothy needs to **“preach the Word” (verse 2)**. Here, the word translated **“endure”** means; **“to continue to accept as valid or true—‘to accept, to receive.’”<sup>2</sup>** So, it’s speaking of those who will not **“accept”** or **“receive”** **“sound doctrine.”** The word **“sound”** means; **“to be correct in one’s views, with the implication of such a state being positively valued”<sup>3</sup>**

3. **“...but according to their own desires...”** – The word **“desires”** mean; **“to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong—‘to covet, to lust, evil desires, lust, desire’”<sup>4</sup>** In this context, it would be understood as the latter – **“...according to their own desires to engage in activity which is morally wrong.”** This brings to mind a statement by atheist, Julian Huxley who said:

**“The reason we accepted Darwinism even without proof, is because we didn’t want God to interfere with our sexual mores<sup>5</sup>**

4. **“...because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;”** – The word **“itching”** means; **“to scratch, tickle.”<sup>6</sup>** Dr. Gordon Fee states concerning this: **“a metaphor for ‘curiosity, that looks for interesting and spicy bits of information.’”<sup>7</sup>** The word **“heap”** means; **“accumulate in piles: to choose for themselves and run after a great number of teachers.”<sup>8</sup>** Commenting on this, Gary Leggett writes:

**“The idea behind ‘itching ears’; is that of entertainment. Such people want their ears tickled with sensational, stimulating oratory. So, opportunistic teachers take advantage of them and tell them what they want to hear.”<sup>9</sup>**

**“For there will be a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. Instead, following their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves, because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things.”**

### II Timothy 4:3 – New English Bible (NET)

B. Verse 4 – **“...and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”** – The contrast is seen here between **“truth”** versus **“fables.”** This is the sixth time the word **“truth”** is found in this epistle (**2:15, 18, 25; 3:7-8**), which shows how important truth was to Paul and how concerned he was that people not depart from it. The word **“fables”** means; **“legend, myth, tale.”<sup>10</sup>** Warren Wiersbe writes:

**“It is but a short step from ‘itching ears’ to turning one’s ears away from the truth. Once people have rejected the truth, they turn to fables (myths). It is not likely that man-made fables will convict them of sin or make them want to repent! The result is a congregation of comfortable, professing Christians, listening to a comfortable, religious talk that contains no Bible doctrine. These people become the prey of every false cult because their lives lack a foundation in the Word of God. It is a recognized fact that most cultists were formerly members of churches.”<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

<sup>2</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 372.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 673.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>5</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 163.

<sup>6</sup> H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 438.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 244.

<sup>9</sup> *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 927.

<sup>10</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 254.

**C. Verse 5 – “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

1. **“...be watchful in all things...”** – The word **“watchful”** means; **“to be in control of one’s thought processes and thus not be in danger of irrational thinking—‘to be sober-minded, to be well composed in mind’”**<sup>12</sup> It is very important what we allow into our thought lives. We’re living in a day when people are abandoning rational thinking and being controlled by emotions, or feelings. Several expositors add the meaning of **“keep your head in all situations.”**<sup>13</sup>
2. **“...endure afflictions...”** – This is one word in the Greek and means; **“to suffer (endure) evils (hardship, troubles)”**<sup>14</sup> The idea is that Paul is encouraging Timothy to be willing to stay with the truth and preach the Gospel even in the midst of persecution.
3. **“...do the work of an evangelist...”** – An **“evangelist”** is **“a bringer of good tidings.”**<sup>15</sup> This is one of three times this word is found in the New Testament (cf. **Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11**). Every Christian should get equipped and be willing to share the Gospel with the lost, but there are some in the Body of Christ who have a more enhanced ministry for evangelism.
4. **“...fulfill your ministry...”** – Paul is exhorting Timothy to stay focused on what God had called him to do and to complete the ministry (service) that God had appointed him to.

**D. Verse 6 – “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.”**

The idea of **“...being poured out as a drink offering...”**, is a reference to the wine being poured out around the base of the altar as a sacrifice (**Numbers 15:1-10**). This is way of saying that his life was poured out for the Lord. He sacrificed his life by being devoted to the carrying out of the ministry the Lord had called him to. He goes on and says, **“...the time of my departure is at hand”**, indicating that he knew he would be put to death soon. The word **“departure”** means; **“a metaphor drawn from loosing from moorings preparatory to setting sail”**<sup>16</sup> A related word is found in **Philippians 1:23** which reads;

**“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”**

**E. Verse 7 – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

1. **“I have fought the good fight...”** – The words **“fought”**, and **“fight”** are the same word and mean; **“to engage in intense struggle, involving physical or nonphysical force against strong opposition”**<sup>17</sup> The word **“good”** means; **“beautiful, excellence, usefulness, as to be pleasing.”**<sup>18</sup>
2. **“...I have finished the race...”** – **“...finished...”** means; **“to bring to fruition, to accomplish”**<sup>19</sup> The word **“race”** refers to a running race and, metaphorically, it means a person has ran the course or, gone the distance. (cf. **Acts 20:24; I Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1**).
3. **“...I have kept the faith.”** – The word **“kept”** means; **“to watch over, protect, guard”**.<sup>20</sup> The **“faith”** would be referring to **“conviction of the truth of anything, belief”**<sup>21</sup> In this context, Paul is saying that he watched over and protected the whole of the Christian faith.

**F. Verse 8 – “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”**

1. **“...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...”** – The **“crown”** is described as: **“a wreath consisting either of foliage or of precious metals formed to resemble foliage and worn as a symbol of honor, victory, or as a badge of high office”**<sup>22</sup> This speaks of being rewarded.
2. **“...which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day...”** – Concerning this, Dr. Bob Utley writes: **“YHWH has appointed Jesus as judge (cf. Matt. 25:31–46; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10).”**<sup>23</sup>
3. **“...not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”** - This is referring to all believers. We should all be looking forward to Him coming again!

<sup>12</sup> Louw and Nida, 352.

<sup>13</sup> *The New American Commentary*, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Vol. 34, Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin Jr. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1992)

<sup>14</sup> Thayer, 320.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>17</sup> Louw and Nida, 495.

<sup>18</sup> Thayer, 322.

<sup>19</sup> Louw and Nida, 162.

<sup>20</sup> H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 805.

<sup>21</sup> Thayer, 512.

<sup>22</sup> Louw and Nida, 75.

<sup>23</sup> Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 173.