



Live Your Life Proclaiming Christ

Two Motivations for a Missional Lifestyle

2 Tim 4:1-8

Aaron Lee | Youth Worship | November 20, 2022



Epigraph

“Consider your own insufficiency and weakness together with the weight of the work. Who is sufficient for these things? Which if you do, you will not dare study without prayer nor yet pray without study, when God allows you time for both. It is a weighty work to bring sinners to Christ.”

— Thomas Boston, Art of Man-Fishing, page 92.

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Introduction

We live in a world that is becoming increasingly intolerant of Christians. Pastors are put in prison. Churches are persecuted. For speaking biblical truth, you will be called out, criticized, and canceled. When trouble comes for Christians, and when the world looks like it's winning, what are we to do?

Context

Our passage today is 2 Tim 4:1-8. We're coming to the closing statements of Paul's letter to Timothy. The Apostle Paul has been put in prison, and he knows his days are numbered. He writes with urgency and directness to Timothy, the young church leader. Left with their letter, we follow their examples in faith.

Paul's overarching theme is to preach the word. Preaching is of utmost importance in the life of the church. The call to preach is for every pastor, but there is also a calling for all Christians to preach. To preach is to herald. It is to be the town crier – making public pronouncements on behalf of the king. It's saying: "Hear ye, hear ye! Listen up and pay attention! I have a message for you!" And this type of preaching that Paul has in mind is not restricted to pulpits (NAC). It is done out in public spaces, sometimes person-to-person (NAC).

Missional Lifestyle

Today, I want to introduce you to the idea of a missional lifestyle — to live your life proclaiming Christ. To be a missionary does not mean that you have to go overseas. You are an everyday missionary in your community, in your school, when you're out with friends, and when you're home with family. You represent Jesus with your thoughts, words, and actions. This is the calling of every Christian. Timothy's ministry is to preach, but all of us have been given the mission. And while this passage affirms biblical preaching, all of us are called to biblical living. Paul says it best with what it means to live as a Christian:

*I have been crucified with Christ. **It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

Christ controls, directs, and empowers all that we do (ESVSB). A worthy life is lived for Christ — and his mission becomes ours. In our passage, Paul will give us two motivations for a missional lifestyle. Here is our outline, and I

want you to pay special attention to the applications that I'm going to make throughout the text. Follow along with the outline, and write down the applications as I speak to you.

1. Fulfill your mission
 - A. Proclaim the gospel
 - B. Always be ready
 - C. Tell the truth
 - D. Endure and evangelize
2. Finish the race
 - A. Stay on course
 - B. Receive your reward



1. Fulfill Your Mission

We begin with our first motivation for a missional lifestyle: To fulfill your mission. Let's unpack what "fulfilling your mission" means.

A. Proclaim the Gospel

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **preach the word**; (2 Timothy 4:1-2)*

Paul punches quickly, charging you with the presence, authority, and power of God. This is reality: God is. He has made himself clear. There is a standard to how you must live your life. You are to uphold his glory. And you have all fallen short of this standard. You all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You will be judged. But if you trust in Jesus, if you believe in him as your savior, if you repent from your sin and come to him, you will find grace. You'll be forgiven. You'll be free. Jesus needs to be known! Christ is coming again and the kingdom of God is at hand. This is serious. Warn the world. Testify to this truth. Preach the word. Again, I know what you're thinking: "Aaron, I'm not a preacher." Remember, preaching is just proclaiming from the pulpit. We're not all called to the pulpit, but we are all called to proclaim. We're all tasked to go out with the Good News. What exactly is the word we are to share?

***All Scripture** is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

The word we are to share and proclaim is all of Scripture. It is the Bible, words that have been breathed out by God, given to us. It is valuable and useful. It is sufficient to speak of everything we need to know to be saved. You proclaim this message, and it is enough.

Application

What do your words and works, your actions and your attitudes reveal about God and his truth? How would the presence of a Holy God change the way you speak? Would you have a closer watch over your words? Are you able to admit to others that you are a sinner? Are you able to say sorry and apologize when you have done something wrong? And do you trust Jesus, finding your final forgiveness in him? Do you live in freedom from your grades and

from performance and from people-pleasing knowing that you have the acceptance, love, and care of Jesus? How does Jesus' return impact your priorities? Does it energize your evangelism? All Scripture speaks to the smallest and largest details of your day. Proclaim the gospel with your words and your works, your actions and your attitudes.

Fulfilling your ministry means proclaiming the Gospel: In the presence of God and knowing its value to proclaim Christ in all of life.

B. Always Be Ready

be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Timothy 4:2)

There are some qualifying statements to proclaiming the Gospel. You are to be ready in season and out of season. This means to be ready at all times, no matter the situation or circumstances. It means to have the Gospel "at hand" for when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient (ESVSB). It means to be prepared. Like a serious student, you're always ready for that pop quiz. Like someone who loves a sport, you always have clothes and shoes ready to play. Like a professional musician, you have a signature piece ready to perform. And just like any dedicated student or athlete or musician, we are to devote ourselves to our work. Later on in this letter, Paul says to devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching (1 Timothy 4:13). Always ready, always prepared. Devoted.

Look at the list of how we can use the Bible to proclaim the Gospel. Reprove. Rebuke. Exhort. This list is not exhaustive, but it's meant to get the point across that Scripture can be used for any occasion. To reprove is to make an argument for the truth. To rebuke is to warn someone of their sin. To exhort is to encourage, and to call others to action. Scripture performs all these tasks, and you are to use it with complete patience and teaching. I talked about this before, but I want to reiterate it again: You must have the character of Christ. Be patient, be kind, be gentle, seeking to teach others — not to take others down. We don't want to win arguments over our opponents, we want to win our opponents over for Christ.

*but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,** (1 Peter 3:15)*



Application

Whether it's to believers or unbelievers, are you prepared to proclaim the Gospel? Are you in spiritual shape to share about the Savior? I'm talking about spiritual strength training. Christian conditioning. We recently talked about spiritual disciplines in my Sunday School class. Daily disciplined devotions. The spiritual disciplines are practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth (Don Whitney). Bible reading, prayer, Scripture meditation and memorization. There's a reason why we call our quiet times with God our devotions. It's because we are devoting ourselves, our time, our mind, our heart, to God. When you are walking with God, you'll be ready to witness. You'll always have something to share. Prepare to share the gospel by making Bible reading, praying, and worshiping your daily routine.

Fulfilling your ministry means to always be ready, devoting yourself and being prepared to proclaim Christ.

C. Tell the Truth

*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, **and will turn away from listening to the truth** and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:2-4)*

Why is it important that we need to be ready? It's because people will not endure sound teaching. They will not endure healthy doctrine. We need to anticipate this. The world will not have it. They will not put up with it. They will not take the truth of Scripture. They might find it boring. They might find it old and outdated. They might actually understand it and hate it. They might be fed up and find it exhausting. They will be offended, see it as bigoted, and declare it as hate speech. So they'll just listen to what they want. They'll listen to whatever tickles their ears and delights their fancy. They'll listen to what they agree with – whatever suits their own passions. But what's sad is that they will actually turn away from listening to the truth. They will turn their back on it. They will rebel, desert, and reject it — wandering off into myths. This is not a theoretical, scary situation. This was personal for Paul:

*You are aware that all who are in Asia **turned away from me**, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (2 Timothy 1:15)*

Paul lost his companions. He suffered personal loss. This did not stop him from telling the truth. We know this to be true: Light has come into the world, and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works are evil (John 3:19). You will find that there are people in this world who do not want anything to do with Jesus. They don't want anything to do with Christians. They will make fun and mock the fact that Jesus really is our Lord and Savior. They will call you foolish. I'm not trying to scare you — but I am trying to help you see that this is serious. Jesus made it clear that even our family ties will be tested when he said: Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:37).

Application

Have you lost friends or family because you are a Christian? Do you see your circle of friends shrinking because of your commitment to Christ? Does your family question your priorities as a Christian? I want to give you some encouragement, and an exhortation. Look around. The Church really is the family of God. Friends who are closer than brothers and sisters. We are united by the blood of Jesus. Be encouraged by the fact that you are not alone. I didn't have any real Christian friends when I was at school Monday through Friday. I needed the weekends to spend with my friends who shared the same faith. I hope you know by now that I really do see you as my younger brothers and sisters in the Lord. We must not neglect meeting together. For encouragement and edification. We meet here for the sake of our souls. Prioritize meeting together for encouragement and edification. Fulfilling your ministry means teaching the truth: proclaiming Christ by sharing sound doctrine even when friends and family turn away.

D. Endure and Evangelize

*As for you, always be sober-minded, **endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.** (2 Timothy 4:5)*

With self-controlled, clear-headed thinking — you are to endure and evangelize. This is the work that God has given you to do. This is your Great Commission. Suffering is all over Paul's letter to Timothy. Do you remember where Paul was writing? He was in prison for preaching the gospel. We must not be ashamed of the gospel or those who suffer for it. When we suffer, we share in it together with great saints of the faith. And our suffering is not in vain. When you are placed in chains, the word of God is not bound:

*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore **I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.** (2 Timothy 2:8-10)*

Application

Have you ever wondered if it's worth it to share your faith with others? It's not popular right now to be a Christian. You might face some social stigma. You might lose some social status. I know not all of your family and friends are saved. Don't give up sharing the good news. Take some risks. Let your family see you reading your Bible. Tell your friends that you go to church. Not to be fake, but to let your family and friends see you're open about your faith. Offer to pray for others — even if they don't pray themselves. It will be weird. It will be awkward. But they'll know who to call when they need a Christian. They'll know who to go to when they want to talk about God. Persevere in sharing the gospel even in the midst of suffering.

Fulfilling your ministry means endure and evangelize: proclaiming Christ in suffering for the sake of saving others.



2. Finish the Race

We now reach our second motivation for a missional lifestyle: To finish the race. Let's unpack what "finishing the race" means.

A. Stay on Course

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, **I have finished the race**, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:6-7)*

Paul says he is being poured out as a drink offering and the time of his departure has come. He's saying his life is like a sacrifice, an offering, to God. Paul's given it all and there's nothing left to give. He knows his time is up — the time of his departure has come. His plane is taking off. His ship is sailing. And he has given us an example to follow: Fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith. This is athletic imagery, demonstrating perseverance, steadfastness, and loyalty. Paul stayed in the game. He did not flinch or back down. He was not intimidated by his opponents, but stayed true to the task at hand. He was not distracted. He was not sidetracked. This is a life consumed by Christ:

*But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, **if only I may finish my course** and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24)*

Application

Have you stayed on course, or have you been sidetracked? I want to talk about one of the biggest distractions of our time: Our phones. Whether it's games, social media, or just surfing the Internet, we have become a culture obsessed with ourselves. We are slaves to our screens. Delete distracting apps. Resolve to keep your phone away during worship. Don't be so self-absorbed. See the needs of others. Is a friend hurting? Is someone in your family stressed or worried? Does someone in your small group need encouragement? Gaze away from your phone and turn your eyes upon Jesus. Bring him into focus. Put away your phones, delete your apps, and don't get distracted from enjoying and sharing Jesus.

Finishing the race means staying on course: denying distractions and staying true to the task.

B. Receive Your Reward

*Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only **to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.** (2 Timothy 4:8)*

Nothing else mattered to Paul except the mission. And now his mission was complete. He's passing the baton. We run for the same reason: to receive an award from the Lord. The reward for finishing a race was a crown – a wreath placed on the head of the winners. As soldiers, we wear the helmet of salvation. And when our fighting is over, when the war is won, we receive a crown to rest and rule.

But the true reward, for those who love Christ, is to be at home with him together in Heaven. Paul knew he was nearing the end. He counted the costs, he considered the risks, he knew what was at stake. Death was at his doorstep. But “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). You know, the worst that anyone can do is kill you. But for Christians, hurting us just brings us closer to home. Death just brings us to the doors of Heaven. This is what we long for: To be with the one we love. Do you know the final words of the Bible? They're a prayer for Jesus to come quickly:

*He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen.
Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.
(Revelation 22:20)*

Application

Is your hope in Heaven? Or are your eyes set on earthly things? We are showered with blessings. Christians must be sure that we are thankful for Jesus more than anything else. If God took all of your material possessions away, would Christ still be enough? You can tell where you place your hope by seeing where you get sad or upset. If your grades start to slip or if you fail a test, do you get scared and freak out? When you look at others and compare yourself with others online, do you feel lonely or insecure? I want to give you a new song for your heart today: Let grades and socials go. God's Kingdom is forever. Place your hope in Heaven — not in school or your social media.

Finishing the race means receiving your reward: The crown of righteousness and the presence of Christ.



Objection

You might say, “Aaron, it’s easy for you to talk about living this missional lifestyle. But sharing at church is different than sharing at school. You’re a preacher. You’re a teacher. But in normal, day-to-day life, there’s no power when I share the Gospel.”

Yes: preaching is special in the pulpit. It is a privilege to preach from the pulpit. This is how God shepherds his sheep. This is the way that God grows his church. But in regards to normal, day-to-day life, and you versus me in comparing our sharing: The power is not in the preacher or the pulpit. The power is not in me as a person or in the pulpit’s prestige. Instead, the power is in the work of the word of God. The power is present in being faithful to the gospel. The power is in just presenting Jesus and the Word of God for what it is. A simple sharing of the good news will suffice. For those whom God has called, he will make certain that they hear his voice:

*And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work** in you believers. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)*

I thank God that it is not our wisdom or eloquence that carries Christ. It is not in our attractiveness or our ability to entertain. The word does the work. Christ is compelling. Jesus draws you in.

Gospel

The missional lifestyle is a privileged lifestyle. What I mean is that it’s an honor to be a bearer of Good News. Think about this: If you are not a Christian, if you have not repented from your sins and found refuge in Jesus — you are in direct opposition to the glory of God. You are God’s enemy. Your eyes are blind. Your heart is stone. What you need to see is your need for a Savior. You need to be stunned by your sin. This is the state of your soul: You are dead in your trespasses. You are destined for Hell. But if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died for your sins, and that he rose again, you will be saved. Your eternal destiny is secure. Christ is the key to your salvation. Jesus becomes your joy. When you find Jesus to be your treasure, you’ll see that he’s worth everything and more:

*“The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure** hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matthew 13:44)*

I am a beggar telling you where to find free bread. I am a desert wanderer telling you where you can find streams of living water. Eat and drink for free. Jesus will not disappoint. He will not let you down. When you see Jesus as your greatest treasure, you will give your life to him with joy. What a privilege it is to live your life proclaiming Christ!

Applications

If you’ve been following along, here are the applications I mentioned throughout our text:

- Proclaim the gospel with your words and your works, your attitudes and your actions.
- Prepare to share the gospel by making Bible reading, praying, and worshiping your daily routine.
- Prioritize meeting together for encouragement and edification.
- Persevere in sharing the gospel even in the midst of suffering.
- Put away your phones, delete your apps, and don’t get distracted from enjoying and sharing Jesus.
- Place your hope in Heaven — not in school or your social media.

I want to challenge you to choose one to really commit to applying. Work on it for the entire week. Let’s not make a practice of just thinking about applications. Don’t just hear, but do. Let’s be humble (Ephesians 3:8), work hard (1 Corinthians 15:9-11), practice what we preach (Matthew 23:3), and pray that God would open doors for us to evangelize (Colossians 4:3).



Big Idea

Having a missional lifestyle means to live your life proclaiming Christ. Our two motivations for a missional lifestyle are to fulfill your ministry and to finish the race. Said another way, here is our big idea: God calls you to carry out and complete a missional lifestyle — to live your life proclaiming Christ.

Conclusion

When trouble comes for Christians, when the world looks like it's winning, what are we to do? We recall and remember what Jesus said:

*“In the world you will have tribulation. But **take heart; I have overcome the world.**” (John 16:34)*

Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, has overcome the world. The Word has overcome the world. My prayer for you is that whenever you open your mouths, words may be given so that you will boldly make known the mystery of the gospel. I pray that you may proclaim it fearlessly, as you should.

(Ephesians 6:18-20) You can be sure and even sing that we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37). So we rejoice and pray in persecution. It's fitting that we preach this passage before Thanksgiving: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” In trials and tribulation, you can take heart — the Word has overcome the world.

My brothers and sisters, the pulpit is not the only place where preaching takes place. You proclaim Christ in your everyday life. I'm passing you the baton: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Romans 10:14) God calls you to carry out and complete a missional lifestyle — to live your life proclaiming Christ. You can reach family and friends, your school and communities. You can continue the work of sowing gospel seeds. God will give growth. We gladly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to anyone who has ears to hear.



To Love and Proclaim Christ

You called us out of darkness,
You called us to declare:
That you are God alone!
And we are not to fear.

For though our sin is great,
Your grace is shown in love.
And we can come rejoicing —
Repent and trust your Son.

If anyone would look,
Behold the risen King,
Their sins can be forgiven —
And death will lose its sting.

You've given us your word
For us to taste and see:
That life is found in Jesus,
And that we might believe.

He is the only way,
He is the only truth,
He is the only life,
And he is our Good News.

So soften stony hearts
And open blinded eyes —
As we, your children, live
To love and proclaim Christ.

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