

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: August 4, 2019
Lesson Title: "Enduring"
Lesson Passage: 2 Timothy 3:12-17, 4:1-8

ABOUT THIS LESSON

This Bible passage, Paul's farewell message to Timothy, consists of a charge to Timothy to "preach the word" with urgency and to "teach with all patience." This is followed by Paul's testimony concerning his own impending death, in which he includes the inspiring words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..."

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe the tasks that Paul urged Timothy to carry out faithfully. (2) Explain the metaphors used in Paul's personal testimony.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Start with this: As Nazi forces were poised for a strike at the very heart of England in 1940, Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke these memorable words in a speech to the House of Commons: "We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." In a later speech he said: "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: 'This was their finest hour'." *Suggest that Paul's parting words to Timothy were marked by the same sense of urgency. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2 and 5.*

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. Emphasize the gravity of the solemn charge in 2 Timothy 4:1:
(1) Paul calls upon significant witnesses to attest to the charge he is delivering--God, Christ Jesus, His appearing, His kingdom--thus fulfilling the Jewish requirement that an oath be duly witnessed. In so doing, Paul appeals to the highest possible authority. Timothy's work will be tested by none other than Christ, "judge of the living and the dead." (2) The mention of "his appearing" reminds Timothy that he will give a face-to-face accounting to Christ, and "His kingdom" tells him he is responsible to the "King of kings."

2. Note five imperative verbs in v. 2 (preach, be urgent, convince, rebuke, exhort), and explain their meanings: (1) "PREACH THE WORD." *To emphasize the high priority that Paul placed on proclaiming*

the word, ask someone to read Rom. 10:14-15. (2) "BE URGENT IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON." The Greek terminology has a military tone: "Take a stand, stay at your post." "In season and out of season means "whether or not it is convenient" or "whether the listeners welcome the message or not." (3) "CONVINCE" (REPROVE). Literally, "argue the case." (4) "REBUKE." The word implies moral censure. (Mark 6:18 provides an example of the meaning of the word.) APPLICATION: Although "rebuke" obviously implies correction of errors in speech or conduct, it does not preclude common courtesy. (5) "EXHORT." This word means both "encourage" and "comfort." (The same term is translated "comforted" in Mt. 5:4. And the Greek poet Aeschylus used it to describe troops cheering each other as they went into battle. The historian Xenophon used it to denote blowing on smoldering embers until they burst into flame. ILLUSTRATION: A coach urging his team on is "exhorting" them.

3. Comment on verse 3: (1) The word of God is sometimes an unpopular word. (See 2 Tim. 3:16). It can condemn, reprove and rebuke. Some are not willing to "endure (put up with) sound teaching." (2) And the persons described as "having itching ears," who find "teachers who suit their own likings" (4:3b) are very much in evidence today. They love those who "preach it the way they want to hear it." APPLICATION: Persons motivated by greed love to hear preachers who promise them that God will help them get rich. Another example are those who love to hear an anemic gospel of redemption without repentance, salvation without discipleship and security without service.

4. Call attention to the four things Timothy is asked to do in v. 5: (1) "ALWAYS BE STEADY" ("watch thou" in KJV, "keep control of yourself in all circumstances" in TEV). (An athletic coach might say, "Don't lose your concentration.") (2) "ENDURE SUFFERING" (like the soldier in 2:3). QUOTATION: "God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other"(Reinhold Niebuhr). (3) "DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST" (KJV) means "proclaim the good news of the gospel." (4) "FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY" (RSV) means "do everything you are supposed to do as a servant of God." NOTE: The Greek noun translated "minister" is "servant." "Ministry" (Greek, *diakonian*) is the work of a servant of God.

5. Note the metaphors (word-pictures) in verses 6-9: (1) A SACRIFICE ("ready to be offered," KJV). Paul sees his death as a sacrifice that is offered to God (refer to Phil. 2:17). (2) A SHIP ("the time of my departure has come"). The Greek word for "departure" was used of a ship casting off its lines in preparation for sailing. (3) A BOXING OR WRESTLING MATCH ("a good fight"). (4) A RACE ("I have finished my course"). (5) AN ATHLETIC EVENT ("I have kept the faith" means "I have kept the rules"). (6) A VICTOR'S PRIZE ("crown of righteousness" refers to the laurel wreath awarded to the victor in athletic games").

CLOSING THE LESSON

Ask your class to suggest fitting epitaphs for Paul's tombstone, after thinking about his comments on his ministry in 2 Timothy.

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