

Seeker Friendly Churches

Scripture is: 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (KJV)

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PREACHING

What should be concerning all of God's people today is the ability to recognise truth from heresy.

Many people who would claim that they are Christians are not concerned about going to any particular church so long as they feel "comfortable" there and feel a positive energy from a message, whether it be true or not.

They are not concerned about the doctrine of the church so long as it is basically teaching about the love of Jesus?

People by nature don't like to hear negative messages, yet the bible is filled with more negative messages than positive ones. The bible is mostly a warning to uphold God's law and the punishment if you don't.

But people have become complacent and weak in the truth of the bible and have allowed the churches to become heretical in the word of God. They have become tolerant to sin; and accepting the standards of society.

It is for this reason that the church in this modern age has become weak because the Pastors and Teachers are weak, and have resorted to using modern versions of bibles in which there are more than 158 bible versions based on different manuscripts and translated by the secular world.

They have turned the truth of God's Word into a lie and preach the lies because that is what the people want to hear.

- ✚ Whether a person has faith in what they believe does not mean that they have salvation.
- ✚ For if the perceived truth about Jesus is not biblical then that person's faith is in vain.
- ✚ Bearing in mind it's not the church that saves a person, but the church is the place where they ought to hear the true word of God and the salvation message about who Jesus is.

For that reason, the church must preach and teach sound doctrine in order for a person to put their faith in Jesus and the gospel of Jesus for salvation.

1. What is so prevalent today is the total contempt and the absolute neglect and defiance of God's Word by many well-known preachers, and teachers and churches worldwide choosing to use bibles that are less harsh and in what they feel comfortable in preaching.

2. As one preacher or one teacher or one church succumbs to “the doctrine of devil’s” others soon follow at their heels, and there becomes a tipping point eventually where anyone going against their ideologies is labelled “a fundamentalist fanatic” even if it is the truth.
3. Biblical fundamental churches and preachers and their congregation would be labelled by them as being old fashioned unloving, neurotic, unloving and judgmental.

 **But “what does the bible have to say” about preaching the word of God.**

Well turn with me to 2 Timothy 4 and let’s see what the bible has to say.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

¹ I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

- ✓ Why do we need sound preaching?
- ✓ We need sound preaching because God commands it.
- ✓ But preaching sound doctrine in the churches has become unpopular with many churches and pastors opting to tone down the preaching of God’s Word in fear of losing their congregation and losing money donators in the process.
- ✓ So, in the process these churches are becoming “seeker friendly”.
- ✓ Opting to even erect signage on their church to welcome the LGBTQ community as they call it.
- ✓ So, in the process what God has called the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah these churches have embraced these people and their sin bringing it openly into the church. Soon the whole church is leavened with that sin.
- ✓ With this sin allowed in these churches the church obviously will grow exceedingly in numbers.

 **But look what the bible says about how the minister of God needs to preach.**

Firstly preaching against sin is not optional. Preaching only part of the truth is not an option for the preacher.

- ✓ Look what the scripture says in 2 Timothy 4:1.

¹ I charge thee . I charge you therefore Timothy.....this was a command from God and not an option.

1. This is an instruction, and not an option for the preacher.
2. And more than that it was saying to Timothy...” I order you”.
3. The word charge also means if you look it up in the dictionary it says “**lay the blame on**”.....This word charge is a word that carries with it the full force of laying the blame on Timothy to “Preach the word”

- ✓ The charge is laid on Timothy the preacher to preach as if in the very presence and witness **before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - ✓ So, in other words a preacher must preach exactly as if God is standing at his side, and He is the witness and interpreter.
 - ✓ This command for Timothy to preach the word of Truth was to be carried out as if God the Father and the Lord Jesus were standing in his presence and being a witness to that preaching of the word.
4. So, the word “Charge” is a big deal here. Because it is God **who shall judge both the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.**
 5. It is God who will judge both the saved and the unsaved by his word.
 6. Therefore Timothy “I charge thee to preach the word” and only His word.

God is very Specific about His Preacher.

- In the bible God has given the specific qualifications of a preacher or bishop or elder which is the same as Pastor who is allowed to preach in the church.

God gave these qualifications for specific reasons, and these qualifications are in the scriptures.

Let's examine them.

1 Timothy 3 King James Version

¹ This is a true saying, **if a man desire the office of a bishop, he** desireth a good work.

² **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife,** vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

³ Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

⁴ One that ruleth well his own house, **having his children** in subjection with all gravity;

⁵ **(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)**

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

1. In you will notice all through the scriptures quoted here and below that God calls a man to be the Pastor of the church.
2. The man is called not a woman. Yet so many churches big and small, or even the mega churches do not concern themselves with God's word and please themselves to be preachers and pastors within a church.
3. They neglect Gods word simply because they don't even believe it, because if they did they would be in obedience to it.

These people do not care what God says. Their goal is to make money even if they don't admit it, all under the disguise of love and truth for Jesus.

- **Further qualifications is given by God in the following passage of Titus.**

Titus 1:6-16 King James Version

6 If any be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having **faithful children** not accused of riot or unruly.

- ✓ As the bible defines a man and wife. It is Not the way the world or society defines a husband or wife in today's world of law.
- ✓ In today's society with Sodomite world marriages of two men or two woman taking either role of husband or wife does not constitute a marriage in God's eyes by His word. Neither does an operation to change a persons gender qualify in Gods Word. You are what you are when born, either male or female and no gender operation will change that in God's Word.
- ❖ The bible also says that the qualification of a bishop or elder or preacher must have faithful children. So how can a sodomite marriage of two men or two woman have children? Because the qualification calls for the marriage to have children. So this qualification discredits those people from holding the office of pastor, bishop or elder.

- ✓ But a seeker friendly church won't look at these qualifications to draw people into their church.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

1. Blameless does not mean sinless.
2. And blameless means listening to the law of God which is the Word of God.
3. For the sake of the length of the message I can only point out the main points because they are the most obvious.
4. According to the literal reading of this verse a pastor must have children. If you going to say that the Apostle Paul never had children you are right, but Paul was an Evangelist, not a Pastor.

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able **by sound doctrine** both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1. Holding fast the word as **he** has been taught.
2. The word **he** is masculine. It refers to a MAN not a WOMAN.
3. Therefore the scripture is qualifying that ONLY A MAN can be a pastor or preacher in the church. And if I use the word later for pastor it also means the same as a preacher, or elder or bishop.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: **11 Whose mouths must be stopped,** who subvert whole houses, **teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.**

1. There are two reasons why there are false teachers or preachers or pastors in the pulpits in OT and NT times as well as the times today.
2. Number one. They do it for the money. (Filthy lucre's sake).
3. Number two. They do it for pride.
4. They are driven by the doctrine of devils.

5. They teach things that are false just to make money. They don't care for your soul. The scripture says that they are vain talkers and deceivers.
6. And remember this is talking about in the church, as well as especially the circumcision referring to the Jews religion.
7. Among some of the richest people in the world today are" famous preachers" deceptive preachers both men and woman.

¹² One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

¹³ This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

¹⁴ Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

¹⁵ Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

1. The bible in Titus 1 (verse 15) says here that..... **unto the pure all things are pure**.....meaning those that love God's pure Word and the saved believe and hold all of God's word as truth.
2. **but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure: but even their mind and conscience is defiled**.....this means that they have (defiled) and tainted and corrupted God's word.
3. They are in fact unbelievers, and nothing is pure to them speaking of God's word. They are like that because not only are they unbelievers but their mind and their conscience is defiled and corrupted. Jesus even warned the Pharisees who were the Jews of the OT and NT they were teaching for doctrines the councils of men.

(Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**)

4. This is exactly what the seeker friendly church does through compromise.
5. And it is these very same people who end up corrupting those that listen to them.

¹⁶ They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

6. This is very strong language the bible is using here in Titus 1 verse 16. Because the word reprobate means that they **are now beyond salvation** and that there is nothing that they can do to change that.

- As we look to further qualifications as a Pastor in the church.

Please see 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 King James Version

¹¹ Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

- ✓ Woman are to learn in silence in the church.

¹² But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

1. Woman are not to teach in the church.
2. That also means woman are not preach in the church.
3. Woman are not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence in the church.
4. God wrote those words not me.

Here is further proof in the scriptures about the Preachers.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 King James Version

³⁴ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are **commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.**

1. The woman are to keep silence in the churches:
2. For it is not permitted for them to speak.
3. But they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law (Gods Word).
4. So based on this scripture alone woman cannot be a Pastor or a Preacher of a church.
5. **They cant**, because otherwise they are going against what God had said. That woman cannot usurp authority over a man in the church.

³⁵ And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

- If the previous verse was not decisive enough, then 1 Corinthians 14:35 surely prevents a woman pastor or preacher in the church because it says “**for it is a shame for a women to speak in the church.**”
- Any woman therefore who calls herself a pastor is going against the holy authority of the commandment of God’s word, and she will be labelled as Jesus labelled the woman in Revelation 2:19-21.

Revelation 2:19-21 King James Version

¹⁹ I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

²⁰ Notwithstanding (*means despite that*) I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

- ✚ Seeker friendly churches have become even more seeker friendly over the last especially 20 years since I have been in the ministry,
 1. To be seeker friendly you have to open the church doors to tolerate total sin within the church. This is in fact what many churches have done.
 2. And many pastors have done this even though they have known better.
 3. If pastors who fit the biblical qualification to be a pastor don’t want to stand up and preach hard the complete and full council of God’s Word then they should not be in the pulpit.
- ✚ The bible says that a little Leaven will Leaven the whole lump. Like a church. With sin in the church it will end up destroying the church.

Timothy was told.....by the Apostle Paul.

² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

1. So, what did Paul tell Timothy in this letter here?
2. He told Timothy to ² Preach the word. That’s all Timothy was told to do.

3. He was not told to add or embellish the word of God, but to just preach the word as it is.
4. He was also told to **be instant in season, out of season.**
 - ❖ In season is when the people don't mind hearing the truth when you are preaching positive messages, but out of season is when the people get upset when you are preaching the truth and standing on their sin.
 - ❖ Sometimes you will be popular when you preach, other times when you are preaching against sin you will become unpopular. This is referred to as out of season.
5. Out of season people don't want to hear the truth.

But hang on....what were the first words from the lips of Paul to Timothy in his letter. It was a Charge to Preach the word.

- ❖ So preaching the Word of God is only what is important.....not the words of man.
6. Timothy was told to **reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.**
 7. Preaching is to reprove (or scold, or take to task). So when Timothy was told to preach the word he was told to reprove the people he was preaching to.
 - ❖ So even today as we see that all scripture is still relevant for us today.

2 Timothy 3:16

All **scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine**, for **reproof**, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

- ❖ Timothy was told to also **rebuke** (or scold or reprimand) those that he preached to by preaching these harsh words to them. So that those who were out of season, or favour of the gospel would turn back to God by the preaching of his word.
8. But at the same time Paul told Timothy that whilst preaching these hard words he was to **exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.** Which meant he was to be firm in the preaching of God's word with no compromise whilst at the same time encouraging those who repented (turned) and who turned back to God by the Word.
 - i. We are to: Reprove rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
 - ii. We are to tell them they are wrong.
 - iii. The word Doctrine simply means teaching the truth from the bible.
 - ❖ But there are preachers today and churches, whether they are the mega churches or even Baptist church's today, who will simply not preach hard things to their congregation.

❖ Instead, they will tell the people what they want to hear.....long before they even prepared their message.

1. They will be “Teaching and preaching to their own lusts”. What they want to hear.
2. To tell them what they wanted to hear, because that is why they came in the first place to the seeker friendly church.

✓ They will seek out a place or church to their taste instead of what does God say.

✓ They will seek?..... “Where can I go to get lifted up” to feel good.

✓ But if we are to please God, then we need to hear what the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about preaching the Word. Which was “I command you to preach the WORD”.

✚ **Don't gear to what they want to hear, but preach the whole council of God.**

- With the new seeker friendly churches before they even open up a church in an area they will find out what does the community wants to hear. And advertise their tolerance to all.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

✓ As Timothy was taught, there will come a time when they will not endure sound doctrine.

✓ They will not like to hear what God has to say from the Pulpit instead they will want to hear smooth preaching, which is lies and deceits being preached from the pulpit. This is what Isaiah the prophet also said.

Isaiah 30:8-10 Authorized (King James) Version

⁸ Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

⁹ that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:

¹⁰ **which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:**

✓ Instead of listening to “thus saith the Lord”, they want to hear what “saith the preacher” about soothing their soul.

✓ But the bible warns of those men who preach deceit to their congregation.

Luke 6:26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

1. The word Paul used to warn Timothy about the approaching days of deceits was the word endure.
2. That there would come a time in which, **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;** When their lusts will overcome them and **after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**
 - ✓ They will want teachers to engage with teachers having the same way of thinking as they have. That is why the scripture says here that they will heap to themselves **TEACHERS HAVING ITCHING EARS!**
 - ✓ In other words they will want to go to churches where the preaching softens and sin does not exist, and they will want to be in a place that does not stand on their morals, and does not convict their heart of sin, and does not tell them what is right or wrong and does not rebuke or reprove them in any way but helps soothe their itching ears to make them feel good.
3. THAT'S NOT GODS WORD MY FRIEND AND THAT'S NOT LOVE.
4. AND THAT'S NOT WHAT GOD WANTS THE PREACHER TO PREACH.
 - Isaiah 30: 8-13 ff.....said it is a wicked and adulterous generations that says this.
 - A smooth sermon is a lying sermon.
 - None of the prophets were smooth in their preaching.

Isaiah 30:8-13 ⁸ Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: ⁹ That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:

¹⁰ Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, **Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits;**

¹¹ Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. ¹² Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, **Because ye despise this word,** and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

¹³ Therefore **this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.**

1. They would rather hear fables than the truth.
2. A smooth sermon is a lying sermon. Isaiah was not smooth, Elijah was not smooth, John the Baptist was not smooth, Jeremiah was not smooth AND Jesus was not smooth.
3. That's why the bible here is telling us that smooth preaching is lying preaching.
4. That's why Isaiah said in verse 13, **this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall.**
 - ✓ This is applicable to our nation and many churches today.

- **But Paul said to Timothy preach the word.** Which means we have to preach the word of God whether it be positive or negative.
 - We need to preach negative sermons as well as positive ones.
 - In the book of Leviticus, we see more negative sermons than positives when God is giving instructions to his prophets.
5. But in contrast people only want to hear positive sermons that lifts them up, but I thought we needed to lift the Lord up and then he will lift us up in return.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- **The effects of not preaching negatively against sin** has caused our nations and other nations to be in the state that they are in today.
- God said in the scriptures that if they would turn to me then I would heal them.....

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, **and will heal their land.**

- ✓ But that is not the case today. So why should God heal our land...
 - ✓ If just the Christians, and forget about the other religions today, if just the Christians would hear Gods word, and turn to God today, he would heal their land. But sadly they are not turning to God; instead they are turning to fables and weak preaching.
 - ✓ Because there is virtually no preaching on sin in a lot of churches today.
3. You see the bible in our text verse 3, said that because of their own lusts will they heap unto themselves teachers having itching ears. So it is because of lust that the people will turn away from the truth, to go to preachers that prophesy not the truth of God.
4. That is why many people go to a church because they feel comfortable for the wrong reasons. They need to go to a church where they feel convicted because that is when the Holy Spirit is placing them under conviction of God's word to change their lives and to be conformed to his image and NOT TO THE IMAGE of the preacher.

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

1. There is a great building up of wickedness today.....where the churches have turned away from Gods word to preach the whole council of God's word, to preach only those things that make the people feel good.
2. People will come to church not to hear what the preacher has to say from the bible but what they want to hear instead are things that will make them feel good.

- ✓ There are plenty of churches out there that will simply give the people what they want to hear.
 - ❖ People we are not to feel good, in Gods house, we are to feel convicted by the Spirit of God to change us into his image.
 - ✓ Timothy was warned that the people.... **they shall turn away their ears from the truth.** That the people would dictate to the preacher not to be so hard on the truth.
 - ✓ That they would turn away their ears from the truth.....
 - ✓ And that they would rather hear what is good for them than that which is truth.
 - ❖ Folks this is what the bible calls fables. These are not true things, but just make you feel as if you are worshipping God.
 - ❖ The truth of God has been changed, **and shall be turned unto fables.**
 - ❖ **Fables** just mean a lie or a story, and that's what people will love to hear.
3. Timothy called these things fables. Because they were not from Gods word.

⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

1. The man of God is called to watch. What is he to watch?
 2. Well he is to watch and to make sure truth comes out of his mouth.
 3. To watch that in all things he is preaching the truth and hearing the truth.
 4. Because when you preach the truth Paul told Timothy you will be afflicted. People will hate you because you are preaching the word. They will despise you and call you nasty names and say that you are unloving.
 5. And they will even say, things like if Jesus was here he would not say the things you are saying?
 6. Therefore timothy? **watch thou in all things.** Endure the afflictions that will come your way from others because of the truth?
 7. But, and only but..... **do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.**
 8. The work of an evangelist, is what Paul started out by telling Timothy. “Preach the word”.
 9. To make your ministry the proof of the gospel. Is the truth only.
 10. To **make full proof of thy ministry.** This is to declare the death burial and resurrection of Jesus. That's the full proof of our ministry.
- ❖ Without true preaching on the truth, children will grow up thinking that it is ok to offend God, and therefore what will be their motivation to serve him.
 - ❖ The bible says train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from God.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

1. But when you are allowing your children to not hear the word of the Lord the opposite will come true where they will grow up and walk away from God, and the responsibility of them doing that will rest squarely on the shoulders of the parents who allowed that to happen, because they did not want to endure the sound doctrine not only for themselves but also for their children.

1 Peter 4:11-13 ¹¹ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; **if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth**: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

- ❖ **Isaiah 58:1** **Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,** and **shew my people their transgression,** and the house of Jacob **their sins.**

But today there are fewer and fewer churches preaching sound doctrine.

- ✓ Remember we will one day only answer to God alone.

PRAYER.....CLOSE