

Read: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5

Be Prepared to Preach God's Powerful Word

2 Timothy 4:2-3,5

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There are lots of things that get into our ears. Loud noises. Music. Books. Words. Some of it is good. Some is dangerous. Some of it is because we have “itching ears.” That’s a fancy way of saying, “Scratch my desire to hear what I want to hear.” There are forces with competing agendas for your ears. What an ugly mess life becomes when we only listen to what we want and lose sight of the better life God wants for us.

That’s why God has something to say about what goes into your ears. There are words of truth he wants planted in your ears and words that are lies he wants to stay out of your ears.

Picture words like the food you eat. Some food is not good for you. Eating chicken-fried steak smothered in gravy, with onion rings, butter-drenched rolls, and a chocolate fudge sundae tastes pretty awesome at the moment! But a daily diet of that will make you unhealthy. God’s Word is like eating a meal of grilled chicken, rice, and green beans washed down with a glass of milk. It’s healthy for you—and it tastes good!

How do you tell the difference between the two? Today’s word of God tells us: “Preach the Word.” The most important words of truth, the whole truth, belong to God. He wants to fill your ears with them—words that save! For some of you, that may go all the way back to your baptism as a baby. Parents and pastors, Sunday School teachers, and grandparents loved you so much they shared the best of Jesus for your ears to hear!

Now God promises you the power of his Word and his love so you can speak God’s Word. When you might be tempted to be timid, quiet, or sugar coat words God has made crystal clear, he says, “Keep your head.” Stay focused. When you’re tempted to avoid conflict, he says, “Endure hardship patiently,” which sometimes goes along with speaking God’s truth.

Whether you’ve heard it a thousand times before, don’t ever stop listening to the words God wants planted in your ears! “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says.”

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name three sounds you heard in your ears today.
- In today's devotion, what beautiful sound does God want to go into your ears?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Today's devotion talked about "itchy" ears. What does that mean?
- Today's devotion pictured different words you hear to be like healthy or unhealthy food you eat. How do you tell the difference between the two?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- You have a parent or pastor (or teacher) who share God's Word with you. But why is it important for *you* to be able the difference between good words and dangerous words?
- Name a moment when you are in a group and might be tempted to sugarcoat the truth of God's Word. Devise a response that will glorify your God.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father, your Word is such an amazing gift for us. Let our ears always be ready to hear so that we can be ready for any and all opportunities to share your amazing message of sin, forgiveness, and grace. In your name we pray. Amen.

Hymn: CW 293 – God's Word Is Our Great Heritage

God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way;
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.