

2 Timothy 3:16-4:4 - 28th Tuesday after Pentecost

Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Our age and “Political Correctness” “described” by Saint Paul

2 Timothy 3:16-4:4 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 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; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (28th Tuesday after Pentecost)

We should read the daily readings. It is easy to do, with a calendar and a bible, or a computer program. I usually use the [Menologion](#) program (on my laptop). I even have it on my Droid phone, in a marvelous calendar app. Whether you do it “old school” by looking at a wall calendar or calendar booklet and use a paper bible, or read on your PC using the Menologion program or online, or read/listen on your Smart Phone, **DO IT!** If we read the lectionary readings, we keep pace with the rhythm of the church, and the church year does indeed have a rhythm, in which we are taught different things at different times, depending on the season.

This selection has something for everyone.

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

All of us must read scripture, and we see the purpose here: for “doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness”. My flock should note that I am not making things up when I repeat that “scripture is **always** about you”! Of course, St Paul was most probably referring to the OT scriptures, since the NT canon was being written, and his words apply even more strongly to the Gospels and Epistles.

Perhaps one could construct a “Desert Island” list of the most important Scripture for personal correction. Certainly the Gospels would rank first, and also the Epistles, the Psalms, Proverbs, Wisdom. All of these books should be read often.

If you are not reading scripture daily, how do you expect to learn of God and get better? This is the purpose of your life, and you will not fulfill it by rushing about Christmas shopping or doing whatever else comes up (and things **WILL ALWAYS** come up), and forgetting the “one thing needful” – to learn of the one Who is meek and lowly and whose burden is light, by sitting at His feet, with reading, prayer and desire.

Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

This scripture refers to all of us, but especially to the pastor. This is a difficult command to fulfill to the letter, because our weak humanity gets in the way. The “child Timothy”¹ is being ordered (and we should remember that these instructions are not optional – they ARE orders) to *always* be ready to do the work of a pastor. Preaching “in season” is that which is done at the usual times, when people are expecting or at least will tolerate a sermon, teaching, a word of edification, etc – such as during the liturgy, in or after services such as baptism, crowning, the blessing of a house, etc and, as I have established a custom, between Vespers and matins at vigil).

We *all* must be ready to give a word “out of season”. This is when preaching and teaching is not convenient or easy, or perhaps, is unlikely to be received in the spirit in which it is given. It is also when we are tired, or vexed or distracted. This happens to a pastor a lot. Not everybody that comes to church is living a spiritual, intense life. I have many small encounters, often once in a lifetime opportunities to do something, say something or BE something that will attract a person to God who is barely aware of the real purpose of their life.

I had one recently, and as they say, I am “kicking myself” because of it. Sometimes people come to the church way after the service, just to light a candle, and then leave. I was in the temple talking to someone, and several people entered. They saw me, I saw them, and their body language was purposeful – kiss the icon, light a candle and leave. I was in a conversation, and it was important, but I could have talked to them. They showed no interest in anything except their errand, and I have talked to many who have been running this errand, and almost never does anything come of it, and I never see them again. This could have been one of those times, but I will not know this, because they did not approach me and I did not approach them. It may have been a short conversation, not well understood by either party because of our apparently different mother tongues, but I will most probably never know. This is an example of preaching (which basically means just being there for people, ready to fulfill their perceived and especially unperceived needs) out of season.

There are ALWAYS opportunities to teach, exhort, inspire, comfort out of season EVERY DAY. You have them too. May God help us to see them, and not be like the people of the Gergesenes, who missed their opportunity because of blindness, distraction, and sinfulness.

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

This time has come! Is not our age being described?

Every possible perversion of life is being accepted by supposed Christians. “Politically Correct” speech is tailored for those with “itching ears”, and to the great shame of many Christians, they have fallen for this speech. It is shocking how many supposed Christians are pro-abortion, pro homosexual marriage, pro “living together because everybody is doing it”, etc.

I became aware of a [web page](#)² today where a Greek priest is being criticized because he dared to tell a man living in a sexually active homosexual relationship that he could not have communion until he repented³ of his sin. That people actually consider the actions of this priest to be a sin is beyond me.

This is basic Christianity! Nowadays, we have people who have web pages, blogs, Facebook pages that support their sinful way of life. Their itching ears do not want to be told the truth, but rather, be told that they can do what they want, and label it how they want. This is not Christianity. There is no new sin under the sun – St Paul encountered these people too, and wrote about them, but in our age, with the power of technology, the sinful “excuse with excuses in sins”⁴ can be repeated billions of times to billions of people.

A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him, saying, "You are mad; you are not like us. St. Anthony the Great

Abba Anthony said, "I saw the snares the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, "What can escape from such snares?" Then I heard a voice saying to me, "Humility." St. Anthony the Great, commemorated 17 January

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This article is at:

http://www.orthodox.net/scripture/pentecost-tuesday-28_2011-12-20+instant-in-season-out-of-season+politically-correct-immorality_2timothy3-16-4-4.html

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¹ This is how we begin a reading to Timothy in the church.

² <http://gotruthreform.org/gay-parishioner-denied-communion/> Here is the gist of these sodomy apologists: “The Editors of gotruthreform.org website are compelled to write about an unfortunate matter that has been reported to us. For the sake of brevity, we will not include a long discussion of the Canon Laws regarding the facts. [translation: Don’t confuse us with any stinking rules – we make up our own rules based on how we feel and what we want!! (Fr S)]

... Recent events at a Metropolis of Chicago Orthodox Parish in question, concern a devoted Greek Orthodox Christian who is a doctor and the spiritual son of a faith abiding priest. He has been an active parishioner for several decades. He is also gay. The doctor would attend church almost every Sunday and would frequently receive communion. Unfortunately, for the doctor, his spiritual father recently “retired” due to a disability. The doctor sought spiritual guidance from another Greek Orthodox Priest in the Metropolis of Chicago. This new Spiritual Father, like the prior one, did not bar him from taking communion; indeed, with proper preparation, the Priest encouraged it. [Translation: Two priests trampled on their oath to uphold the teachings of the Gospel, and this article is praising them for this Fr S.]

... The new Priest called the doctor and engaged in a conversation with a male person who answered the phone. The new Priest then spoke to the doctor and posed numerous questions including asking who was the male person answering the phone and whether the doctor was living with this man. Of course, being an honest and forthcoming person, the doctor did not lie to this new Priest. The new Priest told him he could no longer receive communion at his Parish. One of the persons reporting the incident to us commented that “his honesty of course was rewarded by condemnation”. [The doctor was honest in reporting his behavior, but his behavior is fundamentally not Christian. Any unrepented of sin MUST be addressed by a priest! Fr S]

This article goes on to do some “social engineering” which may occur to have some pastoral merit, but actually, here we have an example, by no means isolated of people who define Christianity in a way foreign to the Gospel, but perfectly in keeping with the Political Correctness of the Age. Truly we live in an age of insanity, and “itching ears”!

³ “Repent” means to change one’s mind. It involves admitting a sin, having sorrow for it, and desiring to change. A person

who repents of a sin may fall into it again and again. Competence in ceasing a sin is therefore not a criterion to decide if a person has begun the process of repentance, but surely refusing to admit that a sin is a sin, or trying to stop the sinning is absolutely not repentance, and a priest has no choice for a person who will not try to repent – he cannot give them communion. Pro homosexual (activity) politically correct speech is absolutely not repentance. A good pastor will help such a person in many ways, and refusal to give communion is in no way any kind of abandonment. On the contrary, it is the action of a pastor who is trying to encourage and teach.

⁴ Here is a good “rule of thumb” – If a person cannot recognize the phrase “excuse with excuses and sins” and know what service it occurs in, they are not competent to reject the moral and theological positions of Orthodox Christianity, but should be humble and realize how little they know about Christianity. Such people would benefit by choosing to learn instead of teach. This is part of a Psalm said at every Vespers service.