

Sermon, 19.10.2025 (2)

2Timothy 3.14-4.5, Luke 18.1-8

The Word of God set before us today, speaks both of a challenge and of a comfort. Paul's exhortation to Timothy in (3:14-4:5) and Jesus's parable in Luke (18:1-8) meet us in a time when the world feels unsteady. Nations and religions are at war. Families displaced by violence. Hunger stalks millions of people. Floods, fires, and destruction leave scars on the earth and on human hearts. Against this backdrop, God's Word calls us to remain steadfast in faith and persistent in prayer.

Paul writes to his, protégé, Timothy: **"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed."** (3:14). Timothy was living in a time when false teachers, and deep suffering threatened to shake the church. Paul does not tell him to run away or despair but to *continue*. To hold fast.

This is the first word we need to hear today. In a world of disinformation, of leaders who seek power rather than peace, of systems that value profit over human life, we are tempted to throw our hands up in cynicism. Yet Paul reminds us that we are not without *anchor*. We have **"the sacred writings"** that are able to instruct us for salvation, scriptures that reveal the God who does not abandon us.

When we see the images of bombed cities or starving children, we may ask: **"Where is God in this?"** Paul's answer is not an easy one, but it is firm: God is revealed in the **Word**, equipping us **"for every good work."** In other words, God is present in every act of compassion, every hand extended to the suffering.

Paul continues with a solemn charge: **"Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching"** (4:2).

Here Paul speaks directly into our moment. For indeed, these are not favourable times, the cries of the vulnerable are drowned by the noise of politics. War budgets increase while food aid decreases. But Paul states: *keep preaching*.

What does it mean to preach today? It means more than the words I speak from this pulpit. **To preach is to embody the gospel of peace in our actions.** It means standing against war not only in our prayers but in our choices and our advocacy. It means declaring that every child – Ukrainian, Sudanese, Palestinian, Israeli, Yemeni or Haitian – is made in the image of God and is worthy of bread, shelter, and safety.

Paul warns that people will **'accumulate for themselves, teachers to suit their own desires'** (4:3). We know this reality well. Many voices today encourage us to look away from suffering, to believe that violence is inevitable, or to put our trust in nationalism, weapons, or walls. But the gospel says otherwise: it calls us **to look into the eyes of the least and see Christ himself.**

The gospel reading gives us Jesus's parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8). This woman, powerless in the eyes of the society, faces a judge who neither fears God nor respects people. Yet she does not give up. she keeps knocking, keeps crying out for justice until the judge relents. Jesus tells this parable so that his disciples **"ought always to pray and not lose heart."**

We live in an age when it is easy to lose heart. Newsfeeds bombard us with violence and destruction. We may feel as powerless as that widow before the unjust judge. Yet