I Beg Your Pardon, I Never Promised You a Rose Garden

2 Timothy 2:4-6

Introduction:

1. We are always communicating: smiles, frowns, a yawn, nods, clear words, unclear words, withheld words.
2. Communication begins and ends the second chapter of 2 Timothy and is in the middle.
   1. Teaching and training faithful men. 2 Timothy 2:2
   2. Remind them of these things. 2 Timothy 2:14
   3. Teaching and instructing people in sin. 2 Timothy 2:24-26
3. Paul describes the process as a continual journey that will require work, training, and perpetual encouragement to be effective.
   1. “So you, my son, must keep renewing your strength in the spiritual blessing that comes through union with Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1, Williams).
   2. Fatigue and discouragement are continual problems in any task or profession. Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13
      1. Therefore, the solution must be ongoing. 2 Peter 3:18
         1. Ask for it. 2 Timothy 4:9,11,13,21
         2. Put encouragement in the bank to withdraw when needed – Gratitude Box.
         3. Give it to yourself – 30-year plaque.
         4. Sow seeds of encouragement – encourage others.
      2. It is a personal responsibility. 1 Samuel 30:6
4. He begins by telling and illustrating for Timothy how difficult the work is going to be.
   1. This is different from the positive and often high-pressure selling methods I often encounter.
   2. Can you imagine a car salesman, early in the sales presentation saying, “Now I want to be sure you understand the things you are not going to like about this car.”?
5. The key to anything worthwhile is truth. John 8:32
   1. Truth is often painful.
   2. But truth is also freeing.
6. The truth is that there are some hard issues to face in communicating.
7. Rose Garden, Lynn Anderson.
8. TEACHING AND PREACHING – WHETHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE – IS HARD, AND OFTEN UNAPPRECIATED WORK.
   1. Old Testament prophets learned this.
      1. It is easy to quit and most teachers and preachers do many times. Jeremiah 20:7-9
      2. I need to communicate God’s will and word for my benefit; then I will get something from it even when others seem to be rebellious. Ezekiel 33:8,9
      3. If I am looking for “results”, I will never know if I am accomplishing anything.
         1. Those who seem to be appreciative and obeying may, in fact, be making no changes in their lives. Ezekiel 33:30-33
         2. Therefore I tell God’s truth because of who I am - not because of what I must make others become. 1 Corinthians 1:17
   2. This is true regardless of the classroom or pulpit.
      1. In services.
      2. Visitation.
      3. Personal evangelism.
      4. Encouraging others.
      5. The home.
         1. Husband, wife.
         2. Parent, children.
   3. Why would we want to tell someone how difficult an assignment is?
      1. Encourage proper preparation.
      2. Reduce discouragement.
      3. It’s normal to find that communicating is difficult.
   4. Jesus prepared people for reality. Luke 14:25-33
9. HOW SHOULD I VIEW THE TASK OF COMMUNICATING GOD’S WORD?
   1. Endure hardship like a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:3, 4
      1. The soldier’s purpose is not rest and recreation.
      2. Cross-bearing is difficult. Luke 9:23
      3. Tribulation is part of entering the kingdom. Acts 14:22
   2. Go by the rules like an athlete. 2 Timothy 2:5
      1. Don’t hit from behind. Leviticus 19:16; Matthew 18:15
      2. Don’t hit below the belt; don’t judge motives. Matthew 7:1,2
      3. Stay in bounds. 2 John 9
   3. Work hard like a farmer. 2 Timothy 2:6

Conclusion

1. But that’s hard!
2. “I never promised you a rose garden.”