

1 TIMOTHY 4:13

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (ESV).

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching” (NIV).

FROM – THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE¹

The study note below comes from *The Lutheran Study Bible*, ESV translation.

“4:13 A concise summary of the pastor’s service: worship, preaching, and teaching. *Public reading.* Paul is not saying that Timothy himself must be the one to read the Scriptures in public worship, but that he should exercise care in which portions of the Scriptures were being publicly read in the Ephesian congregations. *Exhortation.* Words of admonishment and encouragement (Law and Gospel), based on publicly read portions of Scripture; preaching.”

Unless I am missing something I believe this footnote has unintentionally missed what St. Paul wrote by the leading of the Holy Spirit. To have been faithful to what St. Paul wrote, am I correct in believing the footnote ought to have been written in the following manner: **“4:13** A concise summary of the pastor’s service: **public reading of Scripture** [emphasis added], preaching, and teaching?”

Additionally, am I correct in believing the practice of non-clergy or non-deacons reading the lessons is not what Paul is saying. Historically it came about in mainline churches due to Vatican II, again. This footnote suggests a departure from two thousand years of churchly practice (not to mention fifteen hundred years of priestly OT practice). What is glaring in its absence in the footnote is not able to reference a single support for its new found position from either: the prophets or apostles, (the ones who are to interpret the prophets and apostles), the early church, Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard or anyone of note. This does not serve the catholicity of the church.

FROM THE REFORMER – LUTHER²

13. *Till I come.* This is a beautiful text worth noting. *Attend to the public reading of Scripture.* He considers not just private but also public reading, as we read. If someone takes this to mean private reading, that is good too. What follows, however, concerns public matters, because preaching, etc., are public. The factious spirits greatly despise the Word. We must make

¹ “1 Timothy 4:13,” in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, Edward Engelbrecht, gen., ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), p. 2074, n. 4:13.

² Martin Luther, “Lectures on 1 Timothy,” *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, 55 volumes, edited by J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955-1986), 28:328-330.

this passage well known. **You see, Paul is commanding his finest disciple in the Spirit to read the Scripture** [emphasis added]. To the Corinthians he writes, “Don’t speak in tongues” (cf. 1 Cor. 14:1 ff.). There is to be reading. **To read is nothing else than to proclaim from books** [emphasis added]. We should recommend and preserve this reading so that we stand firm in our use and understanding of Holy Scripture. Paul does not consider such Scripture useless, even if it is read, and not translated, so that he does not forbid reading it in foreign languages. But greater is he who prophesies. **Thus bishops and deacons have been doing this; they have read a chapter from the Gospel, what has so been done the bishop explained with examples, so that our people, etc. But afterwards also the rest. The custom endured.** [sic] [emphasis added] But reading should not be done without translation. Better that one word be understood than not understood. If they understand one line in the Bible, this edifies the church more than a hundred secular lines. *Lectio* (“reading”) and *lingua* (“language”) are understood from *legere* (“to read”). **First, attend to the public reading. Do not omit it.** [emphasis added] It seems to me that there is a miraculous spirit in those fanatics. Thomas [Müntzer] began it. So they hold the Word in contempt. “The testimony in my inner being is enough for me.”

I have here external testimony that I teach others. They say, “That is useless. Why do you want to teach others?” If they have the Spirit without the Scripture, why do they teach? Why don’t they say, “You must ask for the Spirit as we do”? They say that they must not teach Scripture; yet they teach others. That spirit is widespread. There are signs. Therefore it has a place. In the church Paul simply wants reading and language to continue, which still is not understood by the church. **He even commands the bishop himself to do this, even though he has the least need of this. Yet he [pastors, bishops] ought to attend to reading.** [emphasis added] You should not think that this is said about the hearers [priesthood of all believers], that is, “attend to reading; see to it that you keep on reading.” Therefore the oral reading of Scripture is useful in the church. The Enthusiasts, then, abuse this. **Paul establishes reading in the church.** [emphasis added] It is useful then in this respect, that the Holy Spirit and salvation can come thereby. Otherwise he would not have established it. **From this passage, then, we prove the institution of public reading, so it is salutary and necessary.** [emphasis added] So also: *Attend to preaching*. There are two kinds of preaching. Reading ought not to be so cold and obscure. Rather, teaching ought to be added to it when I explain a reading and draw in a passage because I am teaching faith and Christ. *Teaching*, that is, something you don’t know. See to the reading. Therefore reading is useful and necessary. Whatever you teach, present it, impress it, foster it, follow it up, lest it grow cold. Use proof texts and examples with which you admonish the conscience of your hearers. Then this conscience has learned and understood.