

Training for Godliness

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[0:00] Writing to Timothy says, This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance, and for this we labor and strive that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely.

Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. You'll remember that last week we looked at the great significance of spiritual nourishment and spiritual training for God's people.

[1:53] You need to be fed the right food, and you need to exercise your soul in the right way. Train yourself unto godliness. And there was a third thing that we wanted to get to, but didn't, and that was your need for a spiritual trainer.

A pastor who is able to proclaim that word, to give you that spiritual nourishment that you need, and to help you in that training for godliness. God has been good to us.

He hasn't left us to walk the road alone. He hasn't left us to ourselves. He's given us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us, to strengthen us along the way. And He's given to His church pastors, ministers, spiritual trainers to feed their sheep, and to help them in training along the way.

Certain things are required of a minister. And we're going to pick this theme up, not just from the verses we looked at last week, but from the rest of the chapter as well. Verses 11 through 16 tonight.

Seeing what is expected of a minister of the gospel, of a spiritual trainer. These directions were initially given, of course, to Timothy.

[3:02] It's Paul's first letter to Timothy. And Timothy was working in the church in Ephesus. And the church there needed a lot of work. And so these things were first for Timothy the minister. And Paul says, as you do these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ.

But they are also for ministers today. For ministers of the gospel. And so they're directed at us. But lest you think this is not for you, because it's only for pastors, remember some reasons to think about these things.

Just like we thought about back in chapter 3 when we saw qualifications for elders. Well, I'm not an elder, so I don't need to think about these things. No, they are important for all of us to consider.

We'll find them to be a helpful measure for evaluating current elders in the church.

How are they doing? How am I doing? Where do I need work? They will challenge us as pastors. And I hope they will challenge you all to pray for us as pastors, because we are unable to fulfill these tasks in our own strength.

It's also a standard by which to evaluate future potential ministers in the church. And for future potential ministers to evaluate themselves, to see where they stand.

[4:15] And there will also be principles here that are relevant to all of us, even though they're directed specifically to ministers. So may God teach us and make these things profitable as we seek to clarify some of the roles of a minister in the church, of a spiritual trainer in the church.

And we're going to see that ministers. And we're going to see that ministers have to work. And they have to work on their own lives. And they have to work on behalf of their people. And then we'll look

at the outcome of that work. So, first of all, they must work.

They must do the work of the ministry. You need a spiritual minister working for you, a spiritual trainer to help you with that good spiritual food and spiritual training.

And so do I. Just a side note here. One of the great benefits of a plurality of elders, the necessity of more than one pastor in a church, is that pastors need pastors too.

I need shepherding. I need help in spiritual training. So what a blessing to labor alongside other men who are able to do these things. And work along with them in the gospel. But you notice in verse 10 that they are to labor and strive.

[5:22] Paul says, for this we labor and strive. He talks about how we've put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. And he labors and strives to get that message out, to communicate that message to his hearers.

It's work. The words labor and strive can be athletic words. And we're in this context of training. It implies that the minister himself must be one who is trained, who is fit spiritually, and is able to work in that ministry to expend himself, to give himself for that work.

One of the words is agonize. Agonize to proclaim the message of hope in God our Savior. Paul said to the Colossians in chapter 1, verses 28 and 29, he uses the same words.

He says, we proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor. That's our word. Struggling. That's our other word.

With all his energy which so powerfully works in me. Paul recognized that it was work. It would take labor. But he recognized too that he didn't have that strength in himself.

[6:27] And so it's with God's power, with his strength, working in him that he does this work. If we want our people to be nourished in the truth, then we work to proclaim it.

We seek to proclaim his word. Not the latest ideas from society or psychology. Not our own ideas. No, we labor and work to proclaim God's word. And so we go into the study and we dig into this word that God has given.

To draw out of it that which will benefit God's people. And it takes work. And there's something here, I think, for all of us in this principle of working, laboring, striving, and whatever you're calling. Here he's talking to ministers. He's talking to Timothy. Work at your calling. But elsewhere to the Colossians, he says in Colossians 3.23, whatever you do, if you're a minister, you minister this way. If you're a farmer, you farm this way. If you're a mother, you mother this way. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord and not for men. You're to work for a life of godliness.

[7:32] Do that with all of your heart. You're to expend yourself in your calling. You should be known by your willingness to do your work wholeheartedly as unto the Lord. Are you students known as the hardest working students?

Even if your grades don't always reflect it, are you with jobs known by your bosses as those that will give the very best effort in all their assignments? It's work. It's labor. It's striving. It's to be done.

The ministry is to be done in this way, but every calling to be pursued this way. And so ministers must work. But now we want to focus in on that work.

First, we want to see how they have to work on their own lives. They've got some work to do right here first. They have to train themselves for godliness.

We talked about that last week and won't go over that ground again, but Paul says to Timothy, train yourself for godliness. That's going to be part of their work for themselves.

[8:30] And as they work on themselves, it's for the good of their people, but we're going to focus on them for a moment. And skip down to verse 14. They're not to neglect their gift. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

And Timothy had received a gift from God, a spiritual gift, a gift to minister in the church. It had been prophesied that he would be a gift to the church, a minister in the church. And then at some point, a body of elders, including the apostle Paul, laid hands on him, representing that that gift had been given by the Spirit, setting him apart for that work.

It's where we get our idea of ordination and laying hands on a man. It's what Paul was ordained when he was sent out by the church in Antioch. The Spirit set him apart. And then the church, the leaders in the church laid their hands on him in Acts 3 and sent him out.

We're not going to dive into the whole subject of ordination tonight, but see that it's a biblical practice. The point is that Timothy had received a gift and he must not neglect it.

He must develop it. He must not allow it to fall into disuse, but rather strive to use that gift. And you can imagine that Timothy, he's facing all this difficulty, all these problems, all these false teachers, all this dissension and turmoil and people talking about he's labored to proclaim the truth and people running around talking about endless genealogies and profaneness.

[9:54] That's discouraging. And you can bet there was a time when Timothy, a time or two or more than that, he said, you know what? It's not worth it. I've been laboring, using the gift that God gives me.

And look, look what I've got to show for it. It's not much. I've got all these problems. And you know what? I'm just going to go do what everybody else in the church in Ephesus does. Whatever the main occupation in Ephesus is, I'm going to go, I'm going to go find that job and do it.

I'm not going to exercise my gift anymore. It's not doing any good. And Paul encourages him. God encourages him. Don't neglect the gift that has been given to you. Don't let it fall into misuse or disuse.

They're calling for ministers as well today to never neglect the gift God has given. There are times when they might wish they could do that. A real temptation for pastors and missionaries.

When you pray for your pastors, and I'm thinking of missionaries especially tonight, who labor in relative solitude, without a lot of fellowship, a lot of encouragement, maybe in a very dark place where the progress is slow, you can bet that many of them more than once have said, you know what?

[11:02] I'm not going to use my gift anymore. I'm going to let it fall. What's the point? There's so little benefit from it. You pray that our missionaries wouldn't fall into that discouragement, that they would stir up the gift God has given them, that they would not neglect it.

Pray for that encouragement for them. And you remember the parable of the talents. The master gives five talents to one servant and three to another and one to another. And the talents were a sum of money.

And he says, I'm going away on a journey. Use this. And when he comes back, you know, the son have used it and they've multiplied it. And the one that has five now has ten. And so he comes to the one with one talent.

And he didn't do anything with it. He stuck it in the ground. He wasn't a good steward of it. He didn't put it to use. He neglected the gift that had been given to him. And do you remember the master's evaluation of that servant?

You wicked, lazy servant. It's wicked to not use the gifts that God has given you.

[12:09] It's lazy to not put to good use what he's given you, whether gifts or resources. So it is for pastors in the church. Pray that we would not neglect our gifts. So it is for whatever gift he has given you.

Your responsibility to put to good use. That which he's given you. Not neglecting the gift. And so to risk receiving the judgment, wicked and lazy servant.

Whether it's a gift of hospitality or teaching or encouraging or service. Or being a mom. Or the gifts peculiar to your calling and occupation.

They must be put to good use. You might feel like quitting sometimes. Like Timothy might have. Or like a missionary might have. But it's not an option.

You're not to neglect the gift. God has given you. God called you to be a... And you fill in the blank with whatever calling you're frustrated with. A mom.

[13:05] A dad. A manager. A mechanic. And he gave you the gifts needed for it. Use them for his glory. And for the good of the people you're serving. Don't neglect the gift.

And then he goes on in verse 15. Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself wholly to them so that everyone may see your progress. With all the commands of this section, Timothy, there's a lot of imperatives in this section.

There's a lot of direct commands. And there's probably 10 or 12 of them if you add them all up. And so, Timothy, refuse profane myths. Don't have anything to do with them.

Train for godliness. Command and teach the truth. Be an example. Be devoted to faithful public ministry. Don't neglect the gift given by God. Watch your life in darkness. All of these things. Be diligent in them.

Practice them. Don't grow weary in doing them. The word in the Old Testament even is meditate on them. Focus on them. Press on in them. And then give yourself wholly to them.

[14:02] You know what the Greek says? It's real simple. It says be in them. That's our give yourself wholly to them. Be in them. Be immersed in them. Be absorbed in them.

Be consumed with these things that God has called you to do. Don't quit. You know, if I tell my son to go be in his room for an hour. And we do that sometimes.

So the baby can sleep. Or just to have some time for quiet. Maybe mom can catch a nap. And just be in your room. Play quietly or read quietly on your bed. If he's in his room. And then he's out of his room.

And then he's in his room. And then he's downstairs. And then he's upstairs. And then he's out of his room. And he's in the guest room. He's not in his room, is he? He's not in it. And a minister who is to be in these things.

Doing these things. And he does it when he feels like it. And not when he doesn't. And he's all over the place. He's not in them. He's not consumed with his tasks. Pray that we would be diligent in these things that God has called us to.

[14:58] That we would be in them. That we would be diligent. It's another call to not quit, but to press on. And if he does this, his progress will be evident to all.

Paul earlier, and we'll get here later, he says, don't let anyone look down on you because of your youth. Don't let them despise your youth. And for a minister who is diligently doing his job, who is in it fully, so that everyone may see his progress, they'll avoid that despising of his youth.

Because they'll see his progress. Paul told the Corinthians that his work will be shown for what it is, because day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

And sooner or later, a man's work will be seen for what it is. And it should be clear, his progress should be evident to all. That he is faithfully working for the cause of Christ.

And that's a challenging note for ministers, I think. That means there should be progress, and growth, and development, and his gifts and skills in the ministry.

[16:03] There's a challenge here to not neglect the gift, but to stir it up, to develop, to work at it, to give yourself to it with great diligence and effort, so that your progress, that implies growth, so that your progress may be seen.

It's a frightening thing to stand before you and say, but my preaching should be better now than it was when I got here. Five and a half years ago, there should be progress.

We should be better pastors now than we were before. Pray for us that we might faithfully fulfill this calling. I think there's something here by way of implication.

In this passage, he talks about not looking down on them because he's young, and how he should be an example to the flock. But here's this idea of progress in the ministry. You shouldn't expect from a young minister, right out of seminary, what you would expect from someone who's been in the ministry for 25 years.

He's had 25 years to progress, to make progress, to have his gift developed and grow. And so you wouldn't expect to see, and someone who is young, you still expect to see these qualifications, these things in 1 Timothy 3, and these duties in 1 Timothy 4, and a willingness to do them and pursue them, but the gift grows.

[17:25] He progresses. And so don't expect from a novice what you see from an experienced man in the ministry. But regardless, young or old, they are to be in these things. Diligent about them, pursuing them, so that their progress is evident to all.

Pray for us to that end. And then, one more thing for the minister's personal walk. Watch your life and your doctrine closely.

In verse 16, his work in his own life. We're to keep watch on ourselves. Timothy, this is difficult work. You'll find that if you don't keep close watch on yourself, if you don't take pains with yourself and your teaching, you'll be in trouble.

Continue in them. Persevere in these things. Colossians 1.23, if you continue in your faith, established firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

Continue in it. Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Minister must do that. He's got to continue in that godliness training, heresy rejecting, truth proclaiming way that has been set out before him.

[18:30] It must be done. He must train for godliness. That's watching his life closely. He must beware of false doctrine.

Watching it closely. And the two must go hand in hand. You know, a minister can preach the truth powerfully, persuasively, all day long, but if he doesn't live out in his life what he practices, or what he preaches in his ministry, that ministry will be undermined.

He'll be proved to be no minister at all. Matthew Henry says, those who teach by their doctrine must teach by their life, else they pull down with one hand what they build up with the other.

Watch your life and doctrine. The two must go hand in hand. We must be found faithful, never open to the charge of hypocrisy being leveled at us.

May God so preserve our life and doctrine. We are to watch these things, guard them closely, and so pray that we will. But if you think that that's only important for ministers of the gospel, to watch their life and doctrine closely, and you're mistaken, you too can ruin a Christian testimony by not watching your life and doctrine.

[19:47] You can ruin your testimony by the way you live. Our words and our walk must always align. Not just pastors, but the rest of the flock can bring great shame to the name of Christ in the world by neglecting to live according to God's Word.

You can undo by the way you live what you've sought to do with your words. The world loves the charge of hypocrisy. I don't have to tell you that. People love the point, oh, Christians, they're hypocrites.

A bunch of hypocrites. They love that. If anybody ever uses that accusation against Grace Fellowship Church or someone here, may God give us grace so that such a thing could only ever be baseless slander because we've so guarded our life and doctrine and been careful to keep them on the same path.

May God preserve us and keep us. So ministers have work to do. They have work to do in their own personal lives. They also have work to do on behalf of the congregation. Two things.

They're to make the truth known and they're to be an example to the flock. Making the truth known is throughout this passage. It's in v. 6. If you point these things out to the brothers, he's just warned of heresy.

[20:58] If you set these things before them, if you warn them that falsehood is coming, you'll be a good minister of Christ Jesus. Brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. They're to take those truths, that good teaching, and pass them on to their people.

They're to make the truth known to them. That is what a good minister of Christ Jesus will do. They prevent the flock from being fed the wrong food. They don't want them to be poisoned by bad food, the wrong sort of diet.

So they feed them the right food. They give them the truth. The words of faith. The good teaching. It's good that you study God's Word for yourself. We talked about that last week. But you need a minister that will faithfully proclaim it to you as well.

Someone who has been nourished in it. Someone who has been trained in it. Someone who has been brought up in it in v. 6. You might have heard the example before. You can do all the self-diagnosis and research on the internet that you want about your health and sickness, but you're still going to need a doctor who's trained in these things to treat you when struck with illness.

You might have read about the principles of aerodynamics and how to fly a plane, but nobody's going to fly with you unless you're a trained pilot. At least, I'm not going to.

[22:13] But it seems that when we come to our spiritual lives, there's a thought in our day that says, well, we don't need people that are trained in this sort of thing. We'll just read the Word and get what we need out of it.

I think, at least implicitly here, we see the importance of a well-educated, trained ministry. When it comes to our spiritual lives, we need men who have been nourished in the Scriptures, brought up in them, trained in them, to pass these things on to us.

It's part of their task to give them the truth. You see, they don't just train for their own well-being. It says they set these things before the brothers that they're a good minister. And so they're to command and teach, verse 11, command and teach these things.

All of these things that he's been talking about. Receive God's good creation with thanksgiving. Command that to the brothers. Command that they train for godliness, that they be careful about their spiritual nourishment, that they reject these profaneness.

Command that they hope in God, that they believe. Teach them about the error that's coming, to be aware of it. Teach them the benefits of spiritual health. Command and teach these things. That's a minister's job.

[23:18] And how does he do that? How does he do that? How does he communicate those things? Well, he can do it one-on-one. He can do it from house to house. We read about that in the book of Acts. But what's in view here? Look at verse 13.

It's the public ministry of the Word. Until I come, devote yourself. Be devoted. Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

There's how a minister works for his people. He gives them the truth. That's what we're doing right here tonight. You've heard the Word read tonight, haven't you? Read a portion of Scripture.

Now comes a word of exhortation and teaching. The pastor isn't to be devoted to foolish myths, to endless genealogies, to too much wine, or to deceitful spirits.

But he is to be devoted to, to give attention to the public reading, to exhortation, and to teaching.

This is the pattern. Paul's taking this, it looks like, from the Old Testament synagogues.

[24:14] Acts 13 and verse 15. We read, After the reading, that's the word, after the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement, that's the word preaching in our passage.

If you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak. It's their practice to read in the synagogue publicly from the Old Testament, and then for someone to give a word of encouragement, a word of exhortation.

And Paul takes that model and he adapts it for the church. And now we don't just read from the Old Testament, but even in this day, there were some parts of what we now know as the New Testament. There were Paul's letters.

And we see Paul directing the recipient, Read this letter to the church. And so we're to take the Scriptures that God has given us and read them publicly so that all can hear.

And then to exhort and teach. I think those two words taken together are what we think of as preaching. The word exhortation, here it's translated preaching, it's encouragement, it's comfort, it's exhorting, the teaching, the doctrine.

[25:17] I think the two, you combine them together and you get what we know today as preaching. It's the proclamation of the Word. You can separate them out, have preaching and teaching and Sunday school, that's good.

And sometimes we focus more on doctrine, sometimes more on exhortation. But we never get far from the Word. We read it. And this is, again, we go and we dig into this Word.

We seek to it. It's called exegesis. Once you get out of the text and bring it to the people. You take this, you read the Word and then tell the people how they're to respond to it. You proclaim that Word faithfully to them.

That's what the minister's job is. And they're to be devoted to it, to give attention to it, to focus on it. To proclaim these things to the people.

Now, is it just the minister that is to be devoted, to give attention to these things? I could give attention to public reading and to preaching and teaching, but if I do it to an empty room, well then I guess it's not public reading, is it?

[26:19] Because there's no one else to hear it. But what would be the use of it? Or if I gave it to a room full of people and no one was listening? If I was the only one giving attention to the reading and the exhortation and the teaching, then it would be a waste of time, wouldn't it?

It might do some benefit to me, but what about the people of God? We're to give attention to it so that you can give attention to it. So that you can be nourished in the truth. So that you can receive these things.

It's part of your spiritual training. And so come and hear the Word that's been prepared especially for you. You know, God gives particular pastors to particular congregations. And those pastors are to come and to prepare a Word in season for you.

That's why I think that CDs and online sermons or the radio can never replace the local congregation. Can never replace the public preaching of God's Word and gathered congregations because here is a Word prepared for you.

And so if you're not here, you're missing out. If you're here but not paying attention, you're missing God's special truth prepared for you. That's a minister's job to give attention to these things.

[27:33] To pass the truth on to the people. Pray that we be faithful in it. And that needs to be an example. Verse 12. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.

As the minister is to watch his life and doctrine closely, so he will be watched closely by the congregation, the community in which he lives.

And so he must watch himself closely because others will be. And what they see must be exemplary. And here's part of a minister's work for his people to set an example for them.

Some might have looked down on Timothy because he was young. He might have been in his 30s or so. I like the idea of that being young. But he's not to be looked down on because he's young. In that command, it sounds like it's directed at Timothy, but it's in the third person. It's directed to the people in the congregation. They're not to look down on Timothy because of his youth. But the next part is directed at Timothy.

[28:46] How do you prevent being looked down on? Because of your youth. Be an example. Be exemplary of those who believe. Be an example to those who believe.

They should be able to look at him and mold their lives after the manner of his life. He is a type of what they should be like. A life of godliness summarized in his words, his conduct, his love, his faith, and his purity.

He must be an example in his speech. The words that he says. What comes out of his mouth when he is in the pulpit and when he is out of the pulpit. He is to avoid lies and words and sinful anger. Unwholesome words. Profane words. Bitter words. Slander. Obscenity. Foolish. Coarse. Joking. Abusive. Abrasive words. Read through Ephesians 4 and 5 and get an idea of what sort of speech he should avoid and what he should practice.

Edifying words. Thankful words. Psalms. Hymns. And spiritual songs should come from his mouth. Compassionate. Kind. Humble. Gentle words. Words of forgiveness. He should model these things for the people.

[29:53] His speech should be an example. A mom should be able to separate her arguing sons. And of course, able to say, do you think that Jesus would have spoken like this?

But we've never heard Jesus speak with our own ears. We hear him in the pages of Scripture, but we don't know what he said to his brothers. But you should also be able to say, have you ever heard your pastor talk like that?

And they should be able to say no because he's been a faithful example in his speech. In his conduct. His broad category. His way of life. It must be upright.

It must be holy. He must be a man of integrity. Congregation should be able to look at him and see a life lived according to God's Word. A life worth imitating. Hebrews 13.7 Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you.

Consider the outcome of their way of life. That's our word. And imitate their faith. Example in their life. In their love. This man must exemplify love to God and love to man.

[30:58] The two greatest commandments. Can you see in him that he truly and deeply loves his God? With all of his heart and soul and mind and strength.

Do you see it in his worship? Do you see it in his personal life that he loves God? And is it unmistakable from his life that he loves his neighbor as himself? Does he live by 1 Corinthians 16.14 do everything in love?

He must be an example of love. But also faith. A picture of quiet trust in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Resting on him alone for salvation and his day-to-day sustenance and strength.

Not a man given to worry and fear. Even in the face of great difficulty and trouble and trial, his faith fails not. He's an example of faith. And purity.

Keeping himself unstained by the world, he guards his heart and his mind against all the pollution that is so ready to tear down all who make it their aim to live a life of godliness. An example of purity.

[32:08] Such an important principle is repeated in the Scriptures for pastors. Paul tells it to Titus. Titus 2 and everything. Set them an example by doing what is good. Peter writes about it. 1 Peter 5, verses 2 and 3.

Be shepherds of God's flock. But being examples to the flock. None will be a perfect example. Only Jesus was that. But they must be faithful in their example.

Quick to seek forgiveness when they sin. Now, if we're to be examples of these things, your ministers, does that mean you're off the hook? Well, no.

There's a reason that you're an example of these things. It's so that the example can be followed. so that it can be matched. So that it can be seen and imitated.

And so, you must be careful with respect to your words and your manner of life and love and faith and purity. And you too will be examples.

[33:07] Parents will be examples to their children. Older siblings to younger siblings. Employers to their employees. Employees to their fellow employees. classmates and teammates to their friends.

You are an example for someone. What sort of an example are you? May God make His ministers to be faithful examples here and all the people as well.

And in this, His progress should be evident as we've seen so that they'll have no occasion to despise His youth. As the minister seeks to cultivate his life in ministry, no occasion to look down on him because he hasn't given such an occasion.

And such is the nature of the minister's work with respect to His people. He's to teach them the truth and He is to be an example for them. And so what is the outcome of the minister's work in the congregation?

Notice verse 6 again. If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus. Notice, a good minister of Christ Jesus. It means His eye is not looking for the favor of men.

[34:21] He's looking for God's word of approval on His ministry. He's looking for the good of His brethren, but He's not firstly seeking their approval. He's looking for God's approval.

The outcome should be that Christ is able to say, He is a good and faithful servant of mine. That's the outcome He seeks in the ministry. That Christ approves of it. And that means if there's a painful word, He'll bring it.

Even if it makes the brethren uncomfortable, if there's a word of rebuke needed, He'll say it. Even if it hurts, He'll proclaim Jesus' truth and fight errors even when it's not popular. And so, He is to be a minister of Christ with striving for His approval.

That's the outcome He wants. Jesus' approval. But then the outcome, also in verse 16, Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Those are sobering words. By doing these things, Timothy, by fulfilling your ministry, watching your life and doctrine closely, teaching, being a faithful example, you will save yourself and others.

[35:38] You say, hold on. I thought only God could save people. True. And that's exactly right. But Paul uses this language elsewhere, doesn't he? And what he means is that God uses means when He saves people.

He uses human instruments. And so he says in 1 Corinthians 9 that He became all things to all men so that He might, by all means, save some. That He, Paul, might save some people by His work. That's God using Him to save people from their sins. John Calvin was especially helpful and so I want to read you just a portion of what he said.

as the unfaithfulness or carelessness of the pastor is ruinous to the church. Everybody would be willing to say that. A careless, unfaithful pastor will ruin the church.

He says, so the cause of salvation is justly ascribed to His faithfulness and diligence. True, it is God alone that saves and not even the smallest portion of His glory can lawfully be bestowed on men.

[36:40] But God parts with no portion of His glory when He employs the agency of men for bestowing salvation doesn't take away from God's glory to use human means. And so He does.

He uses men to be the instrument of salvation for other men. That's why we can read Romans 10 and understand that people won't be saved unless a man goes and preaches the gospel to them. They won't be saved without a man to do that work. God uses people to do that work. And so as if the work of the ministry was not weighty enough, there's much here for us, much to do, much to sober us, much to call us to repentance and to call us to press on.

And now there's this. And Paul expresses it this way to the Corinthians in chapter 2 of his second letter. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

To the one we are the smell of death, to the other the fragrance of life. That's more than I can handle. That the preaching of God's Word will be unto the salvation of some and unto the eternal condemnation of others.

[37:57] I can't handle it. I can't do that. I'm not... And Paul feels it. And right after that, he says, who is equal to such a task?

Who is sufficient for these things? Certainly not me. But only God working in me. Our sufficiency comes from God and so may He enable us to so carry ourselves in life and doctrine that we and our hearers might so be saved.

It's a weighty work that God gives to His church, to His ministers. And do you know that that weighs on us, that it's our great concern that you be saved?

That's what we ought the outcome of our ministry to be. The salvation of each person in this room tonight. The perseverance of each person in this room to the end that they might not fall away following false teaching and so we labor and spend ourselves to them.

Not as we should. God help us to be faithful in these things. But our desire is that you would be saved and that you would persevere to the end. And so if you have trusted in this Christ, then press on.

[39:06] Be encouraged. Don't fall away. Don't follow these false teachers, these doctrine of demons. Stay on the straight and narrow path. And if you've never trusted in Christ tonight, then come to Him.

Because the preaching of the Word will be salvation for some and condemnation for others. And we want it to be salvation for you. I want you to know the Lord.

I want you to be saved. so that we're an aroma of life to you and not of death. Pray that God will take the feebleness of the Word preached and use it to save sinners.

the conclusion is please pray for us.

Pray for your pastors. The ones you have now, the ones that you will have in the future. Pray that He would equip us for such a ministry. That He would help us to work in our own lives, to guard our life and doctrine closely, and that He would enable us to be faithful and working in your lives, to proclaim the truth and to set an example.

[40:15] Because we are not sufficient for these things. Only as God enables us will we be able to fulfill them. So please, brethren, pray for us. Even as we pray for you, that you'll be able to live out these principles as we've applied them tonight in your lives.

We pray one for another. Isn't that a blessing that God has given us a body of believers that we're not left alone, but they have one another to encourage each other on the way to glory, to pray for one another.

And so, please pray that the ministry of the Word in this place would always look like 1 Timothy 3 and 4. That this would be a model for Grace Fellowship Church with the pastors you have now and the ones that He will provide in the future.

May God make it so. Let's pray. Our Father, we pray that You would take our lives and let them be consecrated unto Thee. We pray that You would take us and let us be ever only all for Thee.

Give us grace to use those gifts that You've given us in our respective callings. To use them diligently. To bring honor and glory to Your name. We pray that You would encourage our missionaries in different places scattered around the globe.

[41:27] May they not grow weary in exercising the gift that You have given them. That You've called them to use. May they be encouraged in it. May they press on. And may they receive the fruit of their labors.

We pray that their progress would be evident to all and that You would build Your kingdom through their labors. But may they not grow discouraged in being consecrated for service unto You.

And we pray that You would guard the ministry here in Grace Fellowship Church. Guard her pastors, both present and future. Keep them faithful to minister in this way. To take careful stock of their life and doctrine.

To watch it closely. And to be faithful in proclaiming the truth and setting an example for the flock. Give us grace to press on in these things. We pray that You would preserve this church and the ministry here even until Christ comes again.

Do great things here. Not because we are great, but because You are great. And You are strong. And You are powerful. Come and give us Your Spirit. Increasing measures of Your Spirit.

[42:30] Give us help and strength unto that end that You may receive the glory and praise. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. name. Amen.