

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.28.2023

PART 14 - BEING A GODLY EXAMPLE

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Timothy 4:11-16

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

II. BE AN EXAMPLE OF GODLY CHARACTER

- 11 Command and teach these things
- "These things" includes Scripture and apostolic teaching.
- These are the things that Timothy is to teach and pass on to others.
- Timothy is to exercise his authority as an apostolic delegate to command and teach these things to the believers.

A LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

- But there was a challenge Timothy faced—some were undermining his leadership in the church and rejecting Timothy's commendation of the truth because he was still considered a young man.
- Timothy was somewhere in his mid-thirties. He would be considered a youth.
- Elders would have been seen as the ones with wisdom.
- So it would be hard for older people to receive counsel from someone who was perceived to have little life experience.
- In our opening message of this series we looked at this aspect of Timothy's youthfulness.
- But there was something else we learned about Timothy in the pastorals, he was also timid.
- Timothy needed encouragement from Paul in this area. (2Tim. 1:6-7).
- Timothy's timidity would have made it difficult to confront these people.

WORTHY OF IMITATION

- Paul's instruction to Timothy here is classic leadership instruction but it is for every Christian.
- He doesn't instruct Timothy to assert his authority, or act aggressively, or pull rank.
- Rather, he exhorts him to be an example in godly character.
- 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity
- They won't despise his youth if they find his godly character admirable and worth following.
- Pastors / Elders are supposed to be examples to the flock.
- Paul mentions a few things that Timothy is supposed to be an example in: his speech, conduct, love, faith, purity.
- They represent inner qualities of godliness and outward, observable qualities of godliness.
- It's the same exhortation Peter gives in his letter, instructing the elders to be examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
- What is an example? It is a pattern that is set before others to be imitated.
- Titus 2:7-8 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.
- He's telling him the same thing, be an example, be a model for others to follow and also lists godly characteristics.
- Paul wrote in his letters that others could imitate him because he was imitating Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).
- How many of us can say that?
- Every follower of Jesus should all be able to say that.

- Notice how comprehensive these godly characteristics are.
- The entirety of Timothy's life is to be an example. In word and deed.

SPEECH

- If there's anything that can get us into trouble it's our mouth.
- Many proverbs warn us of the dangers our mouths can get us into (Pr. 10:19, 32; 13:3).
- We are to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19).
- Leaders are to have self-controlled tongues.

CONDUCT

- This means "manner of life." In every facet of Timothy's day-to-day life, he is to be a godly example.

LOVE / FAITH / PURITY

- These are the inner qualities of godliness.
- Timothy was to exemplify love in every circumstance and with every person he dealt with.
- He was to exemplify his faith, not only through him holding fast to the truth but also through his faithfulness to the Lord.
- And he is to be an example of purity of heart in all areas of life. He is to live an upright and morally blameless life; a self-controlled life.
- Ministry is a character profession.
- We lead through moral authority that flows from godly character and invites others to follow our lead.
- This is how Timothy is going to win over those who look down at his youthfulness. He will win them through his godly character.
- We should all be examples of these godly characteristics in our life.
- A godly life has value in this present life (1 Tim. 4:8).
- Our inner life and outer life should be worthy of imitation.

III. BE AN EXAMPLE OF DEVOTION TO GOD'S WORD

- 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.
- Here is the primary task and the primary aspect of the worship of the church—the centrality of God's Word in the life of the church.
- "Until I come..." Timothy was there at Ephesus until Paul came to relieve him. Until such a time, Timothy was to give himself fully to the ministry of God's Word.
- **Timothy must devote himself to the public reading of Scripture.**
- This was already a part of Christian worship that was adopted from the Jewish synagogue.
- This is absolutely essential to the worship of the church.
- The Word of God is central to our gathering.
- We see how God's Word powerfully convicted people in the OT.
- Under Ezra's ministry, there was a great reformation that took place (Nehemiah 8)
- How important is God's Word to you? Does it convict your heart? Does it move you to greater worship of God?
- **Timothy must devote himself also to exhortation and teaching.**
- Exhortation is preaching. It involves encouraging, admonishing, and commanding obedience from God's Word and proclaiming truth from God's Word.
- Teaching has to do with doctrinal instruction; it involves explanation and application of Scripture.
- Timothy is to give himself fully to biblical exposition.
- He was to exposit the Scriptures, exhort from the Scriptures and instruct from the Scriptures.
- If God's Word is not central, how can there be proper worship?
- If God's Word is not central, how can we grow in godliness?
- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- Only God's Word will make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
- Only God's Word is what is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training righteousness.
- And only God's Word will equip the man of God for every good work.
- Are you devoted to God's Word?
- Is God's Word central to your life?

IV. BE AN EXAMPLE IN USING YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS

- To further encourage Timothy in the trials of ministry and in the face of opposition from those who would look down upon his youthfulness, Paul calls him to remind the circumstances surrounding his commissioning for ministry.
- He is to remember this significant event from his past, most likely Timothy's ordination, where three specific things happened.
- 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.
- There is a gift that was bestowed to Timothy, that is also called a gift of God (2 Tim. 1:6).
- Paul does not specify what that gift was but we can assume it was related to his ministry, perhaps a teaching gift or leadership gift for the building up of the church.
- There was also a prophetic message given to Timothy through which this gift was given (1 Tim. 1:18).
- Perhaps these prophetic words were to single Timothy out for ministry much like we see in Acts 13:1-3 with Paul and Barnabas.
- There was also the council of elders who by the laying on of hands confirmed God's calling and gift on Timothy.

- "Do not neglect the gift you have..."
- Timothy has a gift, but he can neglect that gift.
- 2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,
- The gift must be nurtured, or it will be like a fire that burns out.
- The warning here is "use it or lose it!"

- We all have been given a spiritual gift.
- 1 Cor 12:1, 4-7, 11 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.
- Whatever that gift is that God has given you, it is not to be put up on a shelf.
- It is to be exercised for the common good. For the building up and edification of the church.
- God may have given you gifts of service, teaching, mercy, exhortation, generosity, leading, use them for the glory of good and the good of the church! (Rom. 12:6-8)

V. BE AN EXAMPLE IN DILIGENCE

- Timothy is to demonstrate diligence in his life and ministry.
- 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.
- Practice is the Greek word for cultivate. He is to cultivate all of the godly characteristics through diligent repetition.
- "Immerse yourself in them..." literally means, "Be in these things."
- If people see you practice these things and be immersed in these things, they will see your progress.

- Can those who have known you for a long time see a dynamic progression of growth in godliness?
- Can a snapshot of the last five or ten years of your life reflect spiritual growth and maturity?
- None of us have arrived. But we must strive for that growth with the grace that God enables us with.
- Philippians 3:12-16 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained.
- The mature know that they haven't made it yet. They press on in their sanctification.
- They also don't act as if they're perfect.
- Be diligent and persevere in maturing in Christ.
- It's what Paul desired most in himself and for the church.
- Colossians 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

A FINAL WARNING

- Paul concludes this exhortation to Timothy with a warning to give equal attention and perseverance to himself and to the doctrine of the church.
- 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- He is to pay attention to his character and what he is teaching others.
 - There is a close connection to what we believe and how we live.
 - Right conduct in the church will naturally flow from a right confession of Christ and his truth.
 - What we believe about God determines how we live for God.
 - And we need to live according to what we know of God and His Word.
- Why does this matter to Paul that is he strongly urging Timothy in this area?
 - Because if Timothy perseveres in all of the things that Paul has instructed him in, he will be growing in his sanctification and he will aid in the spiritual formation of those who sit under his teaching.
 - That is what is meant by “you will save yourself and your hearers.”
 - Surely he doesn’t mean salvation here in the sense of the justifying work Christ has accomplished for sinners.
 - Salvation comes only through God’s sovereign grace and mercy and through Christ alone.
 - What he is saying with this phrase is that those who persist in life and doctrine will persevere in salvation.
 - Those who keep a close watch on their life and on the truth will run the race and cross the finish line.
 - Colossians 1:21-23 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
 - Perseverance is not a cause of our salvation, you aren’t saved by your perseverance.
 - But it will be the ultimate evidence of your salvation (Matt. 24:13).
 - 1 Cor 15:1-2 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you —unless you believed in vain.
 - You are being saved, if you hold fast to the truth.
 - So the good minister, keeping a close watch on himself and his teaching, will himself persevere in the faith and will encourage others to persevere in the faith.

CONCLUSION

- Pray for your pastor, for this double responsibility of keeping watch over my own life and yours as well.
 - I am striving to make sure my life is worthy of imitation, an example for you to follow.
 - Hebrews 13:7, 17 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
 - I will only be able to do this with joy with your cooperation and partnership in the gospel.
 - In your commitment to growth in godliness, God’s Word and using your God-given gifts.
 - Keep a close watch on your conduct and the teaching you have heard, the word of truth.
 - Don’t move away from the hope of the gospel you have heard.
- The key to godliness is Christ and the goal of godliness is the glory of Christ.
 - He is our example of godliness and perfection. He is the goal we are all pressing towards.
 - Be encouraged saint of God, his divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
 - He has granted us His Spirit, to teach us all things and to lead us into all truth, and to sanctify us.
 - (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Peter 1:2).
 - Our Savior and our Lord has secured your growth in godliness and ensured your success, you will be conformed to Christ, even as you persevere in being an example of godliness, devoting yourself to God’s Word and using your gifts for his glory.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today’s message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?