

(1 Timothy) Entirely Given to the Things of God

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of serving God with joy and labor, trusting in His sovereignty, and being a good example to others in our words and actions.

Duration: 46:25

Topics: "Godly Living", "Christian Persecution"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares the story of a young lady who has been arrested for her faith in God. Despite having a junior high level education, she has written over a thousand hymns that are sung by millions of house church Christians in the country. When asked why she is in prison, she boldly states that it is because she believes in God. The speaker emphasizes that the Christian life is not about man-made rules, but about the goodness, grace, mercy, and love of God. He encourages the listeners to reject false teachings and exercise themselves toward godliness, as it is profitable for both the present life and the life to come. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of applying the knowledge and information received from the Word of God in order to make an impact in the world.

Transcript

Let's turn now to 1st Timothy chapter 4 once again, and we'll pick up again tonight in verse 6, but we're going to make it through the end of the chapter this evening, and then next week we're going to come back and spend an extended amount of time on a particular verse, but we'll go ahead and get through the remainder of the chapter tonight. But once again, as we pick up in verse 6, Paul says, if you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ and that these things, of course, are the things that he was previously referring to instructing the brethren basically in the goodness and the grace of God, in contrast to legalistic kinds of things, restrictions on what you can eat and whether you can be married and those kinds of things. Paul says, no, that's that's not what it's about.

It's not about legalism. It's not about a bunch of manmade rules. It's about the goodness of God.

It's about the grace of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, all those wonderful things. And he says to Timothy, if you instruct the people in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine, which you have carefully followed, but reject profane and old wives fables and exercise yourself toward godliness for bodily exercise profits a little bit. Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance for to this end, we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe these things command and teach. So remember, Paul is writing this letter to his protege, if you will, Timothy. Timothy is Paul's disciple.

He's raising him up and he's in the ministry together with Timothy. Ultimately, he's going to sort of pass the mantle of his own ministry on to Timothy. But here at this point, he's encouraging him.

And giving him instruction on what it is to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, he also reminds Timothy that the ministry is about labor, the ministry is about working hard for the kingdom of God, that is what the ministry is about. It's. There's labor involved, but, you know, I must say that there's so much joy in it that the labor aspect to it, it doesn't really seem like that big of a deal.

You know, so often people will say to me, oh, oh, Pastor Brian, I hate to bother you with this. You know what? You're not bothering me with this. This is what we do.

This is what we delight to do. We love to do the things of the ministry. Yeah, there's labor involved.

There's long hours, a lot of times. And there's, you know, as a true minister of Jesus Christ, it's twenty four seven. You don't clock out at a certain time and then say, oh, sorry, too late.

You know, I've already clocked out. You know, you need prayer. Could you come back tomorrow at nine? That's when I clock in again.

You know, you don't do that in the ministry. Well, some people might, but you're not supposed to. There is labor involved, but there's so much joy in the midst of it that it just sort of offsets that whole thing.

I was watching a little presentation last night. On the Welsh revival, Welsh revival happened back in 1904, and the the real intense period of that was from 1904 through 1906. And there was a young man who was sort of the leading figure, humanly speaking, in the Welsh revival.

His name was Evan Roberts. And at the age of 13, I think it was he had this intense burden for a fresh outpouring of the spirit of God upon his homeland, Wales. And he began to pray at the age of 13.

Ten years later, God poured out the spirit in an extraordinary way. And for three straight years, this guy ministered almost daily around the clock. They would have meetings that would go till three and four o'clock in the morning.

There were so many people getting saved. And there was such a presence and a power of God. People just never wanted to leave.

And so for three straight years, there was just this intense labor. But at the same time, as he would be questioned about, you know, how do you keep going? And, you know, you need to get rest. And you're you're, you know, you're you're putting way too much time into this and all of that.

And he would say, you know, it's fine. It's the Lord's with me. The Lord strengthened me.

And God kept him and blessed him through that time. And then at the end of that three year period, things didn't die down. Actually, the revival kind of spread around the world.

And then there came a time for him to rest. He just sort of stepped back. God had done a great work.

And then they just, in a sense, sort of enjoyed what God had done. But the point is this, even though there was intense labor, the joy and the peace and the blessing of what God did offset the whole thing. And so he never thought of it as a laborious thing.

Anybody who thinks of the ministry as, oh, you know, while I'm under this heavy burden of ministry, they don't really understand the true nature of the ministry. Now, it is possible to get under a heavy burden of ministry. But when that happens, you know what you've done? You've taken on ministry that God hasn't actually put on you, because Jesus said my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

So when you're under the the yoke of the Lord, the burden of the Lord is not a heavy, oppressive, laborious thing, his yoke is easy, his burden is light. But Paul says we labor. And then secondly, he said, and we suffer reproach because we trust in the living God.

All those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, will suffer difficulty, will suffer opposition. That is part of the Christian experience. It is part of the experience of those who serve God.

And there's just no way around it. That's the way it is, because we're living in a world that's controlled by the devil, God's enemy. We're living in a world full of men and women who are under the influence of the devil.

And they're under the influence of their own sinful natures and tendencies and desires and all of that as well. And because of that, there is going to be times of suffering, times of persecution. As I mentioned last week, I watched a series of DVDs on the church in China, the cross, Jesus in China, and much of this documentary deals with the fact that many of the believers, especially the leaders, have been in prison for their faith, some of them for 20 years, some of them for less amounts of time.

Some of them have been in prison numerous times over. What is their crime? Their crime is simply loving God, worshiping God, telling other people about God. And I was watching the fourth one in the series last night.

And there's a young lady who has this unbelievable gift from God to write hymns. And her testimony is powerful. She has no more than a junior high level education, but she's written about a thousand hymns that are sung by the more than 70 million house church Christians in the country.

And she's been arrested. And when she was she's telling her story about when when she was first thrown into prison, when she got into prison, the prisoners said, why are you in prison? And she said, oh, we're here because we believe in God. And they said, well, you shouldn't be in prison for believing in God.

We we've committed crimes. We've you know, they've done all kinds of horrific things. And even the prisoners themselves, they saw the injustice in it.

But you know what? That's life. That's the Christian life. The author of this epistle, as you know, Paul, he spent many years himself in prison.

Now, when we think of suffering, when we think of imprisonment, when we think of persecution, I think for many of us, we think, well, wait a second, how could that happen? I mean, that doesn't seem right. And, you know, after all, we have rights and I'm going to go to my congressman. I'm going to write my senator a

letter.

And, you know, a lot of times we think in those ways, we think persecution is bad. It's horrible. It's wrong.

It should never be the case, but it is the case. And you know what? It's not always bad. Paul said in writing to the Philippians about his own experience in jail, he said that it has actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

He said, you see, my being in chains, what it's done is it's created a boldness in a lot of other people. They've looked at me and thought, well, if Paul can go to prison for Christ, we can surely open our mouth and speak up for him. And people began to speak up for Jesus because they were emboldened by Paul's situation.

Plus, Paul went on to say that he had an opportunity to minister to people while he was in prison that he never would have had an opportunity to minister to otherwise. He ministered to the Praetorian Guard, which was the elite guard that surrounded the Roman Emperor. And Paul shared the gospel with them.

We will suffer affliction. That's part of. Our experience as Christians, we will suffer reproach and we need to get that in our heads because it's going to happen.

It is happening already. It's always happened. You know, even when a culture is is very Christianized and Christianity is very accepted in the culture, even under those circumstances, anyone who was really serious about the Lord in a deep, devout way always would experience an element of persecution.

You know, oh, no, here comes the the real, you know, hyper religious person or back in earlier times, they used to call him the enthusiast. Now, the ones who called him the enthusiast thought they were Christians as well. Oh, we're Christians.

We're just, you know, we're normal Christians. We're not enthused or excited about anything to do with God. We're just Christians.

We go to church and all of that. But somebody who really loved Jesus, somebody who took the word seriously, somebody who was wanting to live a holy life. Oh, they're enthusiasts, they're fanatics, they're fundamentalists.

So it's always happened, even in a so-called Christian culture. But as that Christian veneer upon the culture sort of fades, then, of course, it becomes a little bit different, a little bit more aggressive. And a bit more challenging, but it is a reality.

I was reading a book this morning and it's a in many ways, it's a good book. There's a lot of great stories in it about what God's doing all over the world and so forth. But the premise of the book, I must say, I completely disagreed with the premise of the book because the author.

He sort of. He has the idea that. The church, rather than just simply worshiping God and praying and fellowshiping and studying the scriptures and sharing Christ with people, leading people to Christ, the church should do that, of course, but that's only part of what the church should do.

The other thing the church needs to do is seek to bring a Christian influence upon the culture. The Christian church should. Should impact the culture to the extent that we turn the culture into a Christian culture.

And this author put a big emphasis on, you know, not simply sharing the gospel with people, he said, in a sense, he kind of said, well, you know, that's OK and we get to do that once in a while and that's fine. But his point was, we need to go out and invade the academic world and we need to go out and invade the world of politics and we need to go. And he actually said he wrote the book as as.

As a means of encouragement for us in this new 21st century to restore a Christian culture to this country. Now, I this guy's a really brilliant guy, too, and I can't believe that he doesn't realize that the only reason we ever had a Christian culture in the first place is because people originally got born again and influenced the culture. But as time goes on and that sort of wears off and you have fewer people being born again and really living the Christian life, that's when things start to change.

So he almost has this idea that somehow you can turn the culture into a Christian culture without getting people saved. You see, evangelism is really the answer, because when people get saved, they work in the world in a variety of different places and then they go back into where they work and then their life begins to be a testimony and they have an impact. And then many times the culture can change if we have, you know, a large number of people that are doing that.

But as I'm I'm looking at this book, I'm thinking, you know, this is this is not right. And of course, I understand this person has a theological background that pretty much teaches that the church is going to bring in the kingdom of God. We're going to set up the kingdom.

We're going to just have a greater and greater influence as time goes on. That's what the church is supposed to do. And and we will kind of, you know, set up the kingdoms ourselves, the kingdom ourselves.

Jesus, of course, will come at the end and say, great job, you guys. OK, glad you got everything ready for me now. All right, I'll sit down on my throne, but that's not the way the Bible says it's going to go, is it? And the reality is this, the Bible never promises.

Never even really hints at the church ever being anything more than a despised minority in this world. That's the picture the New Testament gives us of the church. The church is always going to be a despised minority.

It's always going to be that way. Why? Because the world belongs to the devil right now. Of course, ultimately, sovereignly, it's God's world.

But how many places in scripture are we told that Satan is the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air who now works in the children of disobedience? You see, that's the way it is, and it's not going to change until what happens until Jesus Christ comes back. He's going to set up the kingdom. He's going to come back and he's going to judge a world that's rejected him.

He's going to establish his kingdom. But if we think that somehow we're going to take over everything, we're going to start running the governments. We're going to take over all of the media.

We're going to take over the world of academics. We're greatly mistaken. We're greatly mistaken.

That's not going to happen. It's already laid out for us in scripture, evil men and evil days are going to get worse and worse. Now, I wish it was different.

I'm not a sadistic person. I'm not hoping for persecution to come along. I'm not sitting around saying, man, I can't wait to get thrown in jail for Jesus.

But I'm looking at it realistically and I'm looking at it scripturally, the scripture never guarantees that the church will be anything but a despised minority in the world. That is what the church will be. Paul says it right here.

We suffer reproach. Why? Because we trust in the living God. We trust in the living God that the world rejects.

We trust in the living God that Satan is opposing. Now, let's balance it out. Of course, God's going to win.

He's already won. Principalities and powers have been spoiled by Christ on the cross. And we are led in triumph always, but it's not the kind of triumph that we often think of.

It's not a materialistic thing. It's not a physical thing, necessarily. It's not a visible thing yet.

It will manifest itself in the future when Christ returns, but right now it's invisible and we are a minority rather than the majority. But the Lord is moving. He's working.

And of course, ultimately, he is going to establish his kingdom. He is the savior of all men. And one day that will be made crystal clear.

But as you know, as well as I do, there is great opposition to him now. There is powerful opposition. And as I mentioned, speaking with that Muslim man today, you know, it was a great time, a challenging time.

It was a but I came away invigorated. But at the same time, I came away grieved in my heart to have sat and listened to a man blaspheme Christ. And thinking as he's doing it, that that he's pleasing God, that this is the position that he's to take.

But it's not hopeless because someone else did that a long time ago. He's the one who wrote this letter. He blaspheme God, he compelled others to blaspheme, but he ended up becoming the great Apostle Paul.

So there's hope, but we suffer reproach because we trust in the living God. He is the savior of all men, especially those who believe Christ died to save everybody. Every single person that's ever lived, Jesus Christ shed his blood for that person.

I believe that every person's name is written in the book of life. Jesus talked in his letter to the church of Sardis, he warned them about blotting their names out of the book of life. I believe that every man's name is written in the book of life because every person had Christ's blood shed for them.

But not every person will be saved, will they? He's the savior potentially of all men, but he's really actually only the savior of those who believe. But you see, in the end, when a man perishes, it won't be because Christ did not provide atonement for him. A man will never be able to say, look, I couldn't have gone to heaven anyway because Jesus didn't die for me.

A man will never be able to say that a man who dies and goes to hell. He goes to hell, trampling the son of God underfoot and counting the blood of the covenant by which he was potentially sanctified as an unholy thing. And so when a man goes to hell, he has no one to blame but himself.

Because Christ died for everyone, but he only can save those that believe because he will not violate a man's free will. He will not force us to believe he will not make you believe in him. He'll try to persuade you to believe in him, he'll give you numerous opportunities to believe in him.

But at the end of the day, he does not force us to believe in him. We must make that decision ourself. So Paul said to Timothy, he said, command and teach these things.

And then he said, let no one despise your youth, let no one despise your youth. Paul was probably or excuse me, Timothy, that there's there's a lot of difference among commentators as to as to Timothy's age. Some have said that Timothy was probably in his 40s.

I don't buy that. In a culture where you only lived, you know, generally old age was man, if you reach 60. Or 70, you know, as a matter of fact, the Bible says that.

Three score and 10. That's 70 years, that's about all you get, and if by some fluke you get a few more. Well, it's it's all just trouble anyway.

But 40 years old, no, I believe that Timothy was probably in his 20s. He was a young man. And so Paul says to him, Timothy, don't let anyone despise your youth, he says, but be an example to the believers.

Being example now, remember, Timothy's a leader, he's a young leader, but he's a leader in the church. And so Paul says to him, Timothy, it's important that you set a good example. And of course, it is important that all of us as believers set a set a good example in my text here, it says, be an example to the believer.

I think in the King James Version, it actually says, be an example of the believer. Either one, it can be translated either way, obviously, but I think. Both things are really right, because I can't really be an example to the believer unless I'm an example of the believer.

I've got to be living the life of a believer and then I will be an example to the other believers. And then he says to be an example in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity. Now.

I want to save this verse for next week to go into greater detail on it, so we'll just pass from that and finish up the rest of the chapter. But Paul goes on to say, till I come give attention to reading. To exhortation and to doctrine, so this is what Timothy was to be doing in.

The congregational setting. Now, remember, Paul, Timothy is in Ephesus. A ministry began in Ephesus and Paul has Timothy there in Ephesus, making sure everything is moving along as it is supposed to.

He's there to stand up against the false teachers that are coming in. He's there to establish the proper order of the church service. He's there to give them good, solid instruction so they can have a fruitful ministry.

So here's what Paul tells him to do. He says, give attention to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine. You could translate this, give attention to reading, to preaching and to teaching.

That's what church leaders are to do, among other things. But but as a priority, church leaders are to read the scriptures there, to preach the scriptures there, to teach the scriptures. Now, of course, in Paul and Timothy's day, everyone did not come to church with a Bible like we come today.

Not everyone had a Bible back then, because, of course, there were no Bibles in the sense of a book. There were the scriptures and many of them were still in the process of being written. There were the Old Testament scriptures and some of the other epistles that had already been penned.

And perhaps some of the gospels at this time had been penned. But what would happen is the churches themselves, they would have copies of the scripture. And so the people would come to church for the very purpose they would they would come to this gathering for the purpose of having the scriptures read to them.

So that's why Paul says to Timothy, read them now, you have your own Bible today. And so we can say to you, OK, your job is to read the scriptures. And then, of course, you come to church that we might preach the scriptures and teach you the scriptures.

But this is the means by which God feeds his people. He feeds them through his word. Jesus said man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

So we read the word, we preach the word, we teach the word. This is how God does his great work in our lives through his word, he does his work in our lives. It's a supernatural thing.

You can't explain it. Scientifically, it's a miraculous thing. God's word comes into our lives as we read it, as we hear it preached, as we hear it taught, and it does something glorious in us.

It transforms us. It changes us from the inside out and makes us into the people that God wants us to be. But for Timothy, he's to read them the scriptures, he's to preach to them and he's to teach them.

What's the difference between preaching and teaching? Well, oftentimes the difference is stated to be that preaching is for unbelievers and teaching is for believers. There's some truth to that, because to an unbeliever, you preach the gospel to them. You proclaim the gospel to them so they can get saved.

But you preach to believers as well. Paul, he's going to visit Rome. And he says to them in writing to them in the very first chapter, he talks about how he's desiring to come to Rome.

That he might preach the gospel there also, he said, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God and salvation to everyone who believes. Paul says, I want to come to Rome and he's writing to Christians. He says, I want to come to Rome and I want to preach the gospel to you.

Now, why would Paul want to preach the gospel to people who are already believers? We see Paul understood preaching to not mean merely relating certain historical facts about Jesus to unsaved people. He understood preaching to be imparting to believers the full implication of what Christ did. Through his death and resurrection.

So Paul says to them in Rome, I want to come to you believers. I want to come and preach the gospel. I want to come and fill you in on all of the implications of what the death of Christ is all about.

What is resurrection is all about. And preaching has this element as well. In contrast to teaching, preaching has that an exhortive element in it.

Now, you see, teaching, on the other hand, is it's instruction, it's imparting information. Teaching gives you the information you need. Preaching gives you the motivation to apply the information.

So you can get out there and live the life you see, if if you're just in an environment where you're simply being taught without being preached to. In in the most positive sense, I'm using that term, you know, sometimes say that guy was preaching to me, I don't like that. Well, there's a good there's a good aspect to being preached to.

It's helping you to apply what you've been taught. If you're simply soaking in information and never being given the application of the information, what happens? You get stagnant. You start to stagnate because the information that comes in, it's got to go out.

If it just comes in only year after year after year and it never gets to flow out, you have a stagnation problem that occurs. Now, I fully believe that especially for, you know, new Christians and so forth, when you come initially, there's a time you just need you need to soak as much as you possibly can. And of course, God will lead you to have an outlet for that as well.

But you know, what happens is that people get into sort of a mode of just sitting and receiving. You're just hearing over and over again the same information. If you don't get out and apply that information in your life, you're going to become stagnant.

You see, the end of the ministry in the church is not to have a Bible study. The Bible study is the means to the greater end of serving Christ. If I think that everything is about the Bible study, as long as you're at the Bible study, that's all that matters.

The Bible study is important. But the Bible study is really the place where you get informed, it's where you get the information, you get the right information, and then the pastor, the teacher. Is to then preach, and it's really a combination, it kind of the the gifts go hand in hand together to to motivate you now to get up and do something with the information you got shows you how to apply.

And that's such an important thing. There are certain people and I've listened to people over the years who they refer to themselves, they say, well, you know, I'm just a teacher, I don't want to tell anybody what to do. And, you know, they can pass on a ton of information.

And I've met their disciples. There are people that have tons of information. They've got more information than they can ever use.

A lot of times they don't even use the information they've got other than to argue with people here or there and say, wait a second, you're wrong. I know, you know, the details about that prophetic scenario right there or whatever. It's not for that.

That information is to go into my heart and change me and then work itself out into my life. So Paul says to Timothy, this is what you do. You read in the scriptures, you preach the scriptures to him and you teach him the scriptures.

That's what pastoral ministry is primarily about. And you do that collectively for the congregation. You do it individually as well.

We minister the word not just to groups of people, but we minister the word to individuals as well. You know, we refer to counseling here at the church. If you have a problem, come on in for some counseling.

Well, I'll tell you right now, you know, a counseling is. We're going to preach to you. We're going to teach you the scriptures.

We're going to tell you what God says to do about the problem in your life. That's what we're supposed to do. If you've got the idea that you're going to come in and we've got a couch for you, you can lay down and we're going to take you all through your life, you know, tell me about this.

And how did your parents treat you? And what was it like, you know, remember back in your crib, you know, what was it like back there? You got the wrong idea. We're not going to do that. We're going to say, hey, look, this is what it says right here and we're going to do it, of course, lovingly and patiently.

But we're going to point you back to the word of God. I had an appointment this week and a person came in, they've got some huge problems in their life, huge. But in the end, I said, you know what, let's let's forget your problem right now, let's take your problem, set it right over here, because it's really a secondary issue.

The real issue is you and God. And this problem exists because you are not right with God. So you got to get right with God.

That's what counseling is all about right there, so preach. To them, teach them, read to them the scriptures, he says, do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Now, remember, he's talking to Timothy, says Timothy, don't neglect the gift, Timothy, evidently, from what we can get.

You know, you have to read between the lines in a sense, but Timothy was somewhat of a timid young man. He was a person who tended to probably shy away from challenging things and so forth. So Paul says, no, Timothy, you've got to you've got to stir up that gift, he would tell him that at a later point, but he says here, do not neglect the gift that that was in you, that is in you.

And it was given to you by prophecy with the laying on the hands of laying on of the hands of the eldership. And then he said, meditate on these things. Meditate on these things, Timothy, give yourself entirely to them that your progress may be evident to all.

Give yourself entirely to them, a minister of the gospel is to give himself entirely to the things of the gospel. You know, I don't have time for a million other things. There was a time in my life as a minister of the gospel when I was seeking to minister the gospel and do a bunch of other things also.

You know, I don't know if it's just getting older, maturing or whatever, but. I just I don't have time for any of those things anymore. They're not bad things, necessarily, other people might have time to do them.

I just frankly do not have the time I want to give myself entirely to these things. That's my calling. That's my responsibility.

That's the responsibility of everyone who's in Christian leadership, pastoral ministry. He says, meditate on these things, give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. You see, as people see the leadership, loving God, growing, being faithful, it inspires others as well.

You know, I want to say something, it's kind of on a personal note. My wife, you know, she teaches the ladies study here on Fridays, most Friday mornings now helping out her mother. And I meet ladies and

maybe I've talked to some of you everywhere I go, I meet ladies.

Who tell me how God is touching their life through through Cheryl's ministry. And a lot of times they're just saying, where does she get this stuff? I've never heard. And, you know, they're just talking about the blessing of this fresh word that's coming from God.

I will tell you right now how she gets it. She gives herself entirely to these things. I don't know a person myself who is more devoted to meditation on the scriptures than my wife.

She absolutely blesses me in that area. And all those Bible studies she gives the ladies, she gives them to me before she gives them to them. I steal a lot of those Bible studies, so I have something profound to say.

But the progress is evident. You know, Cheryl left here, she left this church when she was, let me think, I was twenty six. She was twenty two and a half years old when she left here.

She was gone for over 20 years, about 20 years, and she's come back. And, you know, a lot of people remember her. Little Sherry.

Oh, yes. Little Sherry. I remember her.

And now she's you know, she's a grown woman, obviously, and people marvel. Where did little Sherry get all this wisdom? Well, she's given herself entirely to these things. But, you know, guess what? God will do that for anyone who will give themselves entirely to these things.

You don't have to be a pastor, a missionary, an evangelist. You don't you don't have to have some recognized position in the church to get the blessing of God in this area. And just give yourself entirely to these things.

Meditate on these things and God will work a powerful work in your life and through your life as well. And, you know, as wonderful as it is to have great teaching from a pulpit in a church, we need thousands of people out in the community that can take that and pass it on to other people around them because that's where the centers are. We've got to connect with them.

And so Paul says, finally, we'll close with this. He says, take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this, you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. You know, we could there's a lot that could be said about these things here and we don't have time for it tonight. We are all to take heed to ourselves first.

And especially those in ministry, it's easy for a person in ministry to take heed to everybody else. It's easy to read your Bible so you can get a great sermon to give on Saturday night. But you know what? If I do that.

It won't be long before it becomes evident that I'm not taking heed to myself, I've got to take heed to myself, I've got to make sure my own spiritual life is in order, I've got to tend to my life spiritually myself. No one else is going to do that for me. I alone can do it and I've got to do it.

I've got to take heed to my life personally, and I've got to take heed to the doctrine, the word of God. I've got to pay attention, close attention, because here's the promise. When I continue in these things faithfully

by doing this.

I will save both myself and those who hear me now saving myself doesn't mean that I'm actually my own savior, doesn't mean that I worked my way to heaven. Remember, Paul's talking to Timothy's already saved. What he's talking about is Timothy, you'll save yourself from shipwreck, you'll save yourself from disaster, you'll save yourself from going off the rails somewhere down the line, which others have done.

But not only will you save yourself, you'll save those who hear you as well. There's a great responsibility upon church leadership, and it's the responsibility to make sure our own lives are right with God so that we can be an inspiration to others. And we need the grace of God to do that and we need your prayers.

And I know you do pray for us and all of us here that are ministering the word to you. We all greatly appreciate that. And we hope in turn that we are being a blessing to you.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you. That your word is laid out so clearly for us, the things that those who represent you are to be.

The character, the lifestyle, Lord, but all of us, really, you've called us all. To take heed to ourselves and to your word, you've called us all to meditate on the scriptures and give ourselves entirely to them. And so, Lord, may that be our manner of life in these days, Lord, as we look around us and we see the world just on the fast track to hell.

We're never going to impact it by sitting around watching TV, by just being caught up with what everybody else is doing. We're never going to make a difference. So, Lord, liberate us from those.

Worthless things that so often preoccupy us, distract us and help us, Lord, to give ourselves entirely. To these things that our progress may be evident to all and that we, Lord, whether we're teaching a Bible study or working on an assembly line or standing in a classroom or having coffee with a neighbor. Lord, that we will be reflecting Christ and his glory to others.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. Let's stand together.

If you need prayer tonight, these guys up here would love to pray with you. I'd love to pray with you. I'll be up here as well.

And I'm sure people around you would like to pray with you, too. So take your pick. There's a lot of different ways to get prayer tonight.

Just want to encourage you to stir up the gifts that are in you. Provoke one another to love and good works. Encourage one another, be a blessing to one another.

And let's just seek the Lord in these days. Let's really let's just go for it and see what God will do. I'll tell you guys this.

The Muslims are zealous. This young guy that we talked to today, he met with us with the hope of converting us to Islam. That was why he met with us.

And we thought he was meeting because he wanted to become a Christian. He made it clear, oh, no, I'm not interested in that. I want you to become Muslims.

And they're zealous. And not not just the Muslims. But all of the other isms out there are quite zealous.

And as you've noticed, probably the the godless world around us, so they're quite zealous as well. They want us to embrace their ideas. They accuse us of trying to shove stuff down people's throats.

They're the culprits. But the point is, man, they're they're out there, they're passionate, they're they're spreading their ideologies, they're preaching their messages. And it's all lies, it's all destructive, it's all ultimately going to destroy us.

Damn people, we've got the truth, we've got the gospel, we've got the good news. God, help us to have that kind of zeal and even greater than they do to impact the world while we have time. God bless you.

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