

Pastors Call to Action

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon emphasizes the heart of a preacher, the importance of humility, and the necessity of serving God and the church with authenticity and love.

Duration: 1:04:54

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:21, Acts 20:28-35

Topics: "Action"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of both feeding the flock of God and watching out for wolves. He uses the example of Paul, who tirelessly warned and taught the people for three years. The preacher highlights the need for a gospel-centered ministry and message, focusing on repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. He also encourages the listeners to prioritize their own spiritual growth and to not neglect their quiet time with God, emphasizing the significance of studying and applying the Bible in their lives.

Transcript

For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This message has been brought to you by Manichristian Fellowship, Ellensburg, Washington, Area Code 509-925-1167. Greetings again in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I'd like to open our Bibles to Acts chapter 20. Where we will be reading and looking this afternoon. I appreciated the words that were shared this morning about the laying on of hands.

Laying on of hands is an outward picture of what is happening in the spiritual realm. It is a church, it is other leaders who are acknowledging by laying their hands upon a brother that God's call is on him. It's a church saying, this is the brother that God is calling to lead this fellowship.

That's what the laying on of hands is. However, the laying on of hands is more, may I say, than just an outward picture. According to the Apostle Paul, and I believe this, that with the laying on of hands, God also gives gifts unto men.

Paul said that to Timothy, he said, stir up the gift that is in thee by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. So, I do believe that while it's true that our brother has been carrying many of the burdens and

responsibilities of an elder in his fellowship here. Though that is true, I do believe that God will give him something that he hasn't had before.

I believe that he will extend spiritual authority. I believe that God will give him gifts that he doesn't have now. I believe that God will give him a wisdom that he hasn't had up until this point.

I believe that. And it's been my own experience. I look back at my ordination, which is many, many years ago now, 1977.

I know that God put some things in me on that evening that I was ordained, that they are with me to this day. Gifts, which God has used in the ministry that he's called me to. God always supplies that which he calls us to do, Brother Jamie.

He always does. Now, we may sometimes get stretched and we may wonder if he's supplying all the things that we need. But that's only God allowing us to get down on our knees one more time and say, God, I can't do this.

I can't do this. But as you look back in process of time, I would have to say, God has supplied all my needs abundantly above what I would have asked for thought. That's the nature of God, the character of God to do that.

So we want to move this afternoon into the ordination message. And this message, it's for you, Brother Jamie. I know that we're all here and we're all going to listen to it.

And God will minister to our own hearts about it, but it is personally to you. If you're like other ministers, you'll go back and listen to it in the hard times. And God will remind you as you listen to it.

Yes, you did tell me that, Lord. You said it would be this way. You said this.

You know, you will go back and you will listen to it. And it will be an encouragement to you many times. The title of the message here this afternoon is, we're going to call it, The Heart of a Preacher.

Looking at the life of the Apostle Paul here in Acts chapter 20. Now, Acts chapter 20 is, we come upon a scene where this is the last time that Paul sees the elders, the overseers of the church at Ephesus. Seems like we've been in the church at Ephesus all weekend long.

We're in the church at Ephesus again. God did a mighty work there as he planted the church at Ephesus. And Paul stayed longer at that church than most of the other churches where he went.

He was there for two and a half years. That's a long time for a church planter to be in one place. But it seemed like that was God moving him to stay there.

And God, through the Apostle Paul, raised up a beautiful church there. The church at Ephesus was a powerful church. We often call it the heavenly church.

It's the only epistle that I know of that received no correction from the Apostle. He just had nothing but beautiful, heavenly, holy things to say to them. Well, from all of those things, I'm sure we can all agree that the heart of the elders of the church at Ephesus were drawn close together with the Apostle Paul.

And I believe there were several fellowships in the city of Ephesus. When Paul called for the elders of the church at Ephesus, he wasn't calling for one local church. By the time he was calling for those elders, there were several churches in the city of Ephesus.

And the elders from all of those churches gathered together and sat together with the Apostle Paul. And he is sharing his heart with them. And if I can just put you, transport you into that scene here this afternoon.

Paul is going to give his last words to these men. He probably isn't going to see them again. He senses that in his heart.

Many troublous things are ahead for him. He doesn't know if he's going to live through his visit to Jerusalem. So, this is a very important time.

Last words are important. And these are the last words that Paul gives to the elders at the church at Ephesus. We're just going to go down through the text here, Brother Jamie.

And as the years go by, you will learn this is a classic text for ordination. It is. What can I say? It's just packed full of instruction, inspiration, challenge to those who are being called into the ministry.

Reading from verse 17, From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know. Ye know.

And that word know there is not just a flippant little word. It's a deep word. You elders at Ephesus, you know.

From the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. Now in this little phrase, we begin to see something that the Apostle Paul was able to do that I have not been able to do yet in my ministry. But he throws his life right out in front of these men and just says, You know me, you know what I'm like, you know.

And he talks about himself. He begins by saying to these men, You remember when I came to Asia. You remember the way that I lived.

You know how I was among you. And he's laying his life out on the line again to these men and reminding them. You knew me.

You know how I lived when I was with you. And he uses a beautiful little phrase here. After he describes to them again and reminds them of how he lived when he was there with them.

He says, at all seasons, you will learn that the work of an elder is an all seasons work. That's just the way it is. You can't order it.

You can't say, wait, I've got to catch up. You can't say, I didn't have enough time to read my Bible this morning. I'll be back tomorrow.

You can't do that. It is an at all season ministry. And Paul beautifully begins his words of instruction to these elders along those lines.

And he has the credentials to say it. His life backed it up. His life backed it up.

At all seasons, serving the Lord. Serving the Lord. Even those words give us a little bit of insight into the life of the Apostle Paul.

The kind of man that he was. And the example that he was leaving to these men who were elders. Serving the Lord.

And I just want to balance some of the things that were said yesterday, Brother Jamie. And I want to remind you that you are not being called to serve the church by itself. You are being called to serve the Lord.

And your service to the Lord is to serve the church. And there's a difference between the two of those. Paul was serving the Lord.

He had God's witness upon his life. He had God attending to the things that he did. He was there serving the Lord.

And that is what you are to be doing. You are not being called to a life of busy activity, doing this for somebody, doing that for somebody, all by yourself. You are called to serve the Lord, Jamie.

And that service for the Lord has to do with people in this fellowship. And people in this community around you. Serving the Lord.

This speaks of a relationship. A relationship. It's a relationship between Jamie and God and people.

It's a threefold relationship. And I want to encourage you, and we'll say more about it as we look a little bit further here, but I want to encourage you that you keep that relationship threefold. It's a relationship between Jamie and God and people.

It's not just Jamie and people. And it's not just Jamie and God. It's Jamie and God and people.

That's the way it was with the Apostle Paul. Serving the Lord. Walk with God, Jamie.

It will gain you more credibility than anything you can do if you will walk with God. You will not have to worry about so many other things. God will attend to your words.

Many things have been said about authority and amen. I believe in it. God is giving you a positional authority.

But I want to encourage you, brother Jamie, your authority is spiritual authority. It is not positional. There is a mysterious authority that God puts upon a man who walks with Him.

That authority, it doesn't need any argument. It doesn't need to be spoken about. You never need to rife up your voice.

You never need to tell anybody that you have it. You have it because you walk with God. It's called spiritual authority.

Paul had it. It is the Spirit of God attending to your words, brother. Backing up what you say with the witness of His Spirit in the hearts of the people.

That's spiritual authority. It's a credibility and it's an authority that says, this man knows God, we better listen to what he's saying. At all seasons serving the Lord, Jamie.

At all seasons. And that will stretch you to your limit the time, I promise you. It will stretch you to your limits.

But notice one of the secrets of this at all seasons life of serving the Lord. With all humility. There it is.

With all humility of mind. Paul said, I am what I am by the grace of God. Paul was not just making a nice theological statement.

Many people make that statement. It's a right statement to make. It's a true statement.

Every one of us, whatever good there is in us, it is there because of the grace of God. But when Paul made that statement, he was not giving his theology. He was sharing the experience of his life.

And he was saying, I am what I am by the grace of God. There was one place where Paul said, according to the grace of God that worketh in me mightily. Beautiful word.

Mightily. Paul knew that what was happening through his life was not him at all. It was God.

He saw God for who he is. And he saw himself for who he was. And he took his place underneath God's authority.

And with humility of mind, he submitted himself to God. When you have that balance, work will get done and beautiful results. We sang the song sometime this weekend, just a channel full of blessing, a clean vessel in thy hand, with no power but as thou givest, notice this, graciously with each command.

And I've learned that is how God does it, brother Jamie. He will not fill your tank on Sunday and give you something to run on until next Sunday. Yet, he gives his grace graciously with each command.

To the man who is willing to open up his heart and look up dependently upon God as he walks his way through his life of ministry, that man will find God's grace sufficient for whatever the need is. There will be times when you will be so tired you don't know if you can get up and keep going and God will take you up and carry you. You will find yourself stretched to your limits at times and you wonder, how am I ever going to do it? That's when you will find out what a living God you have.

It is in those times when you are attached to your very limits, when in your weakness God makes you strong. That's how Paul served the Lord and he's giving his secrets here with all humility of mind. Not just a feeling of humility, but a humility of mind and there's a difference there.

In his own mind he understood God is who he is. I am who I am. Without God I can't do anything and I'm looking to God for my every need.

Pray much, Jamie, that your posture in the ministry will be a posture of humility. One with a heart that is bowed down before God. I like that beautiful verse.

I think it's in the book of 1 Peter where Peter says, Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. You will have many opportunities to practice that verse as you work in the ministry. When you are stretched to your limits and all you can do is just simply humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and guess

what? He will lift you up.

Paul goes on. I mean he's giving them a sermon but the sermon is his life. He's reminding him how he lived among them.

He goes on. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears. Many tears, Jamie.

Many tears. I know you know what that is but tears is not a little part of the ministry, brother. You have no tears? Pray for them.

You find yourself not weeping anymore? Get serious about it. Not a little part of the ministry. Tears will oil your hardest sermon and make it easy to hear.

Sweet tears. Wonderful tears. Life-changing tears.

Changing your life and changing the life of the one that you're going to speak to. Paul had a broken heart and there is an anointing upon a broken heart just like we said this morning. It is the secret of Paul's ministry.

He wept. He wept a lot. Very interesting to me as he was admonishing Timothy a little later in his life.

Not too much later but a little later in his life from here in Acts chapter 20. He said to Timothy, Timothy, I am mindful of your tears And I believe that Paul trained Timothy to carry on the work of planting churches after he was gone. Paul trained Timothy to extend his ministry of church planting to areas where he couldn't go.

Isn't it interesting? Paul was a man of many tears and Paul says of Timothy, I am mindful of your tears. Paul passed that on to the next generation of leaders that was underneath him. Beautiful tears.

I have written in my Bible in the book of Timothy sermons are eloquent. Tears are more eloquent. Don't ever forget that.

There are times when a minister has to say strong things. There are times when you have to get up and give a sermon that you would just as soon not give. There are times like that when you don't want to give the sermon that God is laying on your heart and you wrestle and you try to get around it and you try to get away from it but God will not let you get away from it.

When those sermons come I wait before God until my heart is broken over that which I need to give to the people. That will oil your soul. A man who weeps can say just about anything he needs to say.

You can say strong things if you have a broken heart. You can say things that are very revealing and maybe even could be easily taken offense of but you can say them if you have a broken heart. I like the example of Jeremiah.

They call him the weeping prophet. He had some very strong things to say and if you read Jeremiah without the tears you would say, boy, this guy is, whoa, he's really strong in the things that he said but we need to remember that while he was standing on the streets of Jerusalem speaking those strong words the tears were running down his face. It was him who said, oh, that my head were waters and my eyes were a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.

That was Jeremiah the prophet, the weeping prophet. Tears, brother Jamie. Another word here and that's the word temptation and I believe what Paul is speaking about there is the temptations of trials.

Paul had many trials. His whole life was a life of trials. He lived on the edge all the time.

He never knew what was coming next. He never knew when he was going to get stoned again. He never knew when he would be thrown in jail.

He never knew when in the middle of a sermon that he was preaching that somebody wouldn't walk through the door, grab him by the scruff of the neck and drag him out of there and throw him in prison again. Many temptations, many trials. Well, they also await you and I know that you've already had some of these but I just want to encourage you.

You plan on having more of them. Plan on having your heart crushed at times, brother Jamie, crushed. Paul said to Timothy, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

He was speaking in the context of the ministry. Plan on being misunderstood. Sometimes that happens.

It's no big deal. Don't take it personal. If there would be one word that I could give to you, Jamie, which would absolutely transform everything that you'll go through in your ministry, it's those simple words.

Don't take it personal. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness of this age. It's not people.

Don't take it personal. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You're going to suffer.

Your wife will suffer. Your children will also suffer. They will.

But if you view all those things the right way, you will translate every one of those sufferings into beautiful, teachable moments for your children and raise up a generation of servants of God through it. That's what you can do. Praise God for every trial.

Put on the mind of a soldier, Brother Jamie. You know, a soldier, a real soldier, he doesn't mind the suffering. He has the mind of a soldier.

He just knows that's the way it is. Soldiers live in a foxhole. Soldiers don't get to eat when they want to.

Soldiers eat stuff they don't want to eat. Soldiers are sweaty. They have lots of aches and pains.

Oh, but it doesn't matter. I'm a soldier. No big deal.

Soldiers. You find yourself getting on your knees and saying, Oh, God, I recognize my need. I need more of your grace.

I need power in my life. And you'll pray that prayer sincerely and God will bring trials into your life. You'll seek God for a message and God will give you a message to give to the people.

And then He'll take you through that message for two weeks in your own life before you're ready to get up and give it to the people. I don't want to make it sound real hard. I love it.

I love it. It's a great joy. But I think the reason why I love it is because I recognize that we're in a war and soldiers like a good fight.

We're not fighting people. We are fighting the enemy. And a good soldier likes a good fight.

God has a principle of exchanging trials for power. Don't forget it. Because it will happen in your life again and again and again.

I just want to encourage you. Allow them to break you, not to bitter you. You have the choice.

It can go either way. Notice also in verse 20. My, so much in one word.

Temptation. But notice in verse 20. Still giving his testimony.

Talking to these elders. Telling them, you know, you remember how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. That was his testimony.

I gave you what would help you. I didn't hold back the truth. I told you that which you needed to hear.

I didn't hold anything back. I want to encourage you that way, Jamie. Keep back nothing that is profitable.

Let that be your testimony here as the years go by that you kept back nothing that was profitable to the people. That was Paul's testimony. By the way, that's love.

I mean, that's love. I mean, what is love? If you know some beautiful principle in God's Word and you've tried it and proven it in your own life and found it to be a blessing to you. It's not love if you don't give it to somebody else.

If you don't tell them what wonderful things is going on in your life. Appear, young man. Keep back nothing, Jamie.

Keep back nothing. Speak the truth in love. If you will do that, you will gather a people who sense that you care for them and they will rejoice in it.

That has been my experience through the years. Speak the truth, speak it in love, speak it with a broken heart, mingle your tears in it and the people will love you. They will know that they are being loved.

They will sense your care for them. They will sense your honest desire to see them prosper in every area of their life. Hold back nothing.

And he goes on to say, Kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and taught you. I have written it by the side of my Bible here, show and tell Christianity. Show and tell.

Not just taught you, but I have showed you and I have taught you that which is profitable. I want to encourage you with that. It's true.

They would rather see a sermon than hear one any day. But when you put the seeing and you put the hearing together, you've got a winning combination. People grow fast.

People learn. People can grasp the truth of what you're saying very quickly. When they see you living it out in your life and they hear you saying it and then you go on down the road and they see you still living it

out and living it out and they see it prospering in your life, then you get up and say it again sometime in a sermon and they see you still living it out a little bit later and I tell you, it's a winning combination.

I remember when our church started many years ago, 21 years ago, we were the only family in the church that homeschooled. That was a whole new concept 21 years ago. Nobody homeschooled.

And I believed in homeschooling and I mean, I really believe in homeschooling. But you know, it was something new to the people and it was hard for some of them to understand and we didn't push it down anybody's throat. We just showed them.

And little by little, they saw the results. Now today, the whole church homeschools, I think, except two families. Interesting.

Show and tell, Jamie. Show and tell. That's what Paul did.

He showed so clearly, so explicitly, that he could gather them all together and look them all in the eye and say, you know how I lived when I was there. You know. Awesome testimony.

Show and tell Christianity. Then he goes on to describe to them, reminding them of the scope of his ministry. He was a show and tell Christian, publicly and house to house.

And your ministry will be in both. Do not make the mistake of thinking, my brother, that your ministry is to get up behind a pulpit and share the word of God only. Yes, it's right.

We need to do that. We need to feed the flock of God. But if all you do is stand and preach a sermon, and you never preach a sermon in anybody's home, you are missing a vital part of the ministry.

Paul was busy about the ministry, publicly and from house to house. That's beautiful. Sometimes, you won't get your first chance in a pulpit.

It will be in somebody's house. It will be in somebody's living room. It will be at somebody's place of business, listening to you as you stand and share with them the things that God has put on your heart to give to them.

They may not come to your church. You may not see them for six months, but yet you found yourself in somebody's house, sharing with them the word of God. It's so interesting to me, you know, some of the ministry that we have among the Hutterite people, you don't get to preach to them.

You don't get to stand in a pulpit and preach to them. You preach living room sermons in Hutterite colonies. You go in there to the living room.

You take your seat over here. Everybody comes filing in from every direction. They fill up every chair.

They cover the floor, and there they are, and they ask questions. And every question is a sermon. But you never stand up.

You never lift up your finger. You never say, Thus saith the Lord. You just simply sit there and answer questions all night long, one thing after another after another, from house to house, house to house, in the jail, in the hospital, in the nursing home, across the world.

Who knows where God will send you? And I also want us to notice in verse 21, Paul had a message. Paul's message. This is what he did publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks.

And note that, Brother Jamie. It is to the Jews and also to the Greeks. Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

That will change people's lives. Never get away from that, Jamie. It's repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the gospel, and that is the gospel which is the power of God on the salvation that changes people's lives. It's simple. It doesn't make any sense at times, but God has ordained that by the foolishness of preaching, souls get saved.

And Paul knew that. And though he was a very smart man, and he had all kinds of education, and he probably learned all the rules of rhetoric and public speaking and all those things, he went house to house and publicly, and the message never changed. The simple message of the gospel changes people's lives, Jamie.

It's not about you, and it's not about how you can say it, and it's not about how good you can say it, and it's not about how many different ways you can say it. It's about Jesus. When Jesus is lifted up, He draws all men unto Him, and men get born again, and their lives change because of the simplicity of belief in Jesus Christ.

That was Paul's message. Though he was probably one of the most educated men of his day, he humbled himself and gave the same simple message everywhere he went. And it changed people's lives everywhere he went.

Amen? And it still does today. Still does today. It's the same old story.

Don't ever learn so much that you get away from the same old simple story. And by the way, it works. With saint and sinner alike, it works.

I want to encourage you to have a gospel-centered ministry, a gospel-centered message, and a gospel-centered life, Jamie. Don't ever get away from that. Well, what's up ahead? What's up ahead? Paul didn't know what was up ahead for him, and I don't know what's up ahead for you.

Paul said in verse 22, And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit. That's a good way to do the work of the ministry. I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

Brothers and sisters, think about his life here. He doesn't know what's going to happen to him there. All he knows is he doesn't have any choice in the matter.

I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I could die there. I could lose my head there.

I could go to prison there. It may be that nothing happens there. I don't know what's going to happen to me.

All I know is I am bound in the Spirit to go. That's a good way to do the work of the ministry. Step out by faith.

There's a good chance you will suffer. There's a good chance you may go to jail. There's a good chance you may preach in hidden places that you never ever dreamed of, Jamie.

And also notice that nothing mattered to Paul. It doesn't matter. Oh, what does he say in verse 24? None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself.

I like that. Those are powerful words for a man to say who may lose his head in Jerusalem. None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself.

Nothing mattered to Paul. His heart was fixed as we clearly see in Philippians chapter 3, as we clearly see him speaking these words at the end of his life in 2 Timothy, I have finished my course, I have finished my ministry, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Nothing mattered to Paul.

Settle it tonight, this afternoon, Jamie. Fulfill the ministry that God has given you. Whatever that is, we don't know.

We know what it is right now. He's calling you to minister to a flock here, here in the Ellensburg area. But you have no idea what the ministry is that God has given you.

But do this. Settle it in your heart. You will fulfill the ministry that God has given you to do, no matter what.

That was Paul's testimony. That's all he lived for. All he wanted to do is live out the ministry that God had given to him.

All he wanted to do was apprehend that which he was apprehended for on the road to Damascus. That was the burden of his heart. That was the focus of his life.

That's what made his heart beat. That's what made him move forward. That's what made him go through all the sufferings that he went through.

I want to fulfill God's call on my life. That should be your heart. Nothing would sidetrack him from that.

No business, no dreams, no cows, no not even troubles would sidetrack him from those things. I want to fulfill the ministry that God has given for me. Now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and affliction abide me.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Look at those beautiful words. Praise God.

None of those things matter to him. He wanted to fulfill God's will. Notice also, the Holy Ghost witnesseth in his heart.

The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city. Paul listened to God. God talked to Paul, and Paul listened to God.

God talked to Paul, and Paul talked to God. And it was real. He knew the voice of the Spirit of God, so much so that he was warned ahead of time, when you go to the next city, afflictions wait for you there,

Paul.

They wait for you there. He went to Jerusalem bound in the Spirit. Paul did not go about with his own program.

God was clearly leading him all along the way. You wanted to be the same, Jamie. Sometimes you may need to take two or three days and get along with God and fast and pray till you hear that still, small voice speaking above all the other voices that may be coming your way.

But do it. Let your ministry be guided by the Spirit of God. God was clearly leading him.

And now, verse 25, Behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. Paul could say that word with confidence to those elders at Ephesus.

He was saying, My hands are clean. If you see some man that you meet on the street, whether it be somebody in the jail somewhere, wash your hands. Keep them clean from the blood of all men.

That's what Paul is referring to here. It's clearly revealed in the next verse. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

All the counsel of God, Jamie, is right here in my hands. All the counsel of God. Oh, how many times I've heard preachers say these words.

If I said all of that, all half my people would leave my church and therefore I won't say it. Don't go down that road, my brother. Declare all the counsel of God to the people.

Speak the truth. Speak it in love, but speak the truth. Don't hold it back.

Then you can say, I'm free from the blood of all men. Ah, there's so much we can learn here from Paul. I'll give you this admonition.

Preach all the word, Jamie. Watch over your own life. Watch over the flock and feed the flock.

All of these are found in this next verse where he said to those elders, Take heed therefore unto yourselves. That's the first thing. Take heed to yourself.

Keep your heart clear with God. Feed your own soul, my brother. Don't get so busy that you don't have time to feed your own soul.

Don't do it. Many men fall into that trap. So much to do.

So many places to go. So many people who want to talk to you. Don't neglect your quiet time.

Take heed to yourself. Make much of this book, Jamie. The Bible.

It's precious. What you do with the Bible will determine what God does with you. If you don't use it, God won't use you very much.

I promise you that. What you do with the Bible will determine what God does with you. Make much of the Bible.

Know this book. Tell people what you see. Step into the glory world and then come out and tell other people what you saw in there.

That's what a preacher is all about. And take heed to the flock. How do you take heed to the flock? You feed them.

You chase away the wolves. You watch over them. And you warn them.

All of these are here in this text. Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears. Look at the testimonial of Paul.

Night and day with tears for three years he warned them. Feed the flock of God, Jamie. There is a saying and it's a true one.

If you feed your sheep, they'll never run off somewhere else. And they don't. You give them good food and they'll come back for another meal every time.

But yes, while it's a responsibility of a shepherd to feed the flock, it's also a responsibility of the shepherd to watch for wolves. And watching for wolves takes courage. Watching for wolves takes grit.

Watching for wolves takes a fearless personality that times you may not feel like you're fearless, but it takes a fearless personality to chase away the wolves. I so well remember many years ago on a Sunday night, God kept me up half the night. I didn't know why, but I just couldn't go to sleep.

And God just kept warning me there's trouble coming, there's trouble coming. And I tried to sleep and I couldn't sleep. And I just kept getting this impression from God, there's trouble coming, there's trouble coming.

And I didn't know what it meant. I had no idea, but I went to church that Sunday morning with those words upon my heart, there's trouble coming, there's trouble coming. Only to realize that there was about 15 people in the assembly that morning and that was back in the days when we only had about 40 people ourselves.

15 people in the assembly that morning who came there with the purpose and intent of taking over the church and giving us a bunch of false doctrines and taking us down a road and leading us astray and all those things. But because God had warned me through the night, I knew what to do the next morning. And there are times when you need to do that where you just need to get a hold of the person who's leading that and say, I do not feel good about what you're doing and I want you to leave now.

Watch over them. Watch over them, Jamie. Especially little congregations.

When the congregation is small, people come wanting to sell their wares. They come looking for a place where they can preach. Keep watch over the flock.

And like Paul says here, warn them. Paul warned night and day with tears. He warned night and day with tears.

Ah, there are so many more things that we could say here. Paul comes into his conclusion of the words. He says, And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

And I would say to you, Jamie, this afternoon, I commend you to God who is able also to build you up and give you an inheritance. And then Paul says these challenging words. He says to these elders, I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel.

I would encourage you to follow his example. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my all necessities and to them that were with me. And I have showed you all things how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how that He said, It is more blessed to give than it is to receive.

And I want to tell you, Jamie, this afternoon, it is more blessed to give than it is to receive. I know that I have sobered this message with many illustrations of reality. I know that's true, but still I want to give this testimony.

It is my testimony. I love the ministry. I love the challenge of it.

I love the strain of it. I love the pain of it. I love the joys of it.

I love the thrill of it. And it is my testimony, it is more blessed to give than to receive. And through the years, though you find yourself giving and giving and giving and giving, God just rolls back on you so many blessings that you're not able to contain them.

And that becomes the fuel of the fire inside of your heart. And lastly, Paul prayed with them, this scene I leave as a challenge for you, brother Jamie, to so build a relationship with the brothers and sisters here that you have this kind of a relationship when it's time to leave, if God ever lets you leave. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

And they all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him under the ship. As we look at the context of all that Paul said here, it's very evident why they fell on his neck and wept.

It's very evident. He laid down his life for them. He literally laid his life down for them for three years, night and day.

No wonder, no wonder they fell on his neck and kissed him and wept when he left. I don't know if you'll ever leave the church here, but I want to encourage you. It would be God's heart that when you leave, they fall on your neck and weep because they will say, that man loved us.

That man. Without question. I want to give you a charge and then we'll have the laying on of hands, Brother Jamie.

Just explain a little bit what a charge is. Paul used those words to Timothy in the book of 2 Timothy. If you remember, he said, I charge you before God.

That word charge is a strong word. It means an authoritative command. We've spoken a lot about authority.

Brother Ken mentioned authority again here this evening. We've told the people to be under your authority. I'm giving you a charge which is a command, an authoritative command.

I charge you before God, Brother Jamie, to bear up under the work of the ministry here. I charge you before God, Brother Jamie, to watch over this flock and build the church of God with your energies, with your spiritual energy. I charge you before God, Brother Jamie, take care of your wife and your children.

Though you are called to the ministry here, though there will be many demands upon you, I give you an authoritative command before God and His witnesses. Take care of your wife and your family. I charge you to do that.

And I charge you before God, to yield yourself to God in such a way that He will use you and those that are here with you to build a church in Ellensburg, Washington. I give you that charge this afternoon. All right.

We're going to have the laying on of hands at this time. Brother Kenneth, you can come. Jamie, we're going to ask you to come.

Sister Stacey, we're going to ask you to come also. This is not a... You can just... Both of you kneel right here. The other way around.

Yeah, that's... Kneel there. If you want to be with your mom, you can be here next to your mom. Brothers and sisters, you can just rise to your feet so you can see clearly as we give our brother a charge and then we'll have a prayer with the laying on of hands.

I want to encourage you. I know that many of you are here because you love Brother Jamie, Sister Stacey. I want to encourage you to enter into the prayers that we pray.

And you brothers and sisters here at the fellowship in Ellensburg, I urge you to enter into the prayers that we pray because it's not just our prayers. It's you acknowledging God's call on your brother. It's you acknowledging that.

So, my brother Jamie, you've been through the weekend. You've heard lots of words. I'm sure you're overwhelmed.

But yet, I know you're trusting the grace of God. Are you willing to receive this charge that is given to you? And it's not from me. It's out of the word of God.

You know that. I haven't given you anything that God doesn't give in the word. Are you willing to take that charge? And my sister, you're willing to stand beside your husband in the work of the ministry.

God, our Father, we lay our hands upon our brother. In Jesus' name, God. And we're trusting you, God, that you'll lay your hands upon him while we lay our hands upon him.

Amen. You can't do it, Lord. It's too much for you.

But it's not too much for you, Lord. I pray in Jesus' name, lay your hands upon our brother Jamie, God. I pray in Jesus' name, give this brother the things that he needs.

Put gifts in him, God. Please, Lord, put gifts in this man, Lord. Put gifts that he doesn't have now.

Give him wisdom that he's never had before, God. We pray that you'll fill him with the Holy Ghost and power, Lord, from this day forward in a measure that he has never known before, God. Give him a watchful eye.

In his heart, Lord, a watchful eye. Use him, Lord. You know the need.

You know the need for a testimony in this community, God. We pray. Raise our brother up again and use him, Father.

We commit him into your care, dear God. You will use this man, Jamie Gordon, to build a church, Lord, along with the brothers and sisters here, to build a church here, Lord, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against. I pray this in Jesus' name.

Our loving God and Father, we come to you in the precious name of the Lord Jesus. We lay our hands upon our brother in the name of the Lord Jesus, God. We pray, Lord, that you also would lay your hand upon him, that you would guide him with your eyes, that you would give him your heart, that you would fill him with your Holy Spirit, God, that you would pour your love and your grace and your mercy out through him, Lord, that you would come and live in him in such a mighty way, God, that all that see is not Jamie Gordon, their follower.

Give him all the power that he needs. Give him all the love that he needs, Lord. They are a great and mighty people, God.

What man can lead them except that you come and fill him with your own self, Lord? Lord, I praise you. Encourage him, follow him, Lord, I praise you. God, bring forth much fruit, little vine that you plant for your kingdom.

God, we know not easily what you've called her to, God, to stand beside her, to be the mother, to these boys, to this family, Father. We pray your grace upon our sister also, God, grace she's never known before, Father. God, we commit her into your care, along with her dear husband and all the children, God.

We pray all these prayers, all of us pray in Jesus Christ.

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