

II Timothy - Part 3 - Guard the Gospel

by John Stott

The sermon emphasizes the importance of guarding and preaching the gospel, despite personal limitations, and the need for personal discipline in the Christian life.

Duration: 45:30

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:13

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, Reverend John R. discusses the importance of actively applying ourselves in self-discipline to cooperate with the grace of God. He emphasizes the need to fan the inner flame into flame in order to become the men and women God wants us to be. The sermon then focuses on the responsibility of Timothy towards the truth of the gospel. Paul urges Timothy not to be ashamed and to take his share of suffering, as preaching the gospel may lead to opposition and persecution. Timothy is also called to guard, suffer for, continue in, and preach the gospel, as emphasized in different chapters of 2 Timothy.

Transcript

This is the first in a series of four Bible studies in 2nd Timothy, given by the Reverend John R. W. Stott at the 8th InterVarsity Missionary Convention, held in the Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, December 1967. So from our Bible set the second letter of Paul to Timothy. We shall take a chapter a morning, and because they're a bit long, I shall not read them to you every morning, but hope very much that every member of the convention will have read the chapter before we come.

And before we look at 2nd Timothy chapter 1, there are four introductory points about the letter that I think it's necessary for me to make. First, this is a genuine letter of Paul to Timothy. The Apostle Paul was its author, and Timothy was its recipient.

And the arguments that have been advanced against the Pauline authorship, historical, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, and linguistic arguments, are not sufficient to overthrow the evidence, both internal and external, which authenticates it as a genuinely Pauline epistle. That's number one. It's a genuine letter of Paul to Timothy.

Two, the Paul who wrote it was a prisoner in Rome, not now in the comparative freedom and comfort of his own hired house, in which the book of Acts takes leave of him, and from which he seems to have been

set free, as indeed he expected, but rather, as Hendrickson puts it in his commentary, in some dismal underground dungeon with a hole in the ceiling for both light and air, perhaps in the Mamertine prison in Rome, as tradition has suggested, a prison to which a second arrest has brought him, and from which Paul escaped only by death. So Paul wrote this, his last letter that has survived to us, he wrote this letter under the shadow of an imminent execution. And although it is a personal communication of Paul to Timothy, it is also, and consciously so, Paul's last will and testament to the Christian church.

So first, it's a genuine letter of Paul to Timothy, and second, the Paul who wrote it was a prisoner in Rome. Thirdly, the Timothy to whom this letter is addressed, is being thrust into a position of responsible Christian leadership far beyond his natural capacities. For over 15 years, Timothy has been Paul's missionary companion and a trusted apostolic delegate.

And now, as Paul is writing, he is the accepted leader of the church in Ephesus. But still heavier responsibilities are going to fall upon him when the apostles' anticipated martyrdom takes place. But yet, humanly speaking, Timothy was utterly unfit for the responsibilities of becoming his way, for these reasons.

A. He was still comparatively young. We don't know his precise age, but in Paul's first letter to him, he tells him that no man is to despise his youth. And in this letter that we're studying, Paul tells him to shun youthful passions.

So he is still a comparatively young man. B. He is prone to sickness. In the first letter to Timothy, the apostle refers to his frequent ailments and recommends him, for his poor stomach's sake, to exchange water for a little wine.

C. He is timid by temperament. Timid Timothy. He seems to have been naturally shy.

If he'd lived today, I have no doubt that we should have called him an introvert. He shrank from difficult tasks, so that when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he had to say, when Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, and let no man despise him. Several times in this letter, Paul tells him not to be ashamed, but to take his share of suffering, because God has not given us a spirit of cowardice.

And in Patrick Fairbairn's words, Timothy was a man disposed rather to lean than to lead. Now this was Timothy, young in years, frail in physique, retiring in disposition, who nevertheless was called to exacting responsibilities in the service of Jesus Christ. And I believe there are thousands of men and women like that here today.

Young, weak, and shy. No, not young, strong, and free, as we sing in one of the hymns, but young, weak, and shy. And if you feel like that, then this epistle is addressed to you.

God is calling you to responsibilities far beyond your natural capacities. Then you're just like Timothy. And that brings me to the fourth introductory point, which is this, that Paul's preoccupation in writing to Timothy is with the gospel, the deposit of truth which has been revealed and committed to the apostle Paul by God.

You see, Paul was a prisoner now, but he was going to be a martyr quite soon. Paul's days of gospel preaching were over. Then what will happen to the gospel when Paul is dead? That is the question that is dominating his mind throughout this letter, and it is to this vital question that Paul addresses himself.

He reminds Timothy that the gospel is now committed to him. Paul is finished, he's on his deathbed, and Timothy has now got to take over responsibility. It's Timothy's turn to assume responsibility, to carry on the torch of the gospel that is about to drop from the apostle's hand.

And in each of these four chapters, the apostle Paul seems to emphasize a different aspect of Timothy's responsibility. In chapter one, he is to guard it, to protect it pure and undefiled. In chapter two, he is to suffer for it.

In chapter three, he is to continue in it, to abide in it, and not to deflect from it to the right hand or to the left. And in chapter four, he is to preach it, to make it known. So after that introduction, we come to chapter one, the charge to God, the gospel.

But before we come to this actual subject, which begins with verse eight, there is an introductory paragraph, the first seven verses, in which in a very vivid way, both characters, Paul and Timothy, the writer and the recipient, are introduced to us. And in particular, they tell us something of how each of these two men came to be what he was. These verses throw light on the providence of God, on how God had fashioned Paul and Timothy to be the kind of men he wanted them to be.

So we'll begin with Paul. Verse one, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. Paul claimed to be an apostle of Christ, and we need to consider that word.

I'm sure you will remember how at the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus chose 12 men out of the wider group of his disciples, and he himself named them apostles. He appointed them to be with him. He deliberately gave them unrivaled opportunities to hear his words and to see his works, in order that they might be unique witnesses to Christ of all they had seen and heard.

And Jesus promised them a special, extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to remind them of his teaching, to teach them more, and to lead them into all the truth which it was the purpose of God to reveal to them. And to this select apostolic circle, Paul was later added, when Jesus apprehended him, laid hold of him, and commissioned him as an apostle on the Damascus road. And Paul could never forget it.

Here he is, humiliated by men, in a dungeon in Rome, awaiting the pleasure of the emperor. And yet, humiliated by men, he is confident that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. Then he tells us two things about his apostleship, its origin and its object.

Its origin was the will of God. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. He uses identical words in two other epistles, and in nine out of thirteen of his letters, he refers either to the will of God, or to the call of God, or to the command of God, by which he had become an apostle.

Now be clear about this. It was the sustained conviction of Paul, from the beginning to the end of his ministry, of his apostolic career, that he was neither appointed by the church, nor by any man or men, nor that he was self-appointed, but that his apostleship originated in the eternal will and historical call of Almighty God through Jesus Christ. That was the origin of his apostleship, the will of God.

Now the object of his apostleship, the reason why he had been appointed an apostle, was the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. In other words, the great object of his apostleship was to formulate and to preach the gospel, the good news to dying sinners that God has promised them life in Jesus Christ. And that is the gospel.

The gospel offers life, true life, real life, eternal life, both here and hereafter. And the gospel declares that the only place in which this true life is to be found is in Jesus Christ. And the gospel promises life to every man and woman who is in Christ Jesus.

So that's how Paul introduces himself. He's an apostle of Jesus Christ, his apostleship originating in the will of God and issuing in a proclamation of the gospel of God, which is the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. Now we move from Paul to Timothy.

To Timothy, my beloved child, so called because Paul had led him to Christ and become his father through the gospel. And to him Paul sends his customary greeting, except that he adds mercy, grace, mercy, and peace. Grace is shown to the worthless, the undeserving.

Mercy is shown to the helpless, who cannot save themselves, and peace to the restless. And God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together constitute the one source from which flows this threefold stream of grace and mercy and peace. Then there follows in verses three to seven a very personal paragraph in which the apostle expresses his deep thanksgiving to God for Timothy.

Now I want to ask you to notice this very carefully. Paul thanks God for Timothy, and the only reason he can thank God for Timothy is that he's quite sure that it is God who has made Timothy what he is. That's why he thanks God for him.

Now Timothy was not an apostle like Paul, but Timothy was a Christian, and he was a missionary or minister, and he was an apostolic delegate. And God had been at work in Timothy to make him what he was. And I find it fascinating that in this next paragraph, directly or indirectly, Paul mentions four major influences which had contributed to the shaping and the making of Timothy.

A. His parental upbringing. We skip to verse five for a moment. I am reminded of your sincere faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.

Now this reference to mother and grandmother was right, because every man and woman to a great extent is the product of his inheritance. There is no doubt that the most formative influence upon every one of us is our parentage and our home. And the Bible taught it long before modern psychology discovered it.

And that is the reason why good biographies never begin with their subject but with his parents, and probably with his grandparents as well. Now Timothy had a godly home. We know from Acts 16 verse 1 that his father was a Greek and presumably an unbeliever, but his mother Eunice was a believing Jewess who later became a Christian.

And before her, his grandmother Lois had also been converted. And these women, before Timothy's conversion, had instructed him out of the Old Testament, so that we read in chapter 3 verse 15, from childhood Timothy had been acquainted with the sacred scriptures. Now this was the first influence upon Timothy, his parental upbringing, a mother and a grandmother who were sincere believers and who taught him out of the scriptures since his childhood.

And anybody here who has been born and bred in a Christian home has received from God a blessing beyond price. B, the second influence on Timothy was a spiritual friendship, because after our parents it is our friends who influence us most, especially if our friends are also our teachers. And Timothy had in the Apostle Paul an outstanding teacher-friend.

We've already seen that Paul was Timothy's father through the gospel, in that he'd led him to Christ. But having led him to Christ, Paul did not desert, forget, or abandon him, as we so often do. No, he constantly remembered him.

Three times in this paragraph he says, I remember you constantly in my prayers, I remember your tears, I remember your sincere faith. Timothy, I've never forgotten you. So Paul took Timothy with him on his missionary journeys.

When they parted, Timothy could not restrain his tears. And mindful of his tears, Timothy longed, as Bishop Mole in his commentary puts it, with a homesick yearning, night and day, to see him, that he might be filled with joy. And until Paul could see Timothy again, he prayed for him unceasingly.

And from time to time, he wrote him letters of counsel and of encouragement, like this one which we're studying in these days. Now such a Christian friendship, including the companionship and the prayers and the letters, which a Christian friendship will involve, did not fail to have a powerful, moulding influence upon Timothy, strengthening and sustaining him in his Christian life and service. Parental upbringing, spiritual friendship, see, a special endowment.

For Paul now turns from the indirect means that God had employed to shape Timothy's Christian character, that is his parents and his friends, to a direct gift that God had given him. Verse 6, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands. Now what this divine gift was, we don't know for certain, for the simple reason that we are not told.

Nevertheless, we can make tentative guesses. It is clear from this verse and from 1 Timothy 4, verse 14, that whatever this gift was, it was given to Timothy when Paul and the elders laid their hands on him, that is to say, at what we would call his ordination. It was therefore an ordination gift, a gift related to the ministry to which he was set apart.

It may have been the ministry itself, which is a great gift of God, as some commentators think, or it may have been the gift of an evangelist, to which Paul refers later in this epistle. Or, since he proceeds at once to refer in verse 7 to the Holy Spirit, then it may be some special endowment, some special anointing of the Holy Spirit at his ordination to equip him for the ministry to which God had called him. Perhaps we can best sum it up in Alfred Plummer's words, it was the authority and the power to be a minister of Jesus Christ.

So we've learned that a man is not only what he owes to his parents, his friends, and his teachers, but a man is what God has made him by calling him to some particular ministry, and by endowing him with appropriate natural and spiritual gifts. D, the fourth influence on Timothy, is personal discipline. For all God's gifts, natural and spiritual, need to be developed and used by us.

So Paul tells Timothy here not to neglect his gift, but rather to kindle it. And the Greek verb *anadzepurio* is used of a fire. It likens this gift of God in Timothy to a fire.

And the Greek verb contains a prefix which can mean either to stir up the fire or to rekindle it if it has died down. This doesn't necessarily mean that Timothy had let the fire die down and must now fan the dying embers into a flame again. It could equally well be an exhortation to Timothy to continue fanning it.

J.B. Phillips, stir up that inner fire. Or Abbott Smith, keep it in full flame, presumably by exercising the gift faithfully and by waiting upon God in prayer for its constant renewal. And having issued this appeal to stir

up the inner fire, Paul goes on immediately to give him a ground for doing so.

Verse seven, because God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, so you don't need to be afraid of exercising your ministry, but a spirit of power in which to exercise your ministry and of love in order to channel your gift into right channels so that you don't use it for self-advertisement or self-assertion or vainglory, but in loving ministry to other people, and of self-control so that you may use your gift with seemly reverence and restraint. Now so far, in these first seven verses, we have studied what these two men, Paul and Timothy, had become. We've considered their making, what made them what they were.

Paul claims he was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, but he says in another place that God's grace that was given to him was not in vain because he labored as an apostle. Similarly, a whole complex of factors had made Timothy what he was. Godly upbringing, Paul's friendship, God's gift to him, and also his personal self-discipline.

Now my friends, I want to urge upon you, whoever you may be, that it is exactly the same with you and me today. And to my mind, as I've meditated on these verses, the most striking lesson that we can learn from them is the combination in both Paul and Timothy of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Paul could say, by the grace of God I am what I am, and he could add, I labored.

Again, Timothy, his mother and grandmother taught him out of the scriptures. Paul befriended him, prayed for him, wrote to him, exhorted him. God gave him a special gift, but still Timothy had to stir up the gift that was within him by his own self-discipline.

So with us, however much or however little we may have received from God, either directly in natural and spiritual endowments or indirectly through our parents, friends, and teachers, we must still apply ourselves in active self-discipline to cooperate with the grace of God and to fan the inner fire into flame if you and I will ever become the men and women God wants us to be. And now we come to verses 8 to the end, in which Paul turns from the complex factors that had contributed to the making of Timothy to the truth of the gospel and Timothy's responsibility towards it. And he begins, verse 8, don't be ashamed, but take your share of suffering, a theme that we'll revert to several times.

You may be young, frail, timid. You may shrink from the tasks to which God is calling you, but God has molded you and gifted you for your ministry now. Don't be ashamed, and don't be afraid to exercise it.

And he says, don't be afraid of Christ, of bearing witness to Christ. Don't be afraid of me, his prisoner. Many were, many turned away from Paul when he was arrested, but Paul says to Timothy, don't be afraid of me.

It's possible not to be afraid of Christ, but to be afraid or ashamed of the people of Christ. It's possible to be a Christian on the campus and not want to associate with the intervarsity group and chapter, because you're ashamed of them. And Paul says, don't be ashamed of me, don't be ashamed of Christ, don't be ashamed of me, and don't be ashamed of the gospel.

These are the three things we must never be ashamed of. And this temptation is strong. Every one of us knows it.

Otherwise Jesus would never have warned us. If any man is ashamed of me and of my words, in this generation of him also will the Son of Man be ashamed. Now after that introductory exhortation not to be ashamed, Paul enlarges on the gospel, the gospel that is committed to Timothy, the gospel of which he is

not to be ashamed and for which he's got to suffer.

And Paul first tells us what it is in verses 9 and 10, and then in verses 11 to 14 he outlines our responsibility in relation to it. First God's gospel, and then our duty vis-à-vis the gospel. Well what's the gospel? End of verse 8, take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God who saved us.

Exactly. It is impossible to speak of the gospel without speaking of salvation in the same breath, because the gospel is good news of salvation. Have we not been thinking of this at Christmas? I bring you good news of a great joy that unto you is born a Savior.

And what does Paul tell us about salvation in these verses? Well three things. A. The character of salvation, what it is. What is salvation? I have to tell you it is more than forgiveness of sins.

For the God who saved us simultaneously, verse 9, called us with a holy calling. And the holy calling is an integral part of the plan of salvation. Salvation denotes that comprehensive purpose of God by which he justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies his people.

First pardoning their offenses and accepting them as righteous in his sight through Christ, which is justification. Then progressively transforming them by the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ, which is sanctification. Until finally they become like Christ in heaven when they see him as he is, which is glorification.

And I beg you do not minimize the greatness of our great salvation. The gospel is bigger, bigger than most of our minds have taken in. It is the transformation of our whole personality, including on the resurrection morning, our bodies into the body of glory that Jesus Christ is wearing.

This is salvation, a great thing. Its character, be its source. Where does it come from? End of verse 9. Not in virtue of our own works, but in virtue of his purpose and the grace that he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago.

That is, if you want to trace the river of salvation to its source, you've got to look right back beyond time to a past eternity. J.B. Phillips, *Before Time Began*, New English Bible, *From All Eternity*. And before eternal ages, before history and time started, the apostle says that there was a purpose of God and a grace of God that he actually gave us in Christ Jesus.

He gave it to us before we existed. He gave it to us before history began. And therefore it is quite plain that the source of salvation is not our own works.

Because the father gave us his grace in Christ before we did any good works, before we were born and could do any good works. Indeed before history, before time in eternity. Now the doctrine of election is difficult to our finite minds.

But the doctrine of election is incontrovertibly a biblical doctrine. And it emphasizes that salvation is due to God's grace, not man's merit. It is due not to our good works performed in time, but to God's purpose of grace conceived in eternity.

And there is nothing that engenders gratitude and humility and excludes all boasting in the presence of God like the doctrine of election. And that brings me see to the third thing about salvation taught here, which is the ground of salvation on what it rests. And this is the historical work of Christ at his appearing.

Verse 10, that this grace that was given us in Christ Jesus ages ago, he has now manifested historically in time through the appearing of our savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is the historical outworking through the coming, the death and the resurrection of Christ, of the eternal purpose of grace that God has given us in Christ Jesus. And let us meditate for a moment or two on this triumphant affirmation that Christ abolished death.

I tell you if Christians believed that and lived it out in the world, the world would sit up and take notice. The world is afraid of death. You can tell a religion almost better than in any other way when you see its attitude to death.

And only when you see Christian people triumphant in the face of death, do you see Christianity as it really is. For death summarizes our human predicament as the result of sin. Death is the wages of sin.

Death is the grim penalty of sin. Physical death, which is the separation of the soul from the body. Spiritual death, which is the separation of the soul from God.

And eternal death, which is the separation of both soul and body from God in hell forever. And all these three deaths of which the Bible speaks are due to sin. They are sin's just reward.

But Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Now the Greek verb for abolish does not mean that he has eliminated it as we know from everyday experience. Sinners are still dead in trespasses and sins until they're born again.

All human beings die physically. And there are many who are going to die alas the second death. But what is triumphantly asserted here is that Christ has defeated death.

He has overthrown it. New English Bible, he has broken the power of death. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, death is like a scorpion whose sting has been drawn.

It's still alive, but it's harmless because its sting has been drawn. Or death is like a conqueror whose power has been overthrown. And Paul can shout triumphantly, oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory? Death is defeated.

Physical death is only a trivial episode in the life of a Christian, the gateway to fullness and newness of life. When he comes to Jesus Christ in penitence and faith, he's given eternal life and death is, passes away. And on the last day, this life will be consummated in heaven.

And it's in these ways that Jesus Christ has abolished death. And through the gospel, he's brought life and immortality to light. This is the revelation of the gospel.

This is what has been brought to light in the gospel. The gospel is the promise of life in Christ Jesus, with death defeated. Such then is the salvation that is offered us in the gospel.

Its character is man's transformation into the holiness of Christ. Its source is God's eternal purpose of grace. Its ground is Christ's historical appearing and abolition of death.

Now in the last few moments that we have, we turn from God's gospel to our duty in relation to it. Of course our first duty, that Paul doesn't mention here, but takes for granted, is that we must embrace it and believe it. But Timothy had already done that.

And so instead of that, he gives him in the next verses, three duties. And the first is to communicate it. Verse 11.

For this gospel, I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher. Now the apostles formulated the gospel. And there are no apostles of Jesus Christ today.

The gospel was formulated by them and has now been bequeathed by the apostles to the church. And if you want to find it in its definitive form, you have to look to the New Testament. And this apostolic New Testament faith is regulative for the church in every place and in every age.

There is no other gospel, there can be no new gospel, than what the apostles were given and formulated and is preserved in New Testament scripture. But although there are no apostles of Christ today, there are preachers and teachers today, who give themselves to the work of expounding and proclaiming and communicating the gospel. And that is our first duty to the to make it known.

And our second is to suffer for it. Verse 12. And therefore, that is because I'm an apostle and a preacher and a teacher of the gospel, and therefore I suffer as I do.

But I'm not ashamed, as Paul had told Timothy, to suffer and not to be ashamed. Now have you asked yourself ever, why is it that people suffer for the gospel? Why do men hate the gospel and oppose the gospel? And I believe the answer very simply is this. That in the gospel, or according to the gospel, God saves sinners in virtue of his own purpose and grace, and not in virtue of their good works.

It is the freeness of the gospel which offends. And the natural man who is not a Christian hates to have to admit the gravity of his sin and guilt. He hates to have to admit his helplessness to save himself, the indispensable necessity of God's grace through Christ's sin-bearing death to save him, and therefore his inescapable indebtedness to the cross.

The natural man hates it. I remember when I was myself a student at Cambridge University, trying to explain to a fellow student that the good news of Christ was free. Salvation is a free gift.

And that he could not earn it and he could not deserve it. And I shall never forget how as he sat in a chair in my room there at Trinity College Cambridge, he shouted at the top of his voice three times, horrible, horrible, horrible. And I thank God for that experience.

It was a naked awareness that I was given of the hatred of the human heart for the gospel. And because men hate the gospel, because it humbles them, they will oppose and persecute those who preach it. And every preacher knows the temptation to trim the gospel and to leave out the unpopular and the unpalatable parts of the gospel, so that he will not have to suffer for it.

But we are called to communicate the gospel and we are called to suffer for the gospel. And lastly, to guard the gospel. Verses 13 and 14.

We'll skip 12 for a moment. 13. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you've heard from me.

There is Timothy, you have received sound words, the gospel from me. You've heard it in a pattern or a prototype. Now follow this and hold on to it.

Again, verse 14. Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you. And the Greek word is the deposit.

The gospel is a deposit. It is a treasure that has been entrusted to us and we've got to guard it. And the Greek verb *philosine*, for to guard, is a military word.

It is used of guarding a palace to prevent it from being broken into. It's used of guarding possessions against their being stolen. It's used of guarding a prisoner to prevent his escape.

And it's used of the gospel. We must not allow the gospel to be lost. We must not allow it to be damaged.

We are called to guard it. It's a precious treasure. And Timothy had to do this because, as the last verses go on to say, all Asia had turned away from Paul and his gospel.

Onesiphorus was a bright exception to the general rule. And as all Asia was apostate, turning away from Paul, Paul says, oh Timothy, don't you turn away as well. Guard the deposit that has been entrusted to you.

And so I finish. The gospel is good news of salvation, promised from eternity, secured and purchased by Jesus Christ, offered to faith. First we must communicate it, spread it abroad.

Second, if we do so faithfully, we shall undoubtedly suffer for it. And when we suffer for it, we shall be tempted to trim it and to eliminate the elements that provoke opposition. So then thirdly, and above all, we must guard it, keeping it pure, whatever the cost, against every possible corruption.

Guard it faithfully, spread it actively, suffer for it bravely. And that is our threefold duty vis-a-vis the gospel. Shall we pray? Father we thank thee for the hundreds and thousands of Timothys, who in their weakness have been made strong, in their timidity have been made bold, and in their immaturity have been made mature by thy Holy Spirit through thy word, and who have handed on that precious truth, and by it the life of our risen Lord, so that we are here today.

Grant to us also thy grace, that we may be faithful in our day. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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