

Things Applicable for God's Servants

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of godliness and the sufficiency of scripture for all good works, highlighting the need for missionaries and Christians to focus on disciplining themselves for the purpose of godliness and living a life that is dedicated to the will of God.

Duration: 1:19:00

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:1

Topics: "Servanthood", "The Great Commission", "Godliness"

Description

Paul Washer emphasizes the vital qualities and responsibilities of God's servants, urging them to be dedicated to sound doctrine, godliness, and the Great Commission. He encourages believers to be part of a sincere church community, to grow in their faith through the Word, and to be examples of Christ-like conduct in their lives. Washer highlights the importance of perseverance in faith and teaching, reminding that true conversion is evidenced by a life that continues in faithfulness. He calls for a commitment to prayer, scripture, and mutual accountability within the body of Christ, stressing that godliness is essential for effective ministry. Ultimately, he challenges listeners to invest their lives in eternal matters, ensuring their progress in faith is evident to all.

Transcript

I just wanted to share once again what a privilege it is for me to be here. Well, last night I was here until about, I don't know, 11 o'clock. And I think I'm getting too old for those kind of things.

But I talk to a lot of people that are really kind of looking for a church, things like that. You know, I'm sure there are some good churches in this area. But I've talked to the men here and know something about them.

And I really find a like spirit here. A group of men who, one of the best things I can say about somebody is an Israelite in whom there is no guile. Someone who just sincerely wants to follow Christ.

And I see that here. And I really want to recommend to the young people, if you're not in a strong body, you need to be. When I mean a strong body, I don't mean a perfect body.

But a sincere one. One that's honestly seeking to follow Christ. I've been following Christ for quite a number of years now.

It's still just, well, He never fails. But my way has been a way of bumbling and stumbling and grasping. I really want to encourage you to get in a good church.

To be dedicated. A place where the word's going to be preached. It doesn't have to be exciting.

It doesn't have to be this magnificent eloquence. But the word of God preached. Because you don't grow on eloquence, you grow on truth.

In a place where people are concerned about the world. Concerned about the world. Another thing that I'd like to say is I have heard some phenomenal, thus far, missionary testimonies.

Wow, I've sat back there every night not knowing whether to grin or to cry. God is so good. And He's doing so much through so many people.

And people so different from one another. With gifts so different from one another. You know, I was listening to the story about the young man, Andrew, who the Lord took home.

And it's amazing. I was reading, I finished up this morning, or this afternoon, Andrew Bonner's work on Robert Murray McShane. Really recommend that to you.

Just a little bitty book. You know, it's so amazing. God is so sovereign.

There's no coincidences. But Bonner asked the question towards right at the end of the book. He asked the question, why was McShane taken at such a young age? As well as a lot of young men at that time who were so godly.

McShane died at 29. And this is what he said. God chooses to pluck some when their bloom is full.

When their bloom is new. You know, some of us, well, we flowered a long time ago. And by the time we get to heaven, we're going to look like a bunch of old vines, maybe.

But He chooses to pick some when just recently their bloom has exploded into color. Another thing I remember one time, someone asked a preacher. Kind of, not like what was said tonight, but sort of with an embittered spirit.

Someone asked a preacher, where was God when my son died? And the preacher said, oh, dear soul. God was exactly where he was when his son died on the throne. On the throne.

And that brings great comfort to me. Some people get very angry about a sovereign God. I wouldn't be sane without one.

I wouldn't be sane without one. Well, I want us to go back to First Timothy tonight and then we're going to go on to something else. And then tomorrow night, please, if you can come back, we are going to start on a full push.

For the Great Commission. For the Great Commission. Because you see, I can't tell you with the authority of God or the authority of the word of God.

What part you should play in the Great Commission. I cannot tell you that God has ordained and decreed for you to be a missionary. But I can tell you this.

God has ordained, decreed and commanded you be just as involved in the Great Commission as those who do go. I can't tell you that. The Great Commission.

The Great Command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.

And I doubt the validity of your confession with regard to obedience to those two commandments. If you're not concerned about the Great Commission. About souls perishing without the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's go to First Timothy, chapter four. We'll just read our text again, starting in verse one. But the spirit explicitly says that in the latter times, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons by means of the hypocrisy of liars, seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.

Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. For it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following, but have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women on the purpose. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance for it is for this we labor and strive because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers, prescribe and teach these things. Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe until I come. Give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance, with the laying on of hands by the Presbytery. Take pains with these things, be absorbed in them so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching.

Preserve, persevere in these things. For as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. Let's pray.

Father. Father, I praise you. I worship you.

I adore you. Your steadfast love, oh, Lord, extends to the heavens and your faithfulness to the clouds. You are a great God and a great king above all gods.

Your name is a strong tower and the righteous man runs into it and is safe. Lord, I praise you. I praise you.

I worship you. Honor and glory. Wealth and riches, fame and honor belong to you.

Glory ascribe to you. Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. Father.

Pour out your spirit on us. Honor your son. By making us worthy servants.

That we may lay down our life effectually for him. Help us. Oh, God, and we will be helped.

Answer this prayer. In his name. Amen.

Over the many, many years, I have seen many, many missionaries and I have seen many trends and missions. Let me share with you some things. Missions is very, very difficult, especially when you are concentrating on this one thing, planting biblical churches.

You can do a lot of things and the devil will not bother you so much because a lot of things we do that have great names about them. In the end, when we reach eternity, we'll find out that they're very superficial. But the one thing you can count on that the devil will oppose is that of planting biblical churches.

When I am listening to missionary statistics, I do not care to hear how many people prayed a prayer in a certain country or how many people walked forward. Or even how many people necessarily were baptized. I want to know the state of the churches.

Are there churches being formed? Are there people being brought together and are they growing in Christ likeness? For a missionary to be truly effective, he need not be eloquent. She need not be brilliant. But godliness is necessary.

There are so many gifted men, there are so many gifted devils. But godliness. Is a thing that God can use.

Now, before I get started, let me say this, as I always say, there is no such thing as a great man of God. There's only a great God of tiny, miserable little men. And there are no men who have reached high degrees of godliness so as to set them apart from everyone else in the community of faith.

We are all people simply advancing, looking unto Christ and seeking to follow him. And many times it is two steps forward, three steps back, five steps forward, one step back. It is a struggle against the world, against Satan himself, against our flesh.

It is difficult, but it is in this one thing. Seeking to be more and more conformed to Christ that we become usable. Usable.

A missionary's greatest asset is godliness. Godliness. Godliness.

Now, we began our text yesterday talking in verses four, verses one through five. We hear of the chaos in the world, even in the church itself. There would be apostasy and false teaching and all sorts of maladies all around this young minister named Timothy.

Now, while the world is all falling apart, and as I said last night, going to hell in a handbag, what does Paul admonish Timothy to do? To get active? No. To start some new ministry? No. To join some new strategy? Absolutely not.

What does he admonish Timothy to do? Isn't this amazing? He admonishes him to get in his study. To get on his knees. To get in the word.

To be a man of God. My dear friend, we have so many movers and shakers today. We have so many brilliant speakers.

We have so many people persons. But the man who spends more time with God than he does men. The man who is shut up to God.

That's rarity. That's rarity. I was telling the young ministers, the young men last night, that when I was called to preach this pastor that I've never met another man like him.

It was so such a man of God. It was almost frightening to be with him. And he looked at me and I'll never forget this.

And he said, boy, can you be alone? And I thought that what he meant was this. If I preach the gospel truly, men will hate me and I will be alone. That's not what he was asking.

What he was asking is this. When all the other preacher boys are going to Bible conferences and Christian retreats, hanging out in bachelor packs and doing all the things they do. Can you go alone? Can you meet with him in the mornings alone? Can you meet with him in the evenings, in the midnight watch and be with him alone? When everyone else is going to Colorado to ski in the name of Jesus, can you go out into the hill country and fast for a week? Throw rocks at heaven until God comes down.

Can you do that? Do you see the difference? This is missing. I love what my brother John Piper says, gentlemen, we are not professionals. We are prophets.

We belong to God. So that when we stand before men. We can say the God before whom I stand has sent me.

Now. He's telling him in verse six, in the midst of many well-meaning people in the church, pointing to all sorts of things that really don't matter. He's saying, Timothy, point men to this, point them to Christ.

Make Christ everything. You know, I have done something of a study of men and women of God down through the ages of the church that have been unusually used of God. And I find very little in common.

Among them, not as much as you would expect, but I find two things. It seemed to run in the vein of all of them. A prayer life.

And a pointing unto Christ, a pointing unto Christ, a pointing unto Christ. They were saturated, consumed with Christ. As the oil in the temple lamps burned out, they burned out for Christ.

Point men to Christ. If you're a missionary, if you're a member of this church, if you're witnessing to people in your factory or in your business or in your schools, point them to Christ, to Christ, to Christ. Magnify Christ.

That is one of the reasons why you should know him deeply so you can love him deeply. And in knowing and loving him deeply, you can explain him to others with a glory that the superficial does not understand. He goes on.

He says in 7, he says, but have nothing to do with worldly fables. There is so much noise in Christianity today. So many voices, so many books.

So many things vying for our attention. Put them away. So I recommend young men don't don't read anything, you know, that hasn't wasn't written 100 years ago or older.

Now, that's a broad statement because there are there are some good men today and women been writing some good things, but most of it is dribble. Most of it is dribble. Focus on Christ.

The things that truly matter, not fables. And then he goes on and he says, instead of thinking about all these things that do not matter, this is what I want you to do, Timothy. I want you to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

As a great athlete will waste his entire life to win a gold medal, will literally throw away his childhood, throw away his teenage years, throw away his life as a young adult and lose it all for the sake of a gold medal. He's saying, Timothy, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. He doesn't say try to make yourself an eloquent speaker.

Don't try to. He's not saying try to learn the new fads of Christendom. He's not telling him to figure out a way to be relevant.

He's saying, you do this discipline yourself to be godly. Now, what does it mean? You know, the flesh profits nothing. It's the spirit and only the spirit that gives life.

We're not talking about a legalistic system of trying to cross every T and dot every I to force yourself into being like Christ. No, we're talking about this saturating your life with the word of God. Crying out to God.

As one impoverished in spirit. Oh, God, fill me, fill me. It's it's being around things and people that lead to greater edification.

It's cutting away from yourself the things that are not profitable, and especially for you young people. Listen to me. One hour of television will destroy 16 hours of good Bible study.

Don't think you can be holy without separating yourself from things that contaminate the mind and the soul. Some of you could study the Bible 24 hours a day and you would still not be useful to God because of all the filth being pumped into you. Take this to heart.

There are things in this world that you cannot have a part of. You cannot. Not and be a useful servant of Christ.

In verse eight, for bodily discipline is only of little profit. It is profitable. I'm amazed at some of the great theologians and Bible teachers of the past who would take long walks, cut, cut firewood, ride horses, do all sorts of things so that they would be strong, so that they would be healthy.

To live their life to the glory of God, even Jonathan Edwards. But it only has a little bit of profit. You know, if I were to take the hours spent just among the people that I see, the hours that you spend either at the gym in front of the mirror are involved in athletics, either participating or watching.

And I could convert that to Bible study. There would be something quite different here this evening. It's true.

It's true. Now, he says, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. I always tell everyone, especially young men and women, you live for two days, the day that he hung before all men and the day when all men will stand before him.

For what is eternal? The one who follows the things of this world, the one who lives for the temporal is a fool. A fool is not a person who lacks intelligence, not a person that learning is beyond them. No, a fool is someone who does not hear the word of God so as to obey it.

You are temporal. Everything will rot and rust or be taken from you, except that which matters to the soul. Remember years ago, an old preacher heard him preaching and he said, there's only three things eternal.

God, the word of God and the soul of a man. Your investments, how are they going? I'm talking about your life investments. How are they? If you were to take up all the time that you've walked upon this planet as a Christian, how well have you invested your life? There are pictures of monks, paintings, sculptures, even of monks who are sitting there sort of morbidly holding a skull in their hand, looking at it.

You think what a perverse and dark thing. Well, yes, as far as they carried it, it was. But there's something to think about there.

What were they doing? They were contemplating their mortality. They were contemplating the fact that in a moment they, too, will be nothing but bone. How should they live? How should we live in light of these things? Should we invest our lives and our strength in things that do not matter? You know, I have talked to so many old missionaries.

Seen them in nursing homes, seen them buried. You know, I have never in my life heard a missionary who regretted that he gave so much. Or that he invested too much in eternal things.

But I have met countless men who regretted investing everything in this world. You want to live for that which has that is profitable. Listen, every Bible study, every bit of prayer, every godly fellowship, every sitting under biblical preaching is an investment in eternity.

Every dime given to this missionary endeavor. Everything lost for the sake of Christ is not lost at all. Everything kept outside of his name is lost.

We shouldn't live as fools, but live as wise. We should walk circumspectly. Knowing that time is fleeting, strength is fleeting, physical beauty is fleeting, wealth is fleeting.

It's all fleeting. But he who does the will of God abides forever. Isn't it amazing that we are such a fortunate people that you and I can actually do something that has eternal value? Did you ever think about that? It's absolutely, well, it's a reason to be alive.

You can actually do something that will never be lost. You can give a cup of cold water in the name of Christ to a disciple for the sake of Christ. And that will be written down in God's account.

His book of remembrance. And yet that's got to cast a dark shadow on the other side that there are so many investments we have made. They will give us no return whatsoever.

Whatsoever. He's telling him, he says, look, godliness is profitable for all things. Do you know the scriptures? One of the greatest problems in evangelical Christianity is that we have decided.

We've written out our creedal statements that scripture is infallible and it is inspired. The problem with that is this. That's only half the battle.

Once you determine that scripture is inspired, you must go one further step. And that's what the evangelical community in America is refusing to do. You've got to say it's not only inspired.

You've got to say it's sufficient. I don't need anthropologists. I don't need psychologists and I don't need cultural experts to tell me how to do the ministry.

The scripture is sufficient. OK, for every good work that a minister has to do, godliness is also profitable for all things. There is nothing you can encounter.

That godliness won't help you with it. Now he goes on and he says this, it is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. He's saying, believe me on this.

It's trustworthy. You know what this reminds me of? John 8, 46. Jesus said, if I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? You know, every one of you, or at least most of you, the great majority of you would acknowledge that everything I'm saying is true.

Why is it so hard? Well, for one thing, it's this. You allow yourself to get too close to the fire. You allow yourself to walk too close with temptation.

You've snuggled up too close to the world. So that even though, you know, you ought to live for that which is eternal, you are still pulled, pulled toward the timber. How does that happen? We are not a thinking people.

We are not a people. Who even stop? To think, what are we doing? We're not a people who meditate. We're not a people who listen.

We're so busy. We know nothing about silence. I had a professor years and years ago.

This is what he told me. He said, Mr. Washer. My intention for you is this.

To so teach you to be still that you can sit out in the middle of a hundred acre field and hear a bug walking across the leaf. I want you to be able to meditate, to think, to just be silent. Remember a point that was written many years ago, talks about Jesus coming in from the wilderness, hungry and coming to the temple.

It says hungry to worship and join in the praise. Wants to be in the temple. He wants to be there and fellowship in the presence of God.

It says that shock met with anger that burned on his face as he entered the wasteland of that barren place. There was so much noise and selling and activity in the temple that he becomes angry and he drives them all out. And then finally, in the poem, it says this.

The noise and confusion gave way to his word. At last, sacred silence. So God could be heard.

We're not a silent people. We need to be. You need to learn to sit before the scriptures and think deeply.

About your destiny. About your activity. Goes on, he says in verse 10, for it is for this we labor and strive.

The Christian life is not easy. We labor and we strive. Because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers.

Why do men labor in the Great Commission? Why do women strive in the Great Commission? I'll tell you. Because they believe. They believe God.

They believe that there is a God who created them. They believe that there is a God who redeemed them and therefore holds a double claim on them. One as creator and the other as redeemer.

They believe that what the Bible says about man is true. All men are born radically depraved. God hating and destined for hell.

They believe that God sent his son and died on a tree. And rose again on the third day and ascended up to heaven. And is seated at the right hand of the majesty upon high.

They believe that by his name and his name alone can a man be saved. They believe that no one will believe unless they hear the gospel. And no one will hear the gospel unless they are sent.

Unless they go. They believe. And therefore they must go.

They must. I agree so many times with a statement. It was a very immature statement, but a powerful statement.

Made by Keith Green. Okay, God hasn't called you to go. Has he called you to stay? He told you to go.

So I suppose the only way you can stay is if he tells you to stay. Do you realize? Let's think about this. Sometimes I wish you could see what I have seen.

And what these missionaries have seen. What other missionaries have seen? People dying without Christ. Children starving.

War and chaos and rape and pillage. Sin after sin leading to death after death. And destruction after destruction.

And it is all caused by one thing. Sin. The only problem man has is sin.

And the only solution for it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And for this reason we labor and strive. Because of that.

You see that is why there must be preaching. If you are here tonight. And you have truly been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

You have truly been converted. You are agreeing with everything I am saying. You agree with it.

But how many days do you walk and you forget it? You forget it. I mean this is what I do. And I do the same thing.

That is why I must constantly be hearing preaching. I must constantly be reading good books. I must constantly be around men and women who burn for Christ.

Why? I don't want to forget what I know is true. You know I can go to every manner of Bible conference. And literally.

Someone gets up and speaks about superlapsarianism versus infralapsarianism. And the decrees of God. Okay wonderful.

Studied that. It is a really deep thing. But I usually don't walk away from there thinking.

Man I just learned something new. Or talking about the Trinity. And the relationship between the three persons.

I hear great lectures on that. But I usually don't walk out going. Never heard that before.

Do you know what encourages me? Do you know what I have discovered about the Christian life? Several years ago I was teaching out in Kansas. At a university setting. And before I was to speak.

They let about four new converts get up and share their testimonies. Now their language was wrong. The way they expressed what God had done in their life.

Was not refined theology to say the least. I learned nothing from what they said. But you know what happened? I remembered a whole bunch of stuff I forgot.

There is not a whole lot of new things to learn under the sun. And our great problem is not necessarily that we don't know enough. Our great problem is we forget what we know.

You know what I am saying is true. That it is a worthy thing to lose your life for the cause of Christ. And labor and strive with everything that is in you for Him.

It is a worthy cause to give up everything. House and home and comforts and security and insurance and everything else for Him. It is all worthy.

But we forget. And start thinking about. Man I need that new car.

I need a bigger house. I need that name brown clothing. Do you see? That is why preachers do people no service.

When they are afraid to agitate them. To stir them up. And to cause them to remember the things they have forgotten.

He says for it is for this we labor and strive. Because we fixed our hope on God. On the living God who is the savior of all men.

Especially of believers. Now I would love to get into that. But I am going to do what I did last night.

I was supposed to preach this last night. But I got stalled on something. I want to go on to verse 11.

Prescribe and teach these things. Now. I want you to note something that is very, very important here.

Extremely important. This can be translated. Keep commanding and teaching these things.

Now what is important about that? Just that it reaffirms what I have already said. We are a forgetful people. One of the reasons why we must have sound Bible study.

One of the reasons why we must read good books. One of the reasons why we must enter into true Christian fellowship. In a church that consists of people dedicated to the things of Christ.

Is that we must constantly be reminded. We must be like iron sharpening iron. We must constantly push one another.

Now Christian let me ask you a question. How many times in all your fellowships. Do you talk more about sports after the church? Then how does that sermon apply to your life? You are excited.

I know part of going to church. A big part of it for me is what happens afterwards. I will be honest with you.

I love my brothers and sisters in Christ. And I just love to talk with them about all sorts of things. But look at what we are doing.

We are going to church. Going to meetings like this. Soon as it is over.

We talk about every manner of thing. You should be talking about what you heard. You should be applying it.

You should be sharpening one another. You should be calling one another on the telephone. You should be talking much about the word that was given.

You should be sharing scripture with one another. You should be constantly prescribing these things. The only malady the Christian has is the forgetfulness of the goodness of God.

And the duties that have been laid at his feet. So it constantly must be prescribed to him and re-prescribed to him. We must constantly be telling one another these things.

That is what a body is for. That is what a church is for. Iron sharpening iron.

I am so blessed with the men that I work with. Why? Because they will walk right into my office. The youngest guy who works at HeartCry.

Who has never been to seminary. Never been to Bible college. He is about 24 years old.

And he knows he can walk right into my office. And sit down and say, Brother Paul, you said something yesterday. And I think your attitude was wrong.

And here is the scripture. Brother Paul, I know you are older than me. And you have served the Lord a lot longer.

But Brother Paul, you were wrong. He is prescribing. He is commanding.

He is sharpening. He is moving me. He is helping me.

I will never forget one time I was preaching. And oh was I preaching. This was about 15 years ago.

I was tearing the place apart. And after I got done. I was walking down this big platform.

And I noticed this elderly gentleman. Who is a friend of mine. Was coming straight out of his seat.

Right toward me. And I made it half way down the platform. And he met me there.

Half way up. And he said this. He said, Paul, you preached the truth tonight.

You did son. And you preached it in the flesh. And you need to get down on your knees right now.

And ask God to forgive you. Don't you need that? But if someone did that to you. You would be out of this church so fast.

No one would ever see you again. That is the pastor's job. That is your brother and sister in Christ.

That is their job. He saved my life that day. Do you see that? And constantly we need to be a body.

This church here. I was asked to come to this church. In this place.

And this body here. Needs to be a body of people. That I am open.

Admonish me. Encourage me. Teach me.

Tell me. Be gentle. Be patient.

But do what you have to do to me. I would like to. I won't do it.

But I would like to get every member in this church. Right here to stand up and say. I make a commitment to that.

So that your pastor can hold you accountable. Next time he comes knocking on your door. We need that.

Now look at 12. He says. Let no one look down on your youthfulness.

First of all. Just because someone is old. Does not make them wise.

Never forget. The fables are the ones carried by elderly women. There are a lot of old fools.

Who have no business giving counsel in the church. Because their counsel is based on their experience. I don't need your experience.

Unless it is only given as an illustration. To what you're teaching me in the word. Do not give your opinion.

It's worth nothing. Be able to open up your mouth. And give the word.

Well I think. It really doesn't matter. What does he say? And so just because someone is old.

Does not make them wise. And just because someone is young. Does not make them foolish.

Again I go back to Robert Murray McShane. And if you think I appreciate him a great deal. Then read him and understand why.

I'm amazed. He's a boy. When he's writing some of this stuff.

A boy. And yet I could spend a thousand days. Locked in my study.

And not be able to come up with what he has written in a paragraph. Young people. Listen to me.

You've been taught. The lie of adolescence. So that you believe you're not to become a man.

Or a mature woman. Until you're in your 30's. There are 12 year olds.

That God has used to change the world. Why don't you join the ranks? Lay aside the X-Boxes. And all the silly things on television.

And discipline yourself to godliness. So that God can use you. So that God can use you.

Now. Now. He goes on and he says.

Let no one look down on your youthfulness. But rather in speech. In conduct.

In love. Faith. And purity.

Show yourself an example. Of those who believe. You know the hardest things for me.

When I was a missionary. In Peru. I honestly believe that missions is carried out.

Yes there are times when God does just magnificent things. But for the most part. Missions is a series of many, many small things.

That do not seem that significant. But when they're all bound together. They have great eternal value.

I dedicated myself. As a missionary. To disciple.

To disciple one on one. To carry young men with me. When I preached.

To have them in my home all the time. And you know what? That is a difficult thing. The devil can preach.

And there are many devils who do preach. I had a church walk up to me. Several years ago.

After I preached a sermon. They were looking for a pastor. And soon as I finished.

This pulpit committee came up toward me. You can always tell. Because they have the fake nose.

And the glasses. And the disguises. They came up.

And they said. We want you to be our pastor. And I said.

Are you crazy? And they said. What do you mean? I said. You don't know if I love my wife.

You know nothing about me. You don't know. If I train my children.

You don't know anything. About my financial integrity. You know nothing about me.

They knew nothing about what? My speech. You say. Well they heard you preach.

It is not the same thing. He is talking speech here. He is talking about your daily conversation.

They knew nothing about my conduct. Or my manner of life. They did not know.

If I had grown to maturity enough to love. They did not know. If I had faith.

True faith. To believe God. When every fiber.

Of your body is screaming. That you should not. They did not know.

If I was pure. Young Christians. Who want to be missionaries.

Do you seek to be pure? You are engulfed. In a physical. Sensual world.

An immoral pornographic world. That has made its way into the church. Do you seek to be pure? Innocent.

Harmless. Being a stumbling block. To no one.

Purity. Simplicity. Are those high.

Goals. Categories for you. Goes on.

He says this. Show yourself an example. Now the preposition here in the Greek.

Can go either way. It is either show yourself an example. Of those who believe.

Show yourself. To be what a true Christian is. So that when people look at you.

They understand. What a true Christian is. That is one of the greatest problems.

In evangelism today. Because the moment you go on a university campus. Or you are on an airplane.

Or any other place. And you start to witness. They immediately identify the Christian faith.

With these heretical TV preachers. Now there are some TV preachers. That are biblical.

Not many. But many of them are heretics. They are wolves.

In sheep's clothing. Whose God is their belly. And they rob people.

And provide them with nothing but fodder. But. We should be different.

People ought to be able to look at us. And understand that is what a Christian is. Not something perfect.

Not something without blemish. Not something without spot. Not something without weakness.

But something truly following Christ. Someone truly loving Christ. Truly seeking Christ.

And truly broken. Over their inability. Or lack of devotion.

A true Christian. He says here. Show yourself an example.

Of those who believe. But it is also possible. Show yourself an example.

To those who believe. Show yourself an example. To those who believe.

We ought to be very, very evangelistic. In our pulpits. But I know some preachers.

All they do is preach on evangelism. They preach to lost people. While the sheep starve to death.

We are also always worried. About being good examples to the outside world. Being good examples to the outside world.

We ought to also concern ourselves. With being good examples to our brothers. And sisters in Christ.

How my life has benefited. From examples. I have known men.
And women. Who glowed. With Christ.
What an example. They have been to me. The greatest thing.
I could do for the world. If I could just somehow bring them all. On to one platform.
And just let you look at them. The glory. The kindness.
The love. The knowledge. And I needed them.
Do you know. Warren Wiersbe. Several years ago.
I think it was Warren Wiersbe. Wrote a book. Walking with the Giants.
And it is little biographies. About Spurgeon and Tozer. And Brainerd.
And all these different ones. Just very short excerpts. Warren Wiersbe.
I get to heaven. I am going to tell him. What a blessing that was to me.
Do you know why? Because believe it or not. I don't always. Just get real zealous about prayer.
And believe it or not. Sometimes it is really hard. For me to get in my study.
And believe it or not. Sometimes it is really hard. For me to evangelize.
I just don't feel a whole lot of motivation. Do you know what I learned to do? When I knew that I needed to study. And yet.
I just. Didn't have it in me. I would pull out that book.
And I would read about Alexander McLaren. Who at times would spend 60 hours. On one sermon.
And after reading that little excerpt on him. I knew I wasn't going to spend 60 hours. But I was motivated.
To go back in there and study. And then. Reading about Brainerd.
The great revivals. Wrought through his intercession. Among the North American Indians.
Praying hide. Read about him for a while. And get me right back in that closet.
We ought to surround ourselves. With godly men and women. Who are alive.
And godly men and women. Who are dead. Because though they are dead.
They still speak. And we ought to be an encouragement. To one another.
I am amazed about the partner. God has given me. My wife.
Because it just seems like. When I am weak. She is strong.
And you are expecting me to say. When she is weak. I am strong.

But usually it is just again. When I am weak. She is strong.

I come back from preaching somewhere. Like a while. A few weeks ago.

And people literally want to tear my head off. Screaming at me. And everything.

And I come back in. They really called me some bad names this time. And she looked at me and she goes.

They are supposed to call you bad names. Be afraid when all the world speaks well of you. Okay.

Maybe she lacks a little on her gift of mercy there. But I mean. Get back out there.

But you see. There is no such thing as lone wolf. Christianity.

And guess what else church. Don't think. That it is always a one way street.

That your elders. And pastors are to be encouraging. Strengthening you.

You are to be encouraging. And strengthening them. You think missionaries.

Missionaries are super spiritual. They are not. They are just obeying.

They need prayer. Great amounts of prayer. Intercession.

Prayer. I can remember right now. It was right before I was married.

It was like 91. The district of Mia Flores. In Lima.

Right there by the Plaza Parque Kennedy. That is how specific this is. And I am walking down the road there.

Getting ready to deal with all the street kids. We had a bunch of kids during the war. That had no place to live.

And we would feed them Quaker oats and stuff. And I remember walking down through there. And all of a sudden.

A joy. And a strength hit me. I literally had to stop walking.

I just kind of stood there for a moment. Over in a corner. Just thinking I was literally going to explode.

I thought what in the world. And then all of a sudden I knew. I don't know how I knew.

But I knew. I knew exactly what was happening. Somebody somewhere.

Was interceding for a single missionary. Working all alone. In the middle of a war.

In Lima, Peru. So we need to be examples. We need to help one another.

Now look at verse 13. Until I come. Give attention to public reading of scripture.

To exhortation. And to teaching. This is missions.

It doesn't change for missions. What does the world need? It needs Christ. Centered.

Bible. Saturated. Preaching.

The communication of truth. That's what it needs. You would be surprised.

How little of all. Our missionary activity. Has anything to do with doctrine.

You would be surprised. How little of the missionary activity. In the world.

Has anything to do with planting churches. And that's the reason. For the weakness.

What do we need? We need men who will stand up. And preach. We need women who will teach.

We need people who realize. Their lives were transformed. By the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And by the renewal of their mind. Through their reading of scripture. And through the preaching of scripture.

And the application of scripture. Their lives were changed by scripture. And they need to go out there knowing.

That the latest fad in missions. Is not going to win a people group to Christ. It will be the preaching of the Bible.

We homeschool. And it's not. As my wife is always reminding me.

Paul we don't homeschool. Just so our kids will know Latin or something. We homeschool.

So that everything. Points to Christ. We homeschool.

So that scripture, scripture, scripture. Is poured into them. We homeschool.

So that Christ will be formed in them. And afterwards. They will grow up to be mature.

Men and women. In the gospel. Those children in Africa.

That we heard about. They need so many things. They need teaching.

And they need training. And they need school. And they need mathematics.

But what do they need most? Christ. Scripture. Building their entire life.

Around thus saith the Lord. Instead of everyone did what was right. In their own eyes.

Give attention. To public reading of scripture. To exhortation and teaching.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you. Which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance. With the laying on of hands.

By the Presbytery. Now. I'm sure at least.

I speak for myself here. I did not discover my gifts. Through someone else's prophetic utterance.

Nor the laying on of hands. But nonetheless. By the providence of God.

I did discover. The gifts that the Lord has given me. And I am a steward.

Of those gifts. I am a steward. Not only to exercise those gifts.

I am a steward. To refine my gifts. To refine my ability.

To use the gifts. I am called upon. To prepare.

I am called upon. To seek to be an instrument. In the hand of Christ.

I am to dedicate myself to that. To discipline myself to that. But so are you.

You too. What is your gift? What are your gifts? How are you honing them? How are you exercising them? How are you using your gifts in this body? In this place? Don't you know you'll be held accountable? A spiritual gift. It's a spiritual gift.

What has God called you to do? You say nothing. Pray to God that's not true. Because if it is true.

You're lost. Because every believer is called. To do things.

Called to serve. Called to refine what they have been given. Are you doing that? Are you? We have made a great and terrible mistake here.

In the United States and in the West. My dear friend, make no mistake. The church has been given men.

Pastors and teachers. Elders. Deacons.

All that is true. But we have developed or borrowed. This almost Catholic.

Orthodox idea. That somehow they have this calling. And we're free from it.

As a matter of fact. Their calling. Is to help us in ours.

The pastor. The teacher. The evangelist.

And so on and so forth. Their entire job. Is to teach you.

So that you. Might minister. You will be held accountable.

Knowing the fear of the Lord. I persuade you. Listen to me.

You will stand before Christ. You will give an account of your life. And you will give an account.

Of your gifts. Of how you served. Christ.

Oh, I wish that the Holy Spirit. Would open up your mind. And make that a reality.

To the point that you trembled. To the point that you trembled. Now.

Go on. And he says this. Now.

I'm especially talking tonight. Right now with this passage. To everyone.

But especially to the missionaries. Who are here. To the pastors and leaders.
Teachers who are here. And to myself. In verse 15.
Take pains. With these things. That's amazing.
Be diligent. In these things. In what things? I think primarily.
The idea here. Is in stewardship. Recognizing.
That you have been called. And you have been gifted. For a specific calling.
That you would be diligent. Take great pains. To be a good steward.
In all these things. Isn't it amazing. I talk to people on this.
And they'll say. Well you know brother Paul. I'm not a big studier.
And I don't read a lot. But the same gentleman. Who tell me that.
I always ask them. If the plant where you worked. Told you.
You were going to be fired tomorrow. Unless you took a manual. About three inches thick.
And learned everything. In that manual. So that you could work a new machine.
At your tool and die company. Would you do it? Well I'd have to brother Paul. Wouldn't be a case.
Of whether I wanted to. Or I thought I could read. Or anything.
If they told me. I had to do it. I just have to do it.
Need I say more? If you knew. That you would get. A double promotion.
Because you mastered some skill. At your job. Would you not spend nights awake.
Burning the midnight oil. To hone your skills. To master what they gave you.
So that you could move up. Do you not desire. To be an esteemed.
Servant. Of the Lord. Just recently.
I may have shared this already. I'm not sure. But a dear friend.
That I was with in Canada. He told me. Physicians or somebody.
Researchers had done all this research. And they'd come to the conclusion. That to become an expert.
In anything. Whether it was physics. Or cross country.
Or playing the guitar. To be an expert in anything. It required 10,000 hours.
Now the average man. Working 40 hour weeks. Works about.

2,000 hours a year. To become an expert. I started kind of.

Figuring all that up. And I said Lord. My son is just turned 8. My other just 6. And my little girl is 2. How many hours a day.

Would it be required. For me to pour. 10,000 hours of Bible.

In their hearts. Before they leave my home. At 18.

Then the idea came up. And Paul. How long would you have to study? How much time.

Are you still seeking. To know me more. Are you still seeking.

To be a better servant. To be more usable. To me.

Now he goes on. And he says this. Take pains with these things.

Be absorbed. In them. I love this translation here.

In the New American Standard. Be absorbed in them. Now here is what I want you to see.

Let's say that I had a table here. Right here. Just a table.

And I poured out a spot of water on top of it. Say about this big. And you walked by.

And there it is. A spot of water on the table. Grouped up together.

There is the water. And then after you pass by. I take a towel.

A teracloth towel. A very absorbent towel. And I lay it across the water.

And I pick it up. And you come back. And you say.

Where is the water? I don't see it. It's gone. I say well.

It's been absorbed. You don't see it because it's absorbed. In the towel.

Now. Listen to me. Those of you who are missionaries, pastors, preachers.

Those who aspire to such things. We must be people. People.

We must love people. We must get out there with people. My wife.

In Peru. They called her. La Cherubina.

The Cherubin. Because they said. That she stood.

In front of the door of my office. With a flaming sword. And her head turned.

Every which way. And she would strike down any human being. That tried to get to me.

Now. I preached in the streets. I disciplined one on one.

I visited the sick. And other things. But preacher, pastor, missionary.

Listen to me. There had to be. Time.
When I. And there has to be time. When you are absorbed. In.
Knowing God. Experiencing. God.
Dwelling with God. And no one can touch us. Because unless.
We are God besought. Unless we are filled with the spirit. Unless we are saturated with the word.
Unless. We are nourished. On the words of faith.
And sound doctrine. We have nothing to give. You have nothing to give in yourself.
Abide in the vine. That is the only way. That you will ever bear much fruit.
So many men. With so many activities. And yet just fruitless and barren.
Remember I could. Just like it was yesterday. I can remember Ravenhill.
You know. You say Peter preached one sermon. And three thousand were saved.
Now we preach three thousand sermons. And one is saved. There is a point there.
To dwell with him. Be first and foremost. A man of God.
Be first and foremost. A woman of God. Above everything.
Be absorbed in these things. So that your progress. Will be evident to all.
So easy to be an itinerant preacher. It's difficult. I guess the traveling.
You don't know me. You don't. You've not watched my life.
What's difficult is to be a minister. A pastor. An elder.
One place. They watch your life. They ought to.
They're going to. They've got to see progress. If my wife sees no progress.
My children see no progress. I have no testimony. Before them.
I care very little. Where a man or a woman is. At the present moment.
They may be very mature. Or very immature. But that is never my concern.
My concern is this. Are they progressing? Are they advancing? Have you progressed? From last year to this? Now of course we must be very careful. Why? Because there are times.
When it seems as though. We're not bearing fruit. When the Lord is pruning us.
That's also another part. John 15. But basically.

Can someone look at your life. And see progress? Can they see it? Now get ready for this. Can they see it on the outside? We're a people today.

We're all about. You can't judge my heart. I don't have to.

Your life tells me. Everything I need to know. About your heart.

Can't judge a book by its cover. Jesus didn't say that. He said.

You will know them by their fruits. Has there been progress? And yes. There are some like I say.

Who can fly. To Christ likeness it seems. They grow.

They're just spiritual giants. And others that seem to creep and crawl. But that is not the issue.

The issue is. Is there progress? Because sanctification. Is the evidence of justification.

He says here in verse 16. And this is where we'll close. Pay close attention to yourself.

And to your teaching. Look at both of those things. Missionary listen to me.

Pay close attention to your teaching. One of my greatest regrets. Up until even now.

I can just be honest. One of my greatest regrets. Is.

I'm quick witted. Things just pop into my head. Brilliant things.

Just pop into my head. Well. The only problem.

As well as brilliant things. Are coming out of my flesh. And.

The point that I'm making is. I need to be. More careful.

I'm around other godly men. I mentioned Sam Waldron and others. And I just see the caution.

With which they speak. And the correctness. And I just so admire that.

And then I get up there. And just like I said. Kind of explode all over everything.

And I'm praying. And you can pray with me. I want to be more clear.

More cautious. More exact. But that's what he's.

See that's a fault of mine. But see. This is what he's telling me.

Pay close attention to yourself. Today. Examining.

My heart this morning. And close attention. To your teaching.

Praying before I got here. Oh lord. Don't let me say something stupid.

This is what he's talking about. We need to be very careful. He says pay close attention to yourself.

And to your teaching. Now look at this. Persevere in these things.

It is not. When we send out a missionary. Or a missionary goes to the field.
And they're there about. Two or three months. Man they're so excited about everything.
And man it's just. And I've had younger guys tell me. Well you can tell that they were right for that spot.
They've been there three months. And their joy. No it hasn't wore off yet.
Let's take it to about six months. Or a year. Then we're going to see.
First the missionary gets there. And he's just blessing everybody. And just god bless you.
I see that hand. God bless you. And then afterwards.
He's waking up at two in the morning. Because the neighbors chicken is crowing. And he goes over there
and beats it to death.
With a mag light. It's one thing to start. Out of the blocks.
It's another thing. To persevere in anything. To persevere.
To persevere. When all those new smells. No longer are exotic.
But literally just make you nauseous. You see. When all this language.
Is just so beautiful. Till. Your independent fundamentalist baptist.
Praying for tongues. It gets to the point where you can't take it anymore. That's when you know.
He's really going to stay. He's hurting. He's crying.
This is killing him. But he's staying. And that's the way it is.
In the Christian faith. Just persevere in these things. Now look.
A lot of you young men. Are going to fall into a trap. That all of us older men have fallen into.
You go get your studies. You get your degree. And you go.
Okay I've studied. Now I'm ready to minister. No.
You're wrong. What you've done. In those four years of Bible school.
Or those three years of seminary. This is what you've done. You have learned a few.
A very few tools. So that you can now. Begin a life of studying.
And you persevere. In these things. Now.
He goes on and he says. Now this statement. Is almost never heard.
Anymore. In American Christianity. He says.
For as you do this. As you pay close attention to your own character. Your own life.

And close attention to your teaching. What you believe. You will ensure salvation.

Both for yourself and for those who hear you. There are many who preach. Who will stand before him on that day.

And hear. I never knew you. There are many.

Who seem to start off well. In their character and their doctrine. And they apostatize.

And turn away. And they don't even know it. Because theology and everything.

Is so general today. That no one even knows. When someone is in heresy any longer.

Godliness is so lax in the church. No one even knows. When someone has given themselves over.

To immorality. And I am not saying that the true believer. And the true pastor.

That they fall away and lose their salvation. What I am saying is they apostatize. And prove they never were a Christ.

I stand before you tonight. With confidence. That I know him.

What is that confidence based upon? That confidence is based upon. Comparing. My conversion to scripture.

That is one. It is by comparing the last 26 years. To scripture.

God's work. In blessing and disciplining. And teaching.

The continuation. Seeming as though the Holy Spirit. Indwelling me.

And leading me. And guiding me. And convicting me.

And teaching me. But do you know. I have not finished the race.

I have not finished the race. And therefore I take care. To watch myself.

And watch my teaching. Like I said. That is not common language today.

But it is true language. I am not saying. At all.

That a true believer can fall from grace. I am not saying. That a genuine Christian.

Can lose their salvation. What I am saying is this. The evidence that the man standing.

Before you truly is Christian. Is that he must persevere. And continue on.

Because there are many. Who spring up and seem to bear. Grapefruit in the ministry.

Only to fall away. And show that they never were. Part of Christ.

I must be careful. I must watch. Circumspectly.

That is the old teaching. Of both the reformers. And the early Baptists.

That the evidence. Of true conversion. Is that those truly converted.

Persevere. Till the end. And the evidence.

That conversion was false. From the very beginning. Is that they did not continue on.

But fell away. So we must always walk. Circumspectly.

We can have great confidence. That we are children of God. And that we know him.

But we should never presume upon things. Especially those who confess Christ as Savior. And yet walk in worldliness.

As a constant practice. I hope you understand. These are serious matters.

And these are serious times. The end of the ages. Has come upon all of you.

You are a part of the church. Of Jesus Christ. You have been commissioned.

In these latter days. To go out. And serve your God.

In a mighty strength. To be faithful. To endure all.

Hardship. For the call of the gospel. And for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Do not take these things lightly. I beg you. Let's pray.

Father I pray. That you would use this. That you would help your people.

That it would bear fruit. In Jesus name. Amen.

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