

# Homiletics - Not Many Preachers - Part 1

by Tim Conway

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*Tim Conway's sermon emphasizes the seriousness and supernatural nature of homiletics, urging careful consideration of the calling to teach and preach.*

**Duration:** 2:28:40

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3

**Topics:** "Biblical Interpretation", "Responsible Ministry"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on homiletics, the science of sermon preparation and delivery, encouraging active participation, questions, and discussions among the listeners. It emphasizes the importance of understanding God's Word, being cautious about teaching without proper understanding, and the accountability believers will face on Judgment Day for their ministries. The speaker urges for a deep study of Scripture to rightly interpret and apply it, highlighting the seriousness of teaching and the need for humility and faithfulness in serving others.

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## Transcript

So, guys, this does not need to be formal at all. If there's questions, blurt out, raise your hand. If there's things that need to be talked about, if there's something in Scripture that you feel like lends itself to what we're talking about, or you know a good story, or you know a good example.

We're going to be talking about homiletics. Homiletics. Basically, the science of sermon preparation and delivery.

That's what that is. And I know some of you are well-read. I know some of you have read different things that different men have said about preaching or they've said about sermon preparation.

If you've got something good and profitable that you can throw out there on the table for all of us, don't hesitate to do so. If you've got questions, if something doesn't seem right, if there's something we need to hash out, let's take the time to do that. The only time restraint is I want to keep this to no more than two hours.

We don't have to finish any amount of material that I've put together. We'll just get as far as we can. Right now I'm talking about four homiletics classes or meetings like this.

If we need five or six, so be it. If we finish everything up in three, that's great. We don't have to be under any constraints that way.

As long as this continues to be profitable, we'll keep going with it. So, homiletics. Anybody know any English words that sound like homiletics? Homily.

What's a homily? A song? What are other synonyms for homily? Yeah, sermon, actually. I mean, we can think song perhaps, but sermon as much as anything is a synonym for homily. Homiletics, homily.

Homiletics, we're basically talking about the science of sermon preparation and preaching. There is a Greek word, homileo. And what's interesting about that is it isn't exactly the Greek word for preaching.

It's more the Greek word for communicating or having discourse with one another. It wasn't until about the 17th century that somebody coined the term for the study of sermons and sermon delivery. But so much for entomology, that's what the word means.

That's what we're talking about. Homiletics classes in seminary are basically coursework that is meant to prepare men to put together sermons and to stand in the pulpit and deliver those sermons. And obviously, this is a science that doesn't just pertain to the pulpit.

Oftentimes, we're going to be talking pulpit. We're going to be talking sermon. But this has to do with teaching.

And whether there's a pulpit involved or not, whether we're in a situation like this, just sitting in my living room, dining room, whether we're in a Bible study, whatever that scenario might look like, what I want us to think about is Christians teaching and what goes into that. What goes into preparing to teach God's people. And this isn't going to be exhaustive.

And look, nobody is the authority on this. Our Lord Jesus Christ, yes. But nobody is an authority on this.

And nobody has exactly the right way. And so much plays into this. God designs men individually.

And personalities are different. People's voices are different. The inflections in voices tend to be different.

We're all products of a past. We're all products of our teachers. We're all products of all manner of circumstances and factors that play into our lives.

There is not an exact science here. This is not like arithmetic where the equation works out exactly the same all the time. But the thing is, once a man has given himself to some season of preaching, he learns things.

And if we are trying to listen to preaching with a critical ear, and I don't mean that in a bad way. Sometimes critical has a negative sense to it. But critical can be taken in just a neutral sense of sitting and evaluating the quality of a sermon, the quality of a man's ability to preach.

And there is such a thing. Those are realities. When we identify somebody as being a better preacher than somebody else, that's not fictitious.

There are realities to that. There is a place where we have preferences. We're all wired different, even as hearers.

We all have preferences to sermons. It's amazing. Some people really like some preachers and some people really like others.

Typically, what you have with good preachers is the better they are, the more the pool is of people who really profit from listening to the preaching. And I have never heard... well, I was going to say I never heard anybody that didn't like Spurgeon. But you know what? When I was first saved, somebody gave me a tract that said it was by Spurgeon.

And Spurgeon said more people are going to be in heaven than in hell. Well, as a young believer, I knew what Matthew 7, 13 and 14 said. Few there be that find it.

And here's Spurgeon saying that there are going to be more in heaven than in hell. And I didn't know who he was, but I thought this guy is erroneous. And I remember telling my pastor later on, oh yeah, I don't read that guy.

My pastor said, wow, I've never heard anybody say that before. Which I did give Spurgeon a second chance. But you know he holds that view.

He basically holds the view that... He was involved in the republication of the 1689 London Baptist Confession. And he did put and was behind and affirmed that all elect children. But Spurgeon believed not only all elect children.

He believed all children are elect. And there's a difference between the two. And you say you don't believe that? I'm just saying that Spurgeon actually believed that because all children who die in their infancy, and because there is this age of accountability somewhere.

I mean, it may not be one specific age for all children, but he believes that because children do have a point before which they're going to be accountable, because so many have died throughout history that certainly heaven is going to be far more populated. And there are the people that believe that if God is really going to be victorious and glorified that there has to be more people in heaven than in hell. And I don't know.

I just don't exactly find scriptural support for that quantity difference. But anyway, you may have your theories. Men, homiletics.

And the first thing that I want to talk about today, and you don't want to miss this part of it, I believe that this is one of the most fundamental beginning points in preparing sermons and preaching sermons. And it is for us to consider this matter. It is a supernatural matter.

This is not like putting together a term paper in college. This is not like having to do a presentation at work. We are dealing with something altogether different.

We are dealing with something that pertains to souls, to eternity, to a spiritual realm. Something that pertains to God. Look, any lost man can prepare a term paper, but not any saved man can even prepare a sermon and deliver it in a way that honors God, in a way that is owned by God.

And you notice the difference. Any lost man can do the one thing, but not even any saved man can do the other thing. This is something that... Look, there is a very erroneous idea today, I believe, that send a guy to a seminary, make him into a pastor.

And look, I recognize that there's a difference between teaching and being a pastor. I recognize that there is a difference in these things. I recognize that being called to teach and being called to preach and being called to be a pastor and shepherd God's people may fall in different categories.

I recognize that we may have men in the church who aren't necessarily elders, who have some teaching capacity. I'm talking about teaching. I'm talking about the ability to simply put together a message of some sort that comes from God's Word in such a way that you're going to communicate that back to God's people.

And I'm saying, God has not equipped all men to do that. And He has given us no promise that all men will be equipped to do that. And He is the one who does it.

And He doesn't say that if you go to seminary, then you can do it. He doesn't say that if you go to seminary, seminary produces pastors or seminary produces preachers. Nor does a homiletics class at Pastor Tim's house.

This does not make a preacher because you sit and you listen. And we may sit at the feet of men like Martin Lloyd-Jones and Charles Spurgeon, some of the greatest preachers, many in the Reformed circles would say Spurgeon in the 19th century and Lloyd-Jones in the 20th century. You know, two of the premier preachers.

We could sit at the feet of men like this. But just because you sit at their feet, just because you allow these men to disciple you, doesn't make you into somebody who now has a God-given ability to put together some sermon or whatever you want to call it, put together a Bible study and sit and communicate it. We are dealing with the supernatural.

We need to recognize that because if we don't, if we just basically have this idea, yeah, I go to Pastor Tim's house for four weeks or for five weeks or for six weeks and then I'm going to become a preacher. No, no. What classes like this do, what a homiletics class in seminary will do, is if they're biblical, if they're actually involved with the things that God is concerned about when preaching takes place, and if a man who God has put His hand on is to sit through such teaching, then what happens is a gift can be honed, it can be nurtured, it can be increased.

But you have to recognize that if God isn't involved in this thing, no amount of teaching, no amount of instruction, no amount of reading, no amount of homiletics, anything is going to produce something if God has not produced it. And look, on that note, I think we need to start here. Because on that note, I really believe that all of us, including the existing elders, here's what I want to do today and here's what I want to focus on today.

I want there to be some soul-searching. I want there to be some questions asked. I think we need to look at our own selves.

If you come into a class like this and you're thinking, you know, oh, this is interesting. We're going to hear some things that might be profitable as to preparing a sermon. I'm interested in that.

I have a certain interest level. Obviously, you're all here because you're interested in this. But I think some soul-searching needs to happen.

And guys, I'm not trying to run anybody out of this class. But I think if we don't deal at this level with homiletics, we're not being faithful. And I obviously have not set myself down in homiletics classes all over this country in the seminaries to know exactly what's being taught or to what level men are being pressed this way.

What I can tell you is this, one of the premier reform schools in the country is found in Louisville. And because we happen to have a church there with a man who attends Denton on a regular basis and we can rub shoulders with Ryan Fullerton, what I know is this, Ryan Fullerton tells me that they get all manner of men who move to Louisville thinking they're called to teach, to preach and or pastor or to go into some ministry who upon arriving in Louisville find a manual, begin to go to church there, begin to learn what the Bible actually says about gifting and calling. And you know what a lot of these men suddenly realize? Ha! I'm not called to do this.

I shouldn't be doing this. I should go sell insurance. I should go do this.

I should go do another thing. I should not be in the position of teaching, of preaching and or pastoring or going to the mission field or whatever. And they find that out.

Why? Because a lot of churches don't vet men like that. A lot of seminaries don't vet men in that way. By vetting, I'm talking about screening out.

I'm talking about taking out those who are not qualified, those who shouldn't be there. You know, there was a day, we were speaking to Charles Spurgeon, where if you went to a pastor's college like that, like Spurgeon's, Spurgeon himself would sit with these guys. They would be interrogated, if you want to put it that way.

They would be questioned. And look, they weren't afraid to hurt men's feelings. They weren't afraid to point men to the door.

They weren't afraid to tell men, you're not called to do this. Or, we're not interested in having you come here. They would be honest with guys.

If they weren't meant to be there, if they didn't show indications of being men who were called to do something, they screened them out. You know, today it's pretty much, if a guy sounds like he's got a radio voice or something, or if a guy can get excited about something, it's like so many churches are undiscerning. Oh, you need to be a pastor.

You need to do this. And then what? All it takes is really having enough money. And the seminary accepts you, or maybe your pastor says, yeah, you know, we think he's got it.

Why? Because he's got certain inflection in his voice or something? It's crazy. Why are all these guys showing up in Louisville who go to Ryan's church and suddenly find out they shouldn't be in the ministry? Well, obviously, because God hasn't called them to that. But some people somewhere, given these young guys the notion they ought to be doing something God really has not equipped them to do.

And so, we need to have some soul searching at this level. And the place I think we should start is right in James 3. James 3.1 We have an inspired word from God that there should not be many teachers. And I want all your eyeballs to fall on that text.

Because look, let's make the connection. Preparing a sermon, standing in the pulpit to deliver it, is what teachers do. And so, right at the beginning, if there shouldn't be many teachers, James is under inspiration.

This isn't just a man giving his opinion. This is God moving this man to tell the churches down through the ages, including ours, that when you look across the landscape of Grace Community Church, should there be many teachers? No, there should be few. That's worth considering as we start out.

And brothers, it's not that he just stops there. Oh, you shouldn't be many. You know, he does give a reason.

And it's a reason that probably we ought to all sit up and take notice of. Brethren, we do not want to live our lives without thinking about Judgment Day. As Christians, every single thing we do, but I'll tell you this, James would have us wake up to a great reality that when it comes to teaching the Word of God, you do not want to lightly tread on that ground.

Because Judgment Day has consequences. And brethren, as we move along, I want to show you that you cannot say, well, you can say it, but you don't want to say it. Say what? You don't want to say, well, I'm a Christian.

I'm forgiven. If I tread on teaching ground and I'm not actually called, or I don't do well, or I fail, or I teach something that isn't God's Word, I'm forgiven. I'm forgiven.

I'm bound for heaven. No consequences. If that's how you read James 3.1, I don't believe James 3.1 means beware of becoming a teacher if you're lost.

That would be bad. But I don't believe that's what he means. He's saying, brothers... Now, some of you are brothers, and those of you that are, it's okay if you're teachers.

He's saying, my brothers, among you who are brothers, there should not be many. You say, seriously? And are we going to be punished if we're a true Christian and we tread where we know it not? Brethren, I think we need to come to grips with Judgment Day. And I think we need to come to grips with the kind of things that Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3. He talks about men's ministries and he talks about men being saved so as by fire.

And if you think that's just a casual thing to go before God and have your ministry burned up because it was built out of bad material, I'll tell you, I remember Rebecca Hamilton told me one time she thinks her husband may fear Judgment Day too much. He trembles. Andy Hamilton trembles before God at the thought of having to stand and give an account for his ministry.

And if you really think about what Scripture is saying, when I talk about 1 Corinthians 3, I'm talking about Paul saying some men build with good materials and some men build with bad materials. And that man that builds with bad materials, yeah, he'll be saved in the end, but he does not paint the most beautiful picture of judgment with that man. We need to be careful.

We need to be serious. I think we need to take homiletics into another realm. Not just how many points should I have in a sermon, but has God designed me to even be preparing points in a sermon? Am I taking upon myself something that God wants me to take upon myself? And that's even if I'm sitting down in a Bible study, in whatever capacity, I'm being a teacher.

Notice, stricter judgment. The ESV uses strictness, right? It's a noun. It's not a noun.

It's an adjective. The idea is a severer judgment. A stricter judgment.

It's an adjective. It modifies judgment. It has to do with intensity.

It has to do with degree. What it means is everybody who has taken upon themselves to teach God's Word when they stand before God, some severe judgment. I think that the King James Version missed it with their condemnation.

It almost sounds like if you're a teacher, you're going to be condemned. That's not what you want to take from that. But it does have to do with judgment day.

Stricter. You know what it sounds to me when I hear that? A stricter judgment. It almost sounds like James is saying that God has a stricter standard for teachers than He has for others.

He actually has a less strict standard for those who are not teachers. A strict standard for those who are teachers. You say, why do you say it almost sounds like that? It does sound like that.

Well, here's what I know about God. God is impartial. We don't want to read partiality into that statement, but it almost sounds like God's being partial.

It sounds like God is saying, you taught. Here's a severe standard that I'm going to judge you with than that guy over there who isn't. What do we make of that? What are we going to do with this? Now look, there is an impartiality which is unjust.

Think with me. Think with me about a judge. Two people commit the same crime.

They commit it together. And they're both equally involved in it. They come up before the judge.

Now look, you well know this. If the judge looks and one of the two guys reminds him of his son, and he's more lenient than he is with the other one, you say, that's not just. If you were to find out that both these men were going to be sentenced and one happened to hit the docket late on Friday, the judge is in a good mood, it's Friday.

He gives a lenient sentence. The other guy gets sentenced on Monday. He gets a harsher sentence.

You say, that's not fair. But I just heard my children go to feast. I was made aware just recently that two of the students committed an offense.

They were both equally guilty, equally involved, but one received a much harsher punishment. What are some examples where there would not be injustice when that happens? Age group. Yeah, what if one's 16 and one's 6? We would immediately say what? One should have known better.

Or what if I said one has autism and one does not? What are some other circumstances that might lend itself? Yeah, what if one person, and that's exactly what happened in this school, one person had a prior offense. The other person didn't. A person with prior offense, much stricter.

You know that's true when you go before a judge. If one guy's been guilty of five felonies in the past and the other has a clean record, of course that comes into play. What are some other things? Gender.

How so? I guess like in the sense of you have a woman who typically... Well, when it comes to gender, what I think of is authority. You know that's taken into account. If you had two individuals commit a crime and one's a general and one's a private, and the private is actually under the authority of that general, or you have an employee-employer relationship and they're both guilty, that's taken into account because one is subject to the other one.

And so that will be brought into it. I mean, sometimes that kind of thing. But think about the sexual offense.

He's saying gender, but I might emphasize authority more. How many times have we heard lately where teachers and students fall into sexual sin? Teacher, student. Who's going to be more culpable in that? Of course, even if the teacher's a woman and she's 22 and the student was 17 or 18 and a male.

I mean, the teacher is... What we have, brethren, is this reality. You know that Jesus said it. To whom much is given, much is required.

And you see, what happens to the teacher is not that God is partial. It's not that He's unfair in the way He deals with teachers. It's that teachers have more to answer for.

That's the issue. And what you need to recognize is this caution is coming from James because it's not a light thing what they have to answer for. You know, there may be some things in your life that, who knows, they may not mean a whole lot when you come before God on judgment day.

It may matter very little about some things that you do. It's not like whether you decide to mow the lawn this afternoon if the rain stops or not. If you take it upon yourself to teach His Word, you're being given a warning like this because what you have to answer for... Look, I'll tell you, you go to handle God's Word, you better tread on holy ground.

You better walk there with the utmost of care. That's why James is saying, my brothers, there better be few of you. Because if you mess up on that ground, brethren, it's severe.

You do not want to run in to preparing messages, preparing sermons, preparing Bible studies, thinking about how to deliver them, until you first do some soul searching about whether God wants you there, and God has prepared you to be there, and God has equipped you to be there. Because if you're running on that ground and God hasn't equipped you to be there, brethren, you better be thinking about judgment day. That's what James is saying.

Men who teach or preach who are not thinking about judgment day ought not to be there. Be careful, brothers. That's what we have going on here.

And look, the reality is if a man or a woman does not teach, then they won't be judged for teaching. Now it may be true that there ought to be somebody out there who ought to be teaching and is fighting the Lord. I mean, it's possible for this thing to go the other way, but I'll tell you this, based on James' warning, you can tell what the reality is in the church.

Is the reality that we have a whole bunch of men who ought to be teaching and God is pressing them to teach, but they resist and they fight? Is that the picture James has given us? It's not. The picture he's given us is of men who are too eager to teach. And I have found that to be massively true.

When somebody steps forward to teach in the Christian community, think about what they're doing. 2 Timothy 4 Preach the Word. We're talking about the Word of God.

Do you know what men and women do? And I include women. Because this is speaking about teachers. And my brothers is not... I don't believe that as in most places, the ESV likes to kind of put that in a masculine form, but it's speaking to all Christians.

I don't believe that that's anthropos there. Just speaking of males only. I don't believe that there's a gender distinction there.

You are taking it upon yourself to speak for God. You ever read through the Old Testament prophets when men stood up to speak for God who weren't called of God to do it and hear what God says? That's ground you don't... Look, even as a Christian, you're headed for God on judgment day. Even as a Christian, you do not want to have lived a life where you were so brash as to run not being sent.

Because there will be a severe judgment for you. Brethren, let's think about this. What this is saying to us is this, GCC, there should not be many teachers among you.

The general rule of the church throughout history, including in 2017 at GCC, is a few well-qualified men and women are far more valuable to the church than trying to multiply preachers and teachers of both genders throughout the church as much as possible. That is exactly what he is saying not to do. Look, we would be good to heed it if God had just said not to do it.

But the reality is, why is God saying such a thing? Judgment day. And why is judgment day such a fearful thing? Look, it's not fearful if you were faithful. It's fearful if you were unfaithful.

God's saying this obviously because most people are not qualified to teach. You say, what do you mean? Most people are not qualified to teach. He's not saying that.

He's saying be not many teachers. He's not saying that most are not qualified. Well, yes He is.

Why is God inspiring James to say GCC, don't be many teachers? Because God is saying to us only a few are men and women that ought to be in that position because I've prepared them to be in that position to communicate the Word of God and I have given them the ability to rightly discern, rightly divide, correctly interpret, and stand before God with a demonstration of the Spirit and power and ability and God-given gift to actually impart truth in a way that it actually does affect positively and build up God's people. And what he's saying is clearly the majority are not thus equipped. God, look, God does not equip everybody to teach and then tell us only a few should.

God does not waste gift. If God gifts, God intends the gift to be used. If He tells the church not to be many, it's because He has not equipped many.

We need to recognize that. This deal of homiletics, we need to start by putting God right in the center of this thing. He is the one who creates men who can prepare sermons.

He is the one who creates men who can deliver them, who can preach His Word and do it. Look, and I recognize there are different degrees of gifting. I recognize that.

Some men have a teaching gift. Scripture does speak about teaching. It does speak about preaching.

It does speak about exhortation. There are different capacities. There can be an utterance of knowledge, an utterance of wisdom, or a word.

There are different gifts. I recognize that. You can go through.

Some men prophesied. Some men spoke in tongues. Some men interpreted.

There's all manner of speaking gifts. I recognize that. There's a variation.

But the reality is that gifts are real. God doesn't design all Christians the same. We need to be thinking about the reality of whether we're entering in to something we're qualified and enabled and gifted of God to do, or whether we're not.

And look, if you're not, and you take it upon yourself to run, James is saying beware. You are going to have to give an answer for that. And when he's talking about stricter judgment, he's talking about God is not going to lightly pass over the fact that you did that.

Judgment Day. Look, you may not be called. You may go into the pulpit.

You may not be called. You may take it upon yourself to lead a Bible study. And nothing may happen now.

And James isn't saying, beware of what might happen tonight. He's saying when you die, after you die, there is a judgment. And when that judgment comes, you're going to be standing there.

Not with us. Not in the crowd. Not with the church.

You and God. And you are going to have to give an account. Brethren, this is major.

This is serious. Shoddy work handling the Word of God is going to be met with at Judgment Day. If you stand up, it is not a light thing for you to stand up and misinterpret God's Word.

You may think, oh, well, good men differ on this. Yeah, but I can tell you this. The reason that a Charles Spurgeon might disagree over against a John MacArthur does not have to do with shoddy Bible study.

It does not have to do with inadequate preparation going into the pulpit. It's one thing when men meticulously study their Bibles and under conviction and much prayer, men with gift, they by conviction come to a different interpretation of something. But to be guilty of shoddily handing God's Word and not being able to rightly divide God's truth and not be able to compare Scripture with Scripture and to step into the pulpit being a novice and you just start spouting out things or not distinguishing between your opinions and speaking authoritatively from the pulpit as though your opinions are God's Word.

Brethren, I'll tell you this. What happens when you do such things is you lead God's people astray. You want to know how serious that is in Scripture? It is a serious, serious, serious matter.

Men and women who aren't gifted or who aren't called, they lack the power. They lack the help of God. Again, I know that there are degrees.

Just because we don't preach like John Piper doesn't mean that we don't have some measure of gift. I recognize that. We're going to get to that in a second.

Look, James is clearly communicating to us. Think about this. He is clearly communicating to us that for most men and women in the church meeting God on judgment day after having tried to teach is going to be a severe reality.

That's what he's teaching. Most men and women should not tread here. That's what he's saying.

Now look, I recognize when I want to do a homiletics class, I'm getting a room full of men with desire. And desire is a good thing. Some men desire to be what God hasn't made them to be.

That's a bad desire. But when men desire to be what God has designed them to be, that's not a bad thing. So all desire to preach is not necessarily the indication of somebody who's ungodly, unspiritual, proud.

There are some, obviously, from James 3.1, there are some who should be teaching. That's clear. But being truly saved, brothers, hear me, being truly saved does not spare you from the severity of that day.

Be careful. I fear too many men take the doctrine of justification by faith. And they do things and allow things because they believe a lie.

They believe that that doctrine basically protects them from everything on judgment day. Look, I will not argue. Does that doctrine protect you from damnation? Yes.

But God says, look, James isn't interested in who's Christian and who's not. God didn't come along and say, you know, Ezekiel, are you saved? Are you not saved? That's the real issue. He didn't say that.

He said, Ezekiel, I'll tell you this, I have an expectation of the watchmen on the wall. I have an expectation, and if you're not faithful, I'm going to require their blood at your hands. You stand in the pulpit and you speak a shoddy gospel message and people go away confused, not saved, or even worse, moving in the wrong direction.

Your shoddy preaching or Bible study or teaching leads somebody to never come back under the Word again. You don't properly divide the Word of Truth and say what God says. See, that's the thing.

That's what God's saying to Ezekiel. You can go search all those passages from Ezekiel where he talks about their blood will be on your head. What does that mean? Their blood will be on your head.

I can tell you this, Ezekiel didn't take that as justification by faith. I'm glad that doctrine's there because I can basically just make null and void what God said about their blood being on my head. Don't you dare buy into that.

If you take it upon yourself to teach God's Word, God holds you to say what He says and to say it how He says it. And if you don't say it, there are icy men, they can stand in the pulpit. And it's absolutely jarbled, confused.

They have not told me to be afraid of any coming danger. They have not set me straight. They have not properly guided me.

It's confusing. It's not God's truth. Or they said something just blatantly erroneous.

Beware. Now look, I know that there are some critically thinking people in the church who might be able to sort everything out and take the good and leave the bad and be Berean. But look, teaching is meant to

teach.

Teaching is meant to lead. Teaching is meant to equip. Teaching is meant to communicate what God wants communicated.

And when you fail to do that, their blood I will require at your hand. What do you think that means? Look, you need to recognize that's the kind of thing that James has in mind when he's saying severe judgment. Don't go there, men, unless you know you're supposed to be there.

Women too. Don't go there. Because God will require such things at your hand.

You don't want to go there unless you know you're supposed to be there. I will require it. That's not just for Ezekiel.

Those things are written for our sake, upon whom the end of the ages has come. Take heed, brothers. Take heed.

Some of you in this room should be there. But you say, it sounds like you're trying to scare us all away. I want you to tread on holy ground.

And I want you to have a healthy fear. Because this is not something to toy with. This is not something, oh, neat, we're having a homiletics class.

Maybe I'll go learn how to be a preacher. This is something that is supernatural. This is something that has to do with God.

A small number of well-qualified men and women is better, obviously, James is teaching us this, than a bunch of half-qualified, not qualified, novice, can't rightly divide the Word, don't know their Bibles, not empowered by God, preachers and teachers running all over the church. Look, what we have to recognize is God expects a standard to be met when men and women take it upon themselves to open this book in front of other people and start talking about it and speaking and trying to unpack it. God has expectation.

You say, what do you mean? Men, it needs to occur to us that when we take it upon ourselves to go in the pulpit or sit in the teaching seat at the Bible study or whatever, that our goal is not simply just to make it through. Oh, I survived that. It's not simply to just get God's people to tolerate us.

Just hear this. 2 Timothy 4.2 Preach the Word. You have one of the most serious... I should not have started that text right there in verse 2. I should have started it in verse 1. Listen to this.

2 Timothy 4.2 If ever there is a severe charge in the Word, I charge you in the presence of God and implied in the presence of Christ Jesus. You need to remember when you teach, God is there. God is watching.

God is listening. Who is to judge? Don't you get the feeling this is the same thing going on? I charge you, Timothy, in light of what? In light of the fact that God and Christ are present and they are going to judge you by His appearing in His kingdom. Preach the Word.

I hear men preach their opinions as though they are God's Word. Be aware, men. You better know your Bibles if you're going to take it upon you.

Look, I know there are different degrees of knowing your Bible, but you want to be certain that you know what you're talking about before you talk about it. Preach the Word. Preach the Word.

Men, I hear men in the pulpit read a verse and they don't preach it. They don't preach the Word. They go and say all manner of stuff and don't preach what was said.

You better preach the Word if you're going to go there. Preach the Word. That means you go to God's Word and you proclaim it and you unpack it and you explain it and you apply it.

What else? How about this? 1 Corinthians 2, 4, and 5. My speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom. Did you get that? It's not going in the pulpit just to be smart, creative, unique, world's wisdom, be funny, entertain, wow people with your knowledge. Paul preached in a demonstration of the Spirit and power.

Can I tell you something? If God is not owning you as a teacher, you will not ever have those two things. Men who stand in the pulpit with no power, with no evidence of the Spirit on them. Women as well.

There are men and there are women that when they talk, God's people know it. God is in that. God's owned that.

It doesn't mean you have to preach bombastically and loud like Andy Hamilton has said before. When a man or a woman is called, they can whisper. And it will come with power.

Powerless preaching. What a curse to the church. Now look, I know I'm throwing warnings out and I'm coming at this from the negative side.

There are men and women when they stand in the pulpit, you all are seeing this. We can be honest. We'll get three men on a third Sunday.

Some come with power. Some move you. Some you tolerate.

Some you sit on the edge of your seat and you're nervous. You're afraid of what they're going to say. You know that there are differences.

You know that there is power. We live in the information age. We live in the age where it's not hard to pull up YouTube.

It's not hard to pull up the Internet and watch preaching that's powerful. Or to go on Sermon Audio. You go on Sermon Audio, you've got thousands of preachers there.

What time do you have, brother? Somebody want to take the chief seat? Chief? It may be an ignorant question, but is there a difference in between a husband who has to teach his children and his wife that there's an obligation there? Is there a difference? Well, you know there are different levels of preaching or teaching. Like in one sense, we know that we teach one another when we sing. That's clear in Scripture.

But you have to think there. When we sing, what's happening? When we sing Psalm 22 or when we sing O for a Thousand Tongues or Hail Sovereign Love, basically what's happening is Major Andre, Charles Wesley, these are men or Scripture itself. This is truth that has been laid out there.

Somebody just texted me a photo of a book. I forget who wrote it, but it said something like you can know a church's doctrine by its songs. Anybody seen that book? But see, the doctrine is established there.

Should a man take it upon himself? Is James speaking about men, don't try to teach your family the Bible? No, he's not. I think that the picture that you have there is basically the life of the church. And it doesn't mean that I can't seek to encourage you no matter where I'm at, what my calling is, that I can't seek to encourage you or tell you something out of the Bible.

I think the whole thing here is there's kind of taking it upon yourself to set yourself in this official capacity of being the teacher. That seems to be the kind of thing that he's got in mind. But look, at every level, I think the thing that we have to come to grips with is this, to whatever level we take it upon ourselves to be the voice of God or to speak as ambassadors for Christ, to speak in God's behalf, to the level you do that, you're going to be judged for that.

A man who's shoddy and sloppy sitting at his family table and teaching his children wrongly is going to be met with severity. But I think the issue that we have is be not many teachers. You don't want to take that and say, so therefore, not many fathers should teach their children.

That's obviously not what he means. I think if we're just using common sense, we know that's not what he means because we can go somewhere else and we can see that fathers are charged very specifically with a responsibility to bring up their children in fear and admonition of the Lord. Does that say that only a few of us should sing? Because, after all, isn't teaching and singing put together in Scripture? Well, obviously it doesn't mean that.

But the issue is that when you take it upon yourself within the church, I think the issue is obviously James is teaching that at a certain level, there should only be few. You all see that. I mean, he's clearly saying.

He's not saying that because there's different levels of teaching and it's kind of indistinct about where people are and how high they should go and all of this, and so therefore, there's no place to really talk about there being only a few teachers. He doesn't think that way. He's not saying that.

He's not saying because every one of us should be exhorting one another and every one of us should be stirring up one another to love and good works and every one of us should be applying Scripture when we do that, therefore, there should be many teachers. All of you should be teachers. See, he doesn't reason that way because he's obviously taking this beyond that level.

He's obviously taking it to the level where you have people who are basically doing what I'm doing right now, who gather people together to disseminate and supposedly speak in God's behalf. It's that kind of thing. It's that kind of thing in the church where people are taking it upon themselves to be teachers.

And you can understand how all you have to do is look at 1 Corinthians 14. Get a feel for it. It sounds like they pretty much had open services in those early days.

Less structured perhaps than we have. There seemed to be an opportunity for almost anybody to be able to stand up and say something. There was obviously opportunity.

Now look, it's in the context of spiritual gifts. Paul certainly is not encouraging people to be doing things in the church that they're not gifted to do. But you kind of had much less structure.

It seems like there was a possibility there for people to be able to stand up and speak pretty much when they wanted to. And Paul's trying to limit and bring into check some of the disorderliness that was going on at least at Corinth and perhaps in many of the early churches. And he's putting a check there.

Two or three perhaps. But he's seeking to limit the number of people. Anyway, any other comments? Life is definitely a connection.

Jesus Himself condemns the Pharisees. They sit in Moses' seat. They preach and they do not do.

Look, to whom much is given, much is required. You have that reality in Romans 2. What does Paul say to these Jews who were in the church at Rome? He said, you guys think you're instructors. You think you're teachers.

You who teach this, don't you teach yourself? There is that reality. There is the reality that we are expected to live up to the light that we have. Anyway, I had dealt with 2 Timothy where to preach the Word, 1 Corinthians, demonstration of spirit and power.

Let's keep going. Matthew 28.20 Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. All things that Jesus Christ has commanded.

The Great Commission, this is what we're to be doing. Teaching all things whatsoever He commanded. Very difficult if you don't know your Bibles.

Very difficult if you don't know what He commanded. Very difficult if you have difficulty interpreting what He commanded. We need to know what is meant by what is said in Scripture.

Many men quote Scripture, misapply it, misinterpret it. We need to know the intention. We need to know the God-given meaning behind these things.

Yes, there is the reality of life as well. I guarantee you this. If you are teaching something and not living it, God is going to hold you accountable.

If you go to the text that Jesus talked about where some are going to be dealt a severe beating than others, here's what He said. He said, that servant who knew to do his Master's will and didn't do it is going to be beaten far more severely than the servant who didn't know the Master's will and didn't do it. Guess what we have there? We have the reality that the more light you have, the more God requires you to live up to that light.

And if you don't, if you violate the light that you have, and obviously if you're a teacher, what's the expectation? That you're going to have more light than those that you're teaching. Why? Because that's what teachers do. Teachers teach.

Teachers help the ignorance of those who don't know. If you're discipling somebody, a disciple is a learner or a follower. If somebody is being disciplined, if disciple means a learner, that implies a teacher.

A teacher is teaching. If you are teaching, it is expected that you are living up to the light that you have. That is also a reality.

But all that Christ commanded, we are to preach the Word, do it in demonstration of Spirit and power. All that Christ commanded, how about this? 2 Timothy 2.15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one

approved, a worker, who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling or dividing the Word of Truth. A worker.

Approved. A worker. I mean, somebody... Man, Andy Hamilton said this.

We are men of a book. If you don't know this book, do not take a pulpit. Andy said in a class much like this, he said, men, if you aren't readers, sit down.

We need to be men who study to show themselves approved. Rightly dividing the Word of Truth. You know what that means? Rightly dividing.

It's like rightly dissecting. The ability to rightly interpret. To rightly give the sense to Scripture.

If you stand in the pulpit, if you sit in a Bible study, and you don't do that, judgment day is coming. 1 Timothy 1.7 Desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. 1 Timothy 1.7 Notice that.

They desire to be teachers. They're without understanding. He's dealing with something specific, but let's broaden it out.

Because the principle's there. Men, I can't tell you the number of times over the last years, men come into the church, they want to declare very, very soon after they come, I'm called to this. I'm called to that.

I'm called to another thing. I should be a teacher. Many men want to teach.

These people are desiring to be teachers without understanding. Do you know what Paul was telling Timothy to do with men like that? Anybody open up to 1 Timothy 1.7? What is Paul telling Timothy to do with men like that? Charge them not to teach different doctrines. We're charged to preach the Word.

Charged in light of a God who judges us. Preach the Word. Anyways, look, the truth is to take upon yourself as a place of spiritual instructor is to take a responsibility upon yourself that's hard to discharge.

What you're being told is it's not an easy thing to be a teacher. You need God to make you into such a person. To be a spiritual instructor is to take upon yourself something, it's a duty, it's a responsibility that is not easy to carry out.

It's not easy to discharge this faithfully and judgment day is coming. Men, what I'm saying in all of this, don't run rashly. Don't run presumptuously.

Don't be hasty, especially when the gifts and graces and calling for such a position as this is only found in a few men. Because that's what James 3.1 is saying. Be few, because there are few.

Clearly what he's saying is it won't be good on judgment day if the majority try to do this. Just a few. Let me say this again.

If you don't consider judgment day, don't do this. And I recognize, look, men can go into the pulpit and mistake the fear they feel for being a fear of God, taking this responsibility in a great way, when all it is is a fear of man. They're going up before men, has them terrified.

And so they feel that this is this great lofty thing. It would be no different if you had to go before the faculty at UTSA if you were given your term paper. The same kind of fear.

Listen, there are men who tremble because other men are out there. And there are men who tremble because they're doing this in the sight of God. And there's a huge difference between that.

You need to be thinking about the fact that you're going to stand accountable for every single Bible study, every single sermon, every single exhortation. You're going to have to give an account for it. And if you're not equipped to do it, better off to stand down.

That's what James is saying. Far better! Because if you stand down, you're not going to be judged for it. Better not to be judged for it than to be judged for it and have it be found shoddy work.

And that you did not represent God accurately and that you went being unsent. That's the gist of this. Man, I want to stress this.

Orthodoxy. I mean rightly dividing the Word. Do you know how much, especially in the pastoral epistles, do you know how much emphasis is given to this? You need to know what you're teaching.

If ever there's anything that I know causes people in our church to cringe, it's when we've got guys in the pulpit who are saying things that the vast majority of the church out there recognizes this isn't true. But the problem is, yes, you have some advanced Christians, some who know their Bibles well, but you know what? You get brand new Christians, you get novices, you get lost people that are visiting, and they don't know. They don't know.

And you've just misguided them. You've confused them. Orthodoxy.

Just listen to some of these. Don't look at them. 1 Timothy 1.3 I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus, so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine.

We just heard that one. Any different doctrine. No different doctrines than what? Than that which has been entrusted to us.

That body of truth. The apostolic teaching that has been entrusted to us. They gave themselves to the apostles' doctrine.

You need to know what the apostles' doctrine is if you're going to teach in God's church. It's not enough to have some wild ideas. It's not enough to have debated election.

You need to know thoroughly. You need to be gleaning all the time. Listen, I can tell you this.

If God has not so designed you as to be a person who is hungry to study the Word of God, hungry to find out its meaning, hungry to read about it, to understand, to dig, to rightly divide, if that's not the way God has wired you, it is not likely that He has wired you to be a prominent teacher, preacher, in the church of God. It's just the case. You've got to know this book if you're going to teach it.

And one of the ways that you're going to not bring forth unorthodox interpretations is to know the Bible cover to cover. The more you know this book, the more when you get into something and you start feeling led away into some maybe perverted interpretation of something, oh, but you remember this verse over here and this one over here, and they pull you back to center. Guys who are novices, guys who don't know their Bibles well, they get in, look, there are certain places in the Bible that sound like they're saying something, that when you compare Scripture to Scripture, you see more accurately what's being said and

it's not the general feel of the verse, it has a more specific meaning or maybe it means something that it doesn't sound like it's saying and you know that because of other verses.

But you can be led astray. Orthodoxy, it's huge. Brothers, you need to know what you're speaking.

You're speaking on behalf of God. You need to know what God actually meant by what God said throughout the Scripture. You need to know the Word if you're going to preach the Word.

Preach the Word in season, out of season. How can you do it if you don't know it? You need to know it. It's not just enough to know how Paul Washer preaches or Piper or MacArthur and seek to imitate that or sound like them.

It's not enough to read a Spurgeon sermon. It's not enough. Yes, you may read a Spurgeon sermon.

Your whole soul might be inflamed. You might recognize it's good doctrine. God uses it.

But look, you can turn around easily and try to parrot that and go off into some unorthodox statements or stress something out of balance which they didn't do. But you run with something. Why? Because you don't know Scripture.

We've got to know our Bibles. You've got to be students of Scripture. Got to be.

Orthodoxy. You hear it. This is 1 Timothy 4.16. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers.

You talk about a big issue, you say, what's that? Isn't Timothy already saved? Why does He say keep a close watch on your teaching? Because by it you save yourself? Yeah, do you know? Preachers and their hearers become lost by bad teaching. You say, that doesn't fit just right with my doctrine that once saved, always saved. Well, you can take that doctrine and submit it.

Kick its knees out from under it. Make it submit to that reality. Brothers, you know what one of the problems is? We have so bought into TULIP and the way it's stressed and the way it's communicated, which by the way, TULIP is not a Biblical designation, and stressing those five doctrines is certainly not the stress of the Scriptures.

It's man-made. It was created. Basically, we let the devil rule that day.

You say, oh, it was the reformers. Yeah, the reformers were responding to error. Isn't it interesting? The devil sets up five errors.

God's people come along and answer those errors and they become five of the major pillars. You see how the devil did that? He basically let us into this stressing. Brothers, one of the reasons we can't take some verses for what they're actually saying to us is because we're so blinded by the five points of Calvinism that we just can't see straight.

You know it's true. Once saved, always saved. Perseverance of the saints.

We're one of the elect. We're saved. We're in.

So how can I really take seriously that if I don't give due attention, careful attention to myself and my teachings, I and my hearers could be lost? But that's the way Scripture teaches. And Paul's not messing

around. He's not playing games.

He's dead serious. You allow shoddy teaching, people go to hell. If you don't come to that interpretation from that passage, I don't believe you're rightly dividing the Word.

Saved? From what? He's talking about salvation here. It has to do with the teaching that comes forth from the pulpit, from Bible studies, in the church every week. And when men don't give due attention to it and aren't careful, people perish.

And the preachers themselves perish. That's exactly what that's teaching. Titus 2.7-8 Show yourselves in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned.

You see the sound speech. Let's back up Titus 2.1. As for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Titus 1.9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine.

I know this is talking about overseers here. And you can say, well, isn't it possible I have teachers in the church that aren't overseers? Yes, it is. But my point is this, it's the emphasis of sound doctrine.

You're not qualified if you don't bring forth sound doctrine. 2 Timothy 2.15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling or dividing the Word of Truth. We heard that one already.

2 Timothy 1.13 Follow the pattern of sound words. 1 Timothy 6.20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Here's the thing, a deposit has been given to Grace Community Church.

At this point in history, at this time, in this place, we are the people entrusted with this. Guard it. How are you going to guard it if you don't know it? And God's going to hold us accountable to guard it.

See, the thing about all these things is, like 1 Timothy 6.3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he's puffed up with conceit, understands nothing. Here you have somebody trying to teach. He teaches a different doctrine.

He understands nothing. You know what the problem is? We never think it's us. It's always them.

But the reality is, there were people in the church at Ephesus in the day when Timothy was there and it was true of them. They might not have thought it was. People don't admit it is.

The people that went out from them never said, we're anti-Christ. People never believed they're the false prophet, they're the false apostle, they're the false teacher. But men, what's a false teacher? A false teacher, a lot of times we think, lost man, a messenger of Satan.

That wouldn't be wrong. But look, when a Christian stands in a pulpit and teaches what does not accord with sound doctrine, he is a false teacher. His teaching is false.

A false teacher is a teacher who saved or lost, is not properly representing God. And judgment day is coming. That's the thing.

That is the thing James wants us aware of. Judgment day is coming. Judgment day is coming.

And when you go a little bit further into James, he basically talks about stumbling. Now, stumbling may have the idea of sin. But remember, he's talking about teachers.

And maybe, yes, maybe he's emphasizing aspects of the life. But you have to recognize, as he carries the argument on, he's talking about what a little member can do. He's not just talking about the overall life.

He's talking about the havoc that can be wreaked by that little member. How much so when it's dealing with men's souls? Life and death. Something that if you're not careful, Paul tells Timothy, you and your listeners might perish if you don't keep careful watch.

What terrible destruction tongues can cause. That's where he goes on. A little member can do so much damage.

So, you're saying if a man preaches something false on the pulpit, you categorize him as a false teacher? I think I understand the sense you're saying that, but is that something we should say? Is that how we should speak? Like if a brother, like John MacArthur, who we don't agree with eschatology or who we think may be off on a certain point that's not an essential core truth of Christianity, would you classify that as a false teacher? Yeah, we know the classification. We know how we generally use the word. And I'm not trying to change our mindset on how we use the word.

I'm just saying, even if you're a Christian, you stand in the pulpit and you say what's false. I mean, let's put an accurate title on it. To the degree you're being false is to the degree you're being a false teacher up there.

I mean, clearly James is telling us judgment day is coming. And if you take it upon yourself to teach, you've got something to answer for. And to whatever degree you've been false... We see these men who were seeking to build with wood, hay, and stubble.

And even though they're saved, so is by fire in the end. You definitely have Paul describing men. We all have ministries.

And those ministries are going to be put to the fire of God's judgment. And look, we're just faced with a reality. Something's going to burn up.

You don't want to pour your life into something that's going to be burned up. I don't. I don't want that.

Look, to basically answer your question, yes, you're right. I don't think if you hear some eschatology come from John MacArthur that you don't agree with, that you call him a false teacher. That's not how we want to use the term.

When you hear Joel Osteen, yes, he's a false teacher. We recognize that so often when we use it, we mean a messenger of Satan. We mean somebody who's crept into the church and is seeking.

They're a vessel of Satan. But I remember that Spurgeon did a message on God's people being servants of Satan. It's worth reading.

The very last picture he creates is one where God's people... maybe you've seen the movie Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe when the witch comes up over the horizon with all of her troops. Spurgeon paints a picture

like that so you can see the enemy coming up over the hill. There's the devil at the front.

They've got all their banners and all the hordes of hell. And he paints this picture of seeing you, a Christian, standing in those ranks. A powerful picture.

He's basically describing how God's people can be tools of the devil. And what's for certain is that if we're not called to teach and preach and we take it upon ourselves to do it, we're not advancing the kingdom. We certainly are being a stumbling block.

We're putting ourselves in potential risk of having people's blood on our head. We're standing in a position where there's going to be a severe judgment. Men, you don't want to be stepping into the pulpit if you're somebody who's blown about by every winded doctrine.

You have no foundations. We see men like that. Oh, they believe this thing, and then they're blown over here and they believe this thing.

Those are the kind of men, untold damage caused by men who stand there. They're blown about. They really have no footings.

They have no foundation in the Word. They're unsettled. The wind blows this way and they go that way.

And it blows the other way and they go that way. There's no deep moorings there where they're fastened in. It sounds like they say one thing and then they say another thing.

It sounds like there's uncertainty. You do not want men in the pulpit that are uncertain about what the truth is. Just blown around.

Blown this way. Blown that way. How much untold damage, James tells us, is created by the tongue.

Now look, James is clearly saying the general tenor of Grace Community Church is not going to be one where everybody is running around being teachers. I don't know if we can see that. Brothers, not many.

It's not biblical. It's not biblical that everybody should be taking it upon themselves to start a Bible study. Not biblical everybody should be aiming at their shot to get in the pulpit.

Not biblical that we should have everybody trying to be in a place where they can just seek to mentor. They can seek to disciple. They can seek to gather people around them.

Brethren, we have far too many people in the church who are immature, who are novices, who don't know the Word. And I'm telling you, we do not want to encourage this. Look, if you love your brothers and sisters, to be pressing them to be where they ought not to be is to not love them.

Not with judgment day coming and not with such warnings as these. You do not want to be pressing people. There are people who need to be pressed.

There are people who are gifted. There are people that ought to be in these places. But we have judgment day coming and we want to be faithful to our brothers and our sisters.

You stir them up to love and good works, but that doesn't mean... Look, some people have the idea that to stir up a brother or sister to love and good works means I need to stir them up to be a teacher. It doesn't mean that, brethren. That is not it.

Brethren, we want to encourage one another to use the gifts that God has given to each of us. And God nowhere in Scripture tells us that it's just universal that He gives the gift of preaching and teaching, leading Bible studies, being mentors, being disciples is the calling of everybody in the church. It's not there.

A few well-qualified is definitely the picture rather than just multitudes who are not necessarily. Brethren, calling. What time do we have? 1048.

Okay. I have some questions I want to give you before we finish. In light of what you just said... We didn't start until like 1015, so come on guys, you've got to give me about a full two hours.

In light of what you said, it's a very blunt question. I agree with all of that, but if that's the case, why are men being called on to exhort in the way they have been over the past six months? Because our desire is to seek... Here's the thing. Our desire as elders is to seek out men who have gifts that we may not have come up on our radar if we didn't give that opportunity to.

But in light of this, yeah, our five elders should be extremely careful on who's being revisited to take those slots. And I think it's fair to say that decisions are made behind the scenes with regards to these things. It's not necessarily... We don't stand up and announce, okay, brethren, we had three men stand up last Sunday, our elders got together on Thursday, had our elders' meeting, and brother X passed and the other two failed, and so you will not see the other two ever again.

But that is happening. And not seeing them kind of in a humorous way, but truthful indicates that very thing, right? That kind of ties into my next question. I just wanted to know if you had anything to say about the difference between what you described as vetting in Spurgeon's Day and kind of what you elders may do in the back of everything versus selecting or even maintaining a pastor, elder, teacher based on the blessing or the help there of the congregation.

Does that fit anywhere into 1 Corinthians 14.32? Yeah, we're moving in that direction. In fact, I'll get there if we have time. But I just wanted to say shouldn't one of those be not completely dropped, but doesn't one of those carry more weight than the other? For example, you as an elder, y'all plurally as elders vetting a man based on what you hear and see, not only teaching but in his life, shouldn't that hold more weight? And especially in light of this verse versus a group of people or even a whole church in total unanimous decision, which sounds bad, but if they say, oh, he's such a help to me, but those other things are lacking.

The other prophets are not really weighing him the same way. How do you deal with that? Well, here's the thing. We would recognize... Think about elder.

Elder implies older. We're not talking about age. We're talking about maturity.

So there is an assumption that those who are elders have a degree of maturity. Overseer. We have a responsibility to make decisions oftentimes with regards to these things that perhaps other people don't.

Pastor. The idea of shepherding. I mean, we want to make sure that people are being led to the green pastures and the still waters to eat and drink with whatever's coming across from the pulpit.

We recognize that as leaders, we're in a position where we have to ultimately make decisions with regards to this, but at the same time, we recognize we're not the only spiritual people in the church. We recognize that we're not the only people who have to be taken into account when it comes to the degree to which somebody's preaching profits or doesn't profit. I am listening to what people are saying throughout the

church.

I want to get a feel for... Look, I know this. I almost exclusively listen to Martyn Lloyd-Jones if I'm going to listen to anybody. I think most of you know, the first ten years of my Christian life, I listened to repeatedly, over and over, more than a thousand John MacArthur sermons.

That was kind of my seminary. The next ten years, I listened to an enormous amount of John Piper. For maybe the last five years, enormous amount of Lloyd-Jones.

I rarely listen to anybody else except in the church. My standard for preaching is extremely high. And so, if I'm getting this diet of that kind of preaching, and now I set it side by side with something else, I recognize that that may taint my ability to be really fair.

I have a high standard for preaching. I personally believe that the pulpit ministry is, if not the most important, it is one of the most important aspects of the church. God raises up men to equip the saints.

People gather together. Yes, they sing, they worship in different ways, but the first and primary thing you find there when the early church gathered was they gave themselves to the apostles' doctrine. And the ability to communicate that.

Personally, if I were in a position where I wasn't pastoring, I didn't have a church, I was looking for a church like so many people are, my number one item on selecting a church is going to be the preaching. It just is. If you sit under bad preaching, poor preaching, powerless preaching, that's bad.

Powerful preaching transforms your life. It has mine. It's affected me.

It's convicted me. God has used it to change my life. Poor, pathetic, not powerful, not clear, even mixed with unorthodox statements.

Guys preaching their own opinions. That doesn't help. That doesn't help God's people.

I think this is something to put a really high standard on. But the reality is this. I have preferences.

You have preferences. We're wired different ways. And I see it even in our elders.

We can sit down with our elders. Two of us can think, we don't get anything out of this guy's preaching. And maybe the other three guys are okay.

I recognize that I'm listening. Certain people communicate certain things about different men. And I want to hear that.

And even if I'm feeling like I may sit and I hear this guy. It's happened with my wife. I come home and say, what did you think of so-and-so's sermon? And she says, well, what do you think? Well, typically when she doesn't answer but reflects it back to me, she's wanting to be kind.

And I'll say, well, I think that's one of the best ones he did. And then my wife, her excuse is typically, well, I was tired. That's how she gets past having to say negative things at times.

Or she will say to me, that was a tremendous message. And I'll stay quiet because I'm thinking, well, I wasn't tired. I was paying very good attention.

And I'm sorry. But see, I recognize that that can have as much to do with me, the hearer, as anything. I mean, maybe I'm spiritually not where I should have been.

I mean, I can remember Spurgeon. Many of you know the story where he was under a dark cloud. He just bailed on preaching.

Went out into the countryside. Walked in. Sat in the back row.

Actually heard the preacher preach his message. And he went up. It's like God met with him.

God caused the sun to come out. His depression, the clouds of darkness blew away. He went up and he was so full of joy and he greeted the pastor.

And he never gave him any hard time for preaching his message. He was just elated. And he said the guy wasn't gifted.

No, he was preaching a good sermon probably. It came from Spurgeon. He said there was nothing really impressive about the guy's preaching.

But he recognized he loved that truth. He loved that Gospel. And the clouds kind of blew away.

And basically the point of that is here's Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers of all time. And he's able to hear a man who's not a great preacher and rejoice in the truth even though that truth was not delivered necessarily with any power or ability like he has to set forth the same message. He was elated.

God used it. I recognize that there are times I hear a guy preach and me not gleaning anything may speak about my spiritual state as much as anything. So I want to be careful.

I just want to be careful. But I recognize we can have good days, bad days spiritually. I can say to my wife, I think that was the best message I've ever heard him speak.

She might have been tired. Sometimes we are tired. Sometimes we're spiritually not where we need to be.

Sometimes we're spiritually where we ought to be. And it's just a great message or it's a crummy message. So, we're evaluating that all the time.

Some of us tend to be more critical. Some less critical. Some are willing to overlook certain gaps more than others among the elders.

Some of us are looking for different things. Many of you, what makes a good sermon? For some people, it's one thing. For some people, it's another.

Some people, if the preacher's voice exceeds a certain level, they just shut off. It's like, I just can't be yelled at like that. I mean, other people, it's like, somebody said just recently to me, you know you look left 85% of the time, hardly ever look right.

Some people, they're traumatized by that. I can't even hear anything he says because we are trying to deal with this. We are trying to sort through these things.

One time, Diego came down from the pulpit and he said, well, I think it was on the airplane, he said, you guys are impossible, speaking of us elders, in as much as how little we say after guys get done. Well, it's

not that we're not thinking. I think the thing is that here's the thing.

Just taking James 3, if we're running all these guys through Third Sunday exhortations, if you just take James 3 and what's said there, is it more likely that many would succeed at it or that a few would succeed at it? Now, I don't know how you guys are wired, but I know this, you start talking to a man about his preaching, I mean, it's like talking to him about his wife or his children. Very sensitive. We tend to be, as Piper has said, we tend to be a very thin-skinned generation.

Here's the problem. We can forget that God gifts. And so the thing is, that if I can't preach, it's not failure on my part.

It's God's gifted me for something else. You see, we are so wired to connect it to self-failure. You know what really failure is? It's when God hasn't gifted you and you keep thrusting yourself where He hasn't gifted you.

That's failure. It is not failure to have to have people tell you, brother, your gift's not teaching. That's sovereignty.

That's not personal failure. We tend to forget that. We are so wired by, well, if I don't get into the pulpit, if I don't get into the chief seat in the Bible study, if I'm not leading a cell group or grace group, if I'm not involved heading up this ministry, preaching in the prison, doing this, then I'm a failure.

Brethren, that's not true. But we are so wired to think that way. And because we are so wired to think that way, to have somebody come along and tell you, brother, like Andy Hamilton says, brother, we love you.

But he talks about taking the frog and trying to get the frog to fly and it comes down and splats. There's a place to take a young bird and do that. But see, what he's saying is God has designed some in the church to be birds and some to be frogs.

Even that illustration probably isn't good. Because you know what it makes it sound like? Well, bird, a lofty creature, flies high. That's a great thing to be a frog.

Oh, and who wants to be a frog in the church, right? He should probably make the one who can't do it into the more elegant. That would be the better picture. In light of 1 Corinthians 12, which is basically saying, look, there's no undesirable part.

Well, there's parts we cover, but every part is needy. Every part is valuable. And see, what happens is we get men who feel like if they can't be in the pulpit, if they can't be in the leadership, if they can't lead, if they can't somehow be teaching, they're a failure.

They're second class. I'm a frog. You've got to change that picture.

I'm going to work on creating different imagery. It's okay when Andy said it, because he was saying it to a room full of pastors, missionaries, and preachers. But I don't think it's a good thing to say generally to the church, because it does give that kind of air that's bad.

And we need to be willing to let the church... This is the idea that we're tested in community. Brothers, look out among yourselves. I recognize that's not specifically teacher, but that's the way we do things in the church where our gifts are tested in community.

And you know this, if God hasn't gifted you, God hasn't called you. If God hasn't given you the ability to teach, He certainly hasn't called you to teach. God doesn't call somebody, not give them the gifts, thrust them into a position that they're going to fail at.

God equips the bird with wings so that when you throw it up, its wings may need to be strengthened, but there's a whole difference. Maybe we use an ostrich. An ostrich has wings.

No matter how hard he flaps those wings, he's never going to go airborne. And that's what we have to be looking for. And you know what? In the past, especially early on being the only elder in the church, I've had to talk to men about their preaching.

And it's not easy. It is difficult. And you know what? I think we need to hear the whole church, not just the elders, but I think there needs to be a general sampling.

Men, don't rely on your wife's opinion of you. Your wife's opinions are rarely objective. And I would say, you know, Papa, you come down from the pulpit, Papa is a kind man.

He's going to pat you on the back. Brethren, I'll tell you this, there's always somebody in the church that's going to pat you on the back. That is not the way you want to measure.

Papa's extremely kind. I can tell you this, to be honest with a man about his teaching and preaching in a way that discourages that man from ever attempting that again, which needs to be done in the church. It's a hard thing to do.

And most people in the church won't do it. Unless, you know, you look people in the eyeballs. We were on that plane ride.

Diego, you know, eyeball to eyeball, we're sitting next to each other and he asked me blunt questions. A lot of men don't want to do that. Again, because they're afraid of failure.

They're afraid of negative comments, negative criticism. But if you really want to know, look, if you're gifted, you know what it means? If God has designed you to be there, it means that when you go there, God's people aren't going to just endure what you're doing. They're going to look forward to it.

They're going to profit from it. It's going to build them up. It's going to instruct them.

It's going to equip them. It's going to help them. If God's people are not experiencing that, God's people know the sound of God's voice coming through a man.

And they know when the power of God attends it. And they know when it isn't. Now look, there's a place.

That's what this class is about. There's a place for throwing the bird up in the air and helping it strengthen its wings. But we need to be honest with one another.

And if we are honest with James 3, then the reality is, not many at GCC are going to be found to be men and women who ought to be in that position. Tim, I'm sure I've told you this, that in spite of the powerful preaching or everything you've said is valuable, but I'm sure I've told you this, that your most powerful message is your testimony of your life. Well, look, there's no question that men that stand in the pulpit need a life that backs the truth they preach.

But you don't want to stop with what Pop said, because here's the problem. James isn't assuming necessarily that most people in the church are just ungodly. Now I know if you follow the argument concerning the tongue, many stumble.

Talking about many that stumble in the church and the ability to control the tongue and everything, it doesn't stop there. What I mean is there is a reality of gifting. If we go look at the primary passages in Scripture, there is such a thing as a teaching gift.

If we look at the appropriate passages in Scripture concerning a call, look, there is a reality in Scripture that men are appointed. You go in the old, you go in the new. Men are called out.

Men, you ought to have some subjective indication through prayer, through fasting, through seeking God, through the feedback of the people of God. There ought to be some subjective reality where God is indicating to you that He has called you to this. More than just you have a desire for it.

And more than you just have a godly life. Godly life does not equal teacher. Now, teachers who don't have godly lives, yeah, you're right.

A man has no authority if he goes in the pulpit and he doesn't have a life to back what he teaches. And he's going to face God on judgment day. But it takes more than being a godly man.

Look, our objective is not to look out among us and look for the few men who have godly testimony. That's not it. We need the few men, which are going to be even fewer, who have godly testimony and some evidence of God's gift at the same time upon their life.

Who have an aptness to teach. Who have quality of life. Who can stand in the pulpit with a sense of a power of God.

A knowledge of Scripture. Rightly dividing the truth. That thing with the tongue, stumbling in many ways, I mean, sometimes it's just a matter of yes, life, what we speak, bad things coming out of the mouth along with good things.

I recognize that that's all in the picture there. One of the ways a man can stumble with his tongue, I've seen this before. Godly men in the church, they stand up and they cannot get their thoughts that are up here in their brains to come fluidly out on their tongue to where they're able to communicate a fluid, orthodox, consistent message.

Communicate their thoughts in a way where people can follow. Some men, you have no idea where they're going. You have no idea what they know.

It's just they're not wired that way. They're not wired by God to study this book, stand up before God's people with such a quality of life and character of life and the gift to unpack that Word in a way that God's people profit. I think some are more teachers, some are more preachers, some may be more exhorters among those who are gifted, but not all are gifted to do that.

And we just need to recognize that. Few. There should be few.

Brothers, few. And so we want to look for that and we want to try to cultivate that and we want to give opportunity to cultivate that. And some may feel like maybe, well, we think this guy's not a very good preacher and we think that the elders have given too much opportunity.

Perhaps. Brothers, it's not an easy thing. And I can tell you that very often, even among the five elders, I often am in the place where I'm needing to tell men things.

And it's hard. And I don't like to be in that position. I don't like to be in the position to tell the man, because I know his response isn't going to be, Praise the Lord! He's made it clear my calling is serving.

Most men don't respond that way. Most men are hurt. Crushed.

Their pride is crushed. Their sense of failure is, you know... That's just true. Right? Again, I mean, look, the proof is in the pudding.

Men who God has gifted, women who God has gifted, God's people are going to hear the voice of their Savior through the mouth. They're going to be impacted. They're going to be helped.

Gift is God's grace. God has so equipped somebody that God's grace pours through that person. That person is a channel.

It doesn't matter what gift. It can be a gift of serving. It can be a gift of teaching.

It can be a gift of mercy. It can be a gift of administration. Whatever you want to put in there.

But the reality is this, gift means God has enabled that individual for the common good. That's in 1 Corinthians 12. For the common good.

And so the thing we have to ask ourselves and be honest with is when you seek to serve the Lord in a certain capacity, does it minister to the common good of the church? Somebody says, you know, I have the gift of encouragement. Whenever they try to encourage you, you're not encouraged. Conclusion of the matter? The handwriting's on the wall.

You know, basically what we want is we want to be thick-skinned enough to really hear what people are saying. Look, it is just wise that if you're picking up, you're not gifted to do something to head the other way. To run away from it.

Look, what we want is we want to go before God on judgment day having sought to give ourselves to what He gifted us to do. Think about a wasted life. Think about... There was a preacher.

Basically our church. Not just me. I did.

I told the man first. But the church basically at large told the man he's not gifted. He said, the church cannot take away my calling.

I would say the church affirms a calling. And for you to press on with some calling when the church says, brother, we don't believe you have that calling, that is to waste your life. Can you imagine giving yourself to something your whole life that God hasn't called you to do? That is a waste.

Why? Just because of some pride? Just because of how other men think about me? Brother, this is all about what God thinks of me. God has designed me. God has designed you.

God has designed you a specific way. Every single Christian has been designed with certain gifts. And you know what? Those gifts are evident by what it is that we do that turns out for the common good.

And what that is, Peter kind of divides it into two classes. You've got the speaking. You've got the serving. You find in other places in Scripture they're divided up more specifically. But we just need to figure out what category we're in and not be led into this foolish thinking that I'm a failure if I didn't make it at teaching. It's crazy.

It's not true. Is there a reason that kind of going back to what Bobby hit on with regard to prophets being subject to prophets or the idea of the elders or those in authority really having the last word on who's going to preach and teach. I get what you were saying about you have a higher standard and so things that may be a little more subjective like power or whatever.

But on the things that you named that seem more objective like men speaking their opinions or men not having a clear thought or speak the text but don't even preach it. Are there reasons that you guys would be as elders that happens objectively enough people in the church say oh wow I was powerful I was helped. But objectively you could say even if whether it's a Martin Luther Jones or not there's opinions.

There's not preaching the word. There's not clarity. Is there a reason that you guys would say yeah but we still think that this person should be there.

And the reason I ask this is because there was a brother that I knew that is very similar in the pulpit for whatever reason not clear a lot of times did not preach the text a lot of opinions and emotions coming forward. But on the side talking to him one on one he knows a lot he knows the Bible he's very orthodox and even one on one can be very helpful but in the pulpit for whatever reason that did not come across. And so I guess I'm just wondering is that would that be the reason or is there a reason that that might happen? I'm not suggesting that that is happening a ton I'm just wondering I mean have you seen that where there's those sorts of things that you're saying are probably not possible? Well we recognize look I recognize this for starters I recognize that 1 Timothy 5 seems to indicate like I'm just going to isolate first right off the five elders I recognize that 1 Timothy 5 seems to indicate that you have elders who rule well and some who are specially given to the preaching and teaching in the church giving themselves to the Word.

Here's the thing and I think this needs to be communicated especially as we multiply elders that I don't believe see we're kind of at saturation point as far as preaching goes. The other elders I mean I'd bounce this off them once in a while are you sure you want me doing all the eleven o'clocks? It seems like it's the consensus of everybody that that's what they among the elders that that's where we should be right now. In 2017 I'm trying not to be gone at all.

I feel like the last two years I've been gone a lot I'm trying not to be gone. I'm going to be gone to Denton and perhaps Switzerland but aside from that I'm planning on no preaching trips other than that unless they be included in the Switzerland trip. So basically what that means is I'm filling almost all the eleven o'clocks.

What that does is it kind of puts us at saturation point at GCC because I'm going to give you my personal assessment here. I believe that David Butterbaugh I believe if we're assessing I believe he's more of a teacher than a preacher. I believe he's the kind of guy that can unpack.

When I set up the preaching schedule I'm very minded to have him seek to speak once a month. James wants to do this three man rotation. This was something that he introduced.

This is a ministry he's running with. That takes another Sunday. I desire to give James one week a month.

What that's doing is John doesn't set himself forth as being primarily a preacher. John is an encourager. That doesn't mean that he doesn't have an aptness to teach.

His teaching is different. Our teaching can be different. I think what's going to happen is we have reached saturation point.

If we begin to multiply more elders, what I recognize is this, there is not going to be opportunity for everybody to be preaching from the pulpit here at Grace. And so, decisions even have to be made among the elders who are most gifted to be in the Word. Who should be there? Who has God called to be there? Who should not be there? And I recognize even there, some are more gifted, some are less gifted.

The issue is if we just asked is there an aptness to teach? We might say yes, there is. But does that equate to should they be in the pulpit all the time? Look, I create the schedule. I feel the tension even among the elders.

This person wants to be here more. Everybody wants to be back at Grace more. You know, trying to put people in the different church plants.

Guys have desires. Especially among the elders, guys want a presence in the GCC pulpit. I feel that.

Oftentimes I put together the schedule and even among the five elders. Not John. But I feel among the others, well, you know, a sense that I want to be doing more of this or less of this.

It puts me in a difficult spot to have to make that schedule actually because by how I use people or don't use people, I'm constantly making a statement about something, about how I feel. And then it comes up, and even among the elders, there's some bit of, well, I know you have me over here and up at this church plant, but I'd really like to not be gone from GCC that much and I'd like to be able to have the pulpit presence there. And I feel that wrestling.

Well, then we come down out of that. We come out of those five elders. And then we've got other men of various gift.

And what's being processed all the time is is there really any gift that needs to be cultivated? And how long should we work with a guy trying to call the faith to gift? And then of course we get these church plants and it's like, well, we need manpower there. And so sometimes somebody may be perpetuated throughout the history of our church because in the past it was Laredo, it was Corpus. Sometimes men have been perpetuated in the amount they're being used simply because of a need far more than maybe their gift dictates.

And so it can be misinterpreted. Oh, look how much they're being used or look how much I'm being used. So there's this wrestling all the time with who should... I recognize this, that I recognize that not everybody's going to preach even if a guy's called to be a pastor eventually and maybe even a primary preaching pastor, it doesn't mean that the first time he's given an opportunity to preach he's going to excel like he will 20 years later.

And so we have to try to figure out what is God doing? Where is God taking these men? What is our consensus among the five of us? What are we hearing feedback from other people? What are the negatives that we see in a man's preaching over against the positives? Some of the negatives might be there's just indications there's no gift. Others may be indications the wings need to be strengthened. So

we're trying to figure that out.

Some men, maybe the hope is over time that certain things will be sharpened and refined and there will be growth. Other things, if James were to admit to you, maybe is a constant struggle. But we know this too.

We're dealing with men's lives. We're dealing with people. This isn't just numbers.

Yeah, I put together a schedule and I got a lot of names, but I see men. And even when James is doing these exhortation rotations, we're dealing with men. They have feelings.

They're our brothers. We want to be faithful to their souls. We don't want to needlessly put them in positions that we're going to have to hurt their feelings.

I don't want to be in that position. But I know to be faithful to the church and faithful to men, at certain points, certain things need to be said. One of the reasons I wanted to have this class is because I feel like... one of the reasons I had this class is not try to turn men who aren't supposed to be preaching into men who can.

Because that's not going to happen. I don't have the power. This class doesn't have the power to do that.

But the hope is that we're going to delve into things that perhaps men like the baby bird, they need their wings strengthened, that there will be things said here over the weeks ahead that are going to help give strength to those wings. That men may begin to fly. You know how the baby bird is.

They can fly a little. And as they grow, they fly further and further between having to come back down. If God has called certain men, there is a place to stir up, like Paul said to Timothy.

There is a place to stir up gifts. The gift that is in you. So for want of a good analogy, I have this picture in my head and I'm going to offer it and for you to correct it.

But it might be a help. It's working out so far in my head that it's not complete. But I have a picture of a fire hose because the consequences of the beauty in relation to the severe judgment.

Because a fire hose's purpose is to save lives, is to put out the fire. And you may not be right to handle that fire hose. It might be a powerful fire hose, but you're not using it right and you're failing.

And the seriousness of the consequences of that failure are that somebody might die, that somebody might burn up or they didn't have to burn up. You put a six-year-old on a fire hose and the result is devastating. But the fire hose itself could be also not equipped properly.

It could be a garden hose. You're really good at using it but it's a garden hose and you're trying to put out a fire. Or that it could be not even water at all.

That it was false doctrine. It might be gasoline and you're not using it right. Well, and some lost men have said the truth and men have been converted by it.

And so, yeah. It's the water coming out of the hose that puts out the fire. Even if somebody not qualified to handle it happens to let the spray go across the fire, it might put it out.

You said that there's kind of levels to gifts. So can someone be gifted enough to maybe hold down a Bible study but not to the extent of standing in the pulpit? I think so, yes. If you just look at the way that 1

Corinthians 12 opens up, you get that very reality.

And maybe we'll just end by reading that. 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12.

You see in verse 4, varieties of gifts. You all see that. 1 Corinthians 12.

There are varieties of gifts and we have no problem with that. That means there's different kinds. Some may be to speak.

Some may have gifts of serving. In fact, in light of James 3, you would get the feeling most in the church are going to be given a gift of serving. That's the conclusion you would come to from a passage that not many should be teachers.

That most are not going to have teaching gifts. Most are going to have serving gifts. Serving gifts are the backbone of the church.

We never ever want to despise that. But the same spirit. There are varieties of service.

Now, that's interesting. Varieties of service. That means that there's different ways that the gifts... You have an assortment of gifts, but you may have two men with the same gift and the outlet for that gift may be in two different directions.

But then you have this. There are varieties of activities. The same God who empowers them all.

Now, it almost can seem like service and activities are synonymous. It's not. The word for activities actually is carrying the idea of different intensities, different levels of ability.

So basically what you have is you have this three-fold reality. Different gifts. Different outlets for the gifts.

Different degree of gifts. That's what's being said there. And so, yes, to go back to Jordan's question, should we expect that we're going to have different levels of gift? Yeah, we would expect that.

You would expect that if you go into Ryan Fullerton's church, that probably nobody else is going to preach like Ryan Fullerton. But does that mean that there's no other teaching gifts, preaching gifts, speaking gifts in the church? No, it doesn't mean that at all. They're just different levels.

And so, there's all sorts of places where we see. Like you take it in the military. It's like a guy can have a leadership ability and he may be a lieutenant.

He's not a general and will never be a general. Because his gifts aren't going to take him that far. And that's okay.

That doesn't mean that he doesn't have any kind of leadership ability. Now look, I know we're talking military and you can get there if you jump through the proper hoops. But I'm just talking about the ability to lead out in the world.

Not everybody becomes a CEO of a company. You have people at all different levels. You have downline managers and foremen and what you do typically is you watch men rise up through the ranks in the business world.

And where does their position get capped? And sometimes there's other circumstances to be brought into the equation. Most of the times, guys rise up in businesses to the extent of their abilities. They're going to climb.

And they don't become the CEO because their gifts are there and they're being used. Sometimes it's a political thing. Sometimes they don't.

There's different things that come into play. But you recognize what I'm talking about. This happens in the military.

This happens in the business world. People typically rise. You think about it in athletics.

How do you get to where you're starting? How do you get where you're first string? Well, you basically use your abilities and as you excel, you get promoted. But excelling has to do with gift. See again, we need to put this failure thing out of our mind because it's not failure if God in His sovereignty... Remember, variety of gifts.

It's one spirit. Spirit gifts. Spirit is dispensing sovereignly as He will who gets what.

The failure is if you don't recognize what you've been given and you constantly live your life trying to be something you're not. That's failure. If we're honest with one another, we won't let one another run and continue to run and keep running in a way that they ought not to run.

This is not being faithful to people. But that doesn't mean that because a guy leads a Bible study and he doesn't preach like Martyn Lloyd-Jones that he shouldn't be doing the Bible study. It's all a matter of is there really gift? Which means is God really channeling grace, power, help through that man? And you know what? If we're really going to figure that out, who are the best voices to search out? Spurgeon said concerning his college, he said he did not believe that the men of the college ever went wrong in their discernment of one another.

In other words, they were constantly evaluating, judging, critically analyzing one another's gifts. And they would boldly evaluate one another. And Spurgeon said to the best of his recollection, the men of his college were never wrong in the way they as a group assessed one another.

You know you might have had different opinions, different ways people are wired, but when the voice of the college was taken as a whole, they never went wrong. And I would just say this, you take the voice of the church as a whole, get away from those who are biased, get away from those who don't have the ability to critically analyze you, and ask people who are spiritually solid, and look them in the eyeballs, and ask them to be honest with you. And the thing is, the elders are eventually going to come and if somebody is in a position for long enough that they should not be in, eventually, I mean, look, we are operating in the sight of God.

And we really do have the best interests of the church in mind. And we want to seek to cultivate men and we want to be patient with that cultivation, but there is going to eventually come a time when we're going to have to come to somebody and say, you know, brother, this is not the direction you should be going in. If indeed we get to where we collectively agree that that's what's happening in a man's life.

But you know, you don't have to be at this church very long to know we're not minded like a lot of the reformed churches to be one man ministries. We seek to use men. We seek, as I've often said, to push

men out on the limb as far as we can without the limb breaking.

Maybe that flies in the face of James 3.1, but I don't think so. Not in light of comparing different parts of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 14. I think the early church was comprised of lots of different gifts.

We should not be thinking one man ministry even when it comes to teaching. But we need to be wise. We need to be faithful.

And men, if you are going to teach or preach, think of Judgment Day. That was really the heart and soul of this first time. Yes, there's a science.

We're going to look at creating sermons. How to effectively strive to proclaim those messages. Men, honestly, soul-searchingly before God, the starting point needs to be here.

If you venture down this path, is it a path God wants you to venture down? And if you go down it, do so with a healthy respect for Judgment Day. Father, I pray that these things we've talked about might put a healthy fear and respect. Lord, a holy awe being charged in the very presence of You, God Almighty, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in light of He who is going to come and judge us.

We are to preach the Word. We are to teach the Word. We are to proclaim the Word.

Lord, I pray that You would give us, even if they be few, those men and those women that are gifted. Lord, give us gifted laborers. Give us gifted teachers and preachers, I pray.

Lord, those men who are going to come to this class who ought to be moving in that direction. Lord, I pray, may You use these times to be profitable, to help build them up, and to encourage them on in the direction that You've called them to go. Lord, help us to be honest.

Help us to be humble in our assessment of ourselves. Help us to be faithful to one another with love, with charity. Lord, help us to be faithful to one another so that nobody be running where they ought not to run.

Lord, help us. Help us. Please help us.

We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Ulz4i8fUzNk.mp4>

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