

INTRODUCTION

What do you need the most? What do those you love need the most? What do people around you need the most?

And how are you to get what you need the most? And how can your loved ones and other people around you get it?

Of course I'm not talking about air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat, what you need for this present life, which lasts only 70 years or so. I'm taking about what you need for the life that is to come, that will last forever.

What is it that we most need, and how do we get it?

TEXT

1 Timothy 4:16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

BODY

I. What We All Most Need

A. There is a great day of judgment coming

1. Matthew 25:31-33 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (33) And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

B. On that day, many people will be condemned and sent to everlasting punishment

1. Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:
2. Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

C. Many other people are saved from the wrath of God; they will not be condemned; they will not be sent to everlasting punishment, but to everlasting life

1. John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

D. To be saved is what you yourself most need

E. To be saved is what others most need - "them" or "those"

What we all most need is to be saved

II. An Instrument By Which Sinners Are Saved

A. “you will save” or “thou shalt save”

1. verse 6 - the minister of Jesus Christ, who instructs the brethren
2. verse 11 - the one who is to command and teach the church
3. verse 13 - the one who is to read, exhort, and teach in the church
4. verse 14 - the one on whom the presbytery or eldership laid hands
5. most directly, Timothy personally
6. by extension, all of the church’s pastors

B. Not in every sense

1. not ultimately; for ultimately, God saves sinners
2. not that I merit salvation for sinners; Jesus Christ saves sinners
3. not that I can effect the change in a sinner from unbelieving to believing or from unrepentant to repentant; only regeneration, new birth by the Holy Spirit can do that

C. But in the sense of being the instrumental cause, being the instrument used by God to save sinners

D. This most directly applies to the church’s pastors, but there is application to every Christian

1. 1 Peter 3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,
2. 1 Corinthians 7:10-17 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to ~~divorce~~ [put away] his wife. 12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? 17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

What we all need most is to be saved

The church’s pastor is an instrument by which sinners are saved

III. The Things About a Pastor By Which People Are Saved

A. Himself; his life

1. elsewhere Paul refers to this as keeping “a good conscience”
2. the pastor himself, meaning his conduct, how he lives his life, communicates to his hearers whether his doctrine is truly to be believed or not

B. The doctrine; the teaching; the learning

1. all the truth of the scriptures, as taught by the Lord’s apostles, including the matters raised in this letter
2. especially the truth that it is the will of God our Savior for all men to be saved through faith in the one who is God manifested in the flesh, the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all
3. both the instructing of those things to be affirmed, and the rebuking of those things to be rejected
4. including his own learning and believing these things, as well as his preaching and teaching to others

C. His continuing in these, persisting in them, persevering in them

1. a man who seems to start well in these things, but does not continue in them, is like a shipwreck (1 Tim 1:19)
2. it is grief to us every time we hear of a minister who does not persevere in these things, either by living in sin or by preaching in error
3. my father told about his father, who helped train and supervise preachers in the Methodist organization, that he said to them often, “persevere, persevere”
 - a) he himself did persevere, continuing in that work until he was too old to keep it up, and continuing in the faith until he died
4. yesterday I was speaking to a sister who recently heard John MacArthur preaching
 - a) he has been at it since the 1970s, I think
 - b) he is now in his 80s

D. If this is the case for pastors, let every man and boy here take notice

1. let it be this to which you aspire
2. if you have the idea in mind already that some day you might serve as a pastor, don’t wait until sometime in the future; start now, to take heed to yourself and the doctrine

E. Let every soul listen to what the preacher says: there is salvation in it

F. Let every Christian pray for present and future pastors

1. not taking for granted that your pastors will continue in these things, but assuming they will fail if God does not sustain them in answer to the church’s prayers
2. not taking for granted that God will send more workers into the field, but knowing that our Lord Jesus Himself told us to pray that God will send them

CONCLUSION

What we all need most is to be saved

The church’s pastor is an instrument by which sinners are saved

The things about a pastor by which people are saved are his life and the doctrine, his continuing in them

Jeremiah - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 90:1-2

Willie - Scripture Reading - Psalm 90:10-17

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Audrey - Prelude "Lead On, O King Eternal"

Journey - Trinity 109 "This Is My Father's World"

Rita - Trinity 26 (First Tune) "Our God, Our Help In Ages Past"

Rita - Trinity 439 "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness"

GEN Take heed unto thy selfe, and unto learning
KJV Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine
NKJV Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine
ESV Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching
CSB Pay close attention to your life and your teaching.

1 Timothy 1:19 ...faith and a good conscience

NKJV for in doing this
ESV for by so doing

KJV thou shalt...save
NKJV you will save

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back [GEN, KJV convert], 20 let him know that he who turns [GEN, KJV converteth] a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Gill: not efficiently, but instrumentally, as in 1 Ti 4:16