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Let's rise as we come first to. Worship God and the hearing of his word read.

Act 15 verse 36 through 16 verse 5. These are the words of God. Then after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, let us now, go back and visit our brethren in every city. Where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing. Now, Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

But Paul insisted that they should not take with them. The one who had departed from them in Pamphilia and had not gone with them to the work. Gone, Then the contention became so sharp. They parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and departed.

Being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Silicia strengthening the churches. Then he came to Derby and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed His father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Antonio.

Paul wanted to have him, go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region. For their own knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them, the decreased to keep Which were determined by the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

So, the churches were strengthened in the faith. And increase in number daily. Oh man, that sends this reading of God's inspired and inerrant work. Please be seated.

Our gathering to worship. God is worthwhile because It is the Lord Himself. Who has given the worship who gathers us to himself is the Lord Himself in this age of the covenant of grace, this administration of the Covenant of grace. Who became a man. That he might be our prophet, and our priest, and our king.

Our tabernacle, the one through whom we are gathered to God, Not just God as our Father but Jesus Christ, the mediator, who's blood speaks better than the blood of Abel And who himself addresses us from heaven. By his spirits use of the ministry on earth. There's a glorious thing.

To worship God in the way that Jesus leads from heaven. This is glorious thing to participate in his church, In which Jesus is working by His Spirit. From heaven. That is the great message of the book of Acts that. Jesus, who did many? Began to do and to teach many things before the day that he was taken up into heaven, has continued now by his Spirit to do and to teach many things.

That's the way the book of Acts began referring to the first volume, Luke whom Lord willing. Next Lord's Day will start using the first person plural to let us know that Paul picked them up in Troas. In, in his first volume, which we know is the gospel of Luke.

He tells us at the beginning of this one. That he related the things that Jesus began to do and to teach. If the Lord Jesus was not the one who was at work in his church. Not only. Would we not know what to do? And how And be left to.

Do such silly. Things has come up with our own way of doing church. But there would be no point in it whatsoever. For what we seek, for the Lord to do, in the giving of life and the redeeming of sinners and the conforming them to Christ. It's all utterly miraculous utterly impossible to man requires the ongoing Almighty work of God, the Holy Spirit.

But the good news. Of the book of Acts is that Christ, is still by His Spirit doing. And teaching. In his church. And as we have gone through the book of Acts knowing that This, the spirit gave. Through Luke initially to. This theophilus, if it is, A particular man who was called the god lover or perhaps it is generally tall.

All who love God and truth. But, The spirit has given us this book as a pattern. A manual of sorts. Although given a narrative form, a living manual. Of sorts How the Lord Jesus works in His church by His Spirit. And as we come to this passage this morning, he signals to us.

That which we are seeing him do in the churches, in the portion of Scripture. Before us and verse 36 of chapter 15 through verse 5 of chapter, 16, he signals to us what he is doing at the end of verse 41, and then, especially in verse 5, 1541. And he went through Syria and Silicia, strengthening the churches.

And then And verse 5, the outcome. So, the churches were strengthened in the faith. And increased in number. Daily. Do you desire? That the church would be strengthened. In the faith that all the churches would be strengthened in the faith? Is it something that you think about that you want to happen?

Is it something that you desire and pursue for your own household for your own self for your own soul? We can hardly think that we actually Want the churches and our own church to be strengthened in the faith. And To grow in number, if we ourselves are not seeking to grow stronger in the faith.

And seeking God by prayer and by the means that he is appointed to participate in his increasing the church in number. And so, just the point of the passage, what the Lord Jesus is doing in the passage that teaches us already, something that we should be desiring. And none of us desire.

It like we should But we do by the Spirit who is working in us. Just as we read in the Word that God is our Father. And the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are His children and he makes us to call him our Father. So also as the Spirit teaches us about churches growing stronger and increasing in number when we find that His work and our own hearts resonates, we hear that the preacher asks you do you desire it?

And your heart says yes not like I should but I do desire it but how And the how of course is given us. Much in the passage And we see at least four things. That the Spirit and this case, Users that Christ by His Spirit uses to strengthen his church in the faith and to increase it in number.

And those four things are. A follow-up ministry. A follow-up ministry. And the first place and the second place fallible men. Of the, the imperfection. The contention. The flaws in the men that are being used here, feature in the passage in the second place, The future ministers. This follow-up ministry.

By fallible men, includes the desire to train men. Who will minister? And extend. Both. But geographically in the multiplication of ministries and then extend chronologically into the future as the young men are trained and continue and grow in the ministry future ministers. And then in the last place, we'll see that the spirit strengthened.

The churches in the faith and increase them in number through the faithful maintenance. Of the scriptural doctrine and practice. Of the church and particular those those theologically determined. Conclusions to which the Synod that had just taken place in Jerusalem. Came. From Scripture. And we see the not only that those things are being taught, but some working out of the principles, Even in.

How Paul and Silas and now Timothy Proceed with their ministry. So follow up ministry. Fallible, men. Future ministers And faithful maintenance. First then follow up ministry. Then after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, let us now, go back and visit our brethren in every city. Where we have preached the Word of the Lord and see how they are doing.

Remember, there was There has been this back and forth. The. Paul and Barnabas when they went up to when they returned to Antioch giving a report with the Lord had done and then when Paul and Barnabas and certain others were sent up to Jerusalem for the Senate, they related along the way and when they got there of what the Lord had done and greetings being sent back and forth from Jerusalem to Antioch and Vice versa, there is This.

Sense of Interest in that produces involvement in God's work in one another, There's a desire. Not just to see how they are doing verse 36, but to strengthen the church's. As we see clearly in verse 41, Was the intent. Of this plan to go back and visit the brethren in every city.

That's what as we were. Starting the Roman series, not too long ago and we saw it in chapter 1. Paul's desire to go to Rome and be used by God to build up their faith and even to have them be used by God to build up his faith. Yes.

They already had. The elders that had been. Appointed ordained and installed in every church. Back in chapter 14, and verse 23, remember when they had appointed elders in every church, And prayed with fasting. They commended them to the Lord in whom they believed, But the Lord has reminded them by recent experience that there is a blessing in as much of the ministry of the Word.

As you can get, Antioch had faithful preachers and teachers. So much so that when they sent Paul and Barnabas in the first missionary journey, they were able to do so because they still had three of their five, main ministers who were left behind in Antioch, while our Paul and Barnabas.

Had gone west and yet. When Judas and Silas come down from Jerusalem? That towards the end of the previous passage. They themselves being prophets verse 32. Also exhorted in strengthened the brethren with many words, And so Paul and Barnabas have recently seen, even in the context of the church and Antioch, How a couple of the most faithful men, that's how we heard that.

They had been selected to be the carriers of the letter, how a couple of the most faithful, pastor and pastors. And teachers. In the Jerusalem church, had had a blessed ministry in Antioch. And Paul now says to Barnabas. After some days, let us know, go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached, the Word of the Lord, They have preached, the Word of the Lord there.

And now, they want to go back where they're still have the elders, whom they had appointed in. Those cities are still preaching, the word of the Lord, but they want to increase and add to the ministry of the word. You see, the The point at, which you come to faith and Jesus Christ, and are made right with God, only through Christ.

And what he has done, that is not the end of the Christian life. That is the beginning. Of the Christian life. And God who, Gives the Christian life begins the Christian life through that faith which comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. He grows the Christian also by the Word of God, as Jesus prayed that he would sanctify them by your truth.

Your word is truth. Paul telling Timothy towards. The end of his last letter. That the scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. Useful for preparing equipping. The man of God through every good work through the ministry of the Word. There's a parallel here, Isn't there? Just as in creation, we know that God.

Created all things out of nothing by the word of his power. He spoke. And it came to be, He declared it, He commanded and it stood fast. So also, he upholds all things by the Word of his power particularly the Lord Jesus. Got the Son in, who is the Who is prominently proclaimed to us as the Creator?

The one who made all things without whom nothing was made, He is the one who upholds, all things by the word of his power. And he the word became flesh. And after he had made atonement for our sins. He ascended and took his seat in heaven and sat down at the right hand of the right hand of God.

So the word in creation and the word in Providence? Well, it's similar in the Christian life. God, begins the Christians. Christian life when he gives us life and faith through hearing. But he also grows us by the ministry of His Word. He grows us in the grace and the knowledge of Christ.

This is this is also true not just with individual Christians but with churches Churches are strengthened in the faith. By the ministry. Of the word. And they are increased in number. By the ministry. Of the word. Now, this was something that they could do to some extent by letter.

We know that later on This particular apostle Paul is going to write many letters which he wrote as he was carried along by the Holy Spirit, He's one of those men. Children, I don't know. How it went and the other children's catechism households this week, but we had a couple of days Where we ask, who wrote the Bible?

And there's almost an incredulous answer God. Absolutely true. But God used means used. Holy men who were Who spoke by the Holy Spirit? I was about to use Peters language and say carried along. By the Holy Spirit, from which the catechism answer goes. You children are right. God, wrote the Bible.

And God wrote the Bible by. Holy men whom the Holy Spirit carried along the way. About is constrained by a current. When it has, Not sale nor rudder but is compelled along where the river where the river takes it? That's the language that the Spirit uses. In Peter's letter.

But there are even spirit inspired writing. It can have added to it, not necessarily content but there is a difference in ministry that is face to face. The Apostle John. And second John verse 12, at the end of that little letter and then at the end of the next little letter versus 13 through 14, he talks about having many things that he could write to them with pen and ink.

But that It being preferable to do so face to face. And so there is something in the Lord's use of ordaining of that, personal ministry of the word, not just initially But with follow-up ministry of

the work. One of the things that we see is that those whom the Lord actually does say, he gives this follow-up ministry by which they are sanctified. And one of the tragedies in some of the so-called revival ministries of.

The 19th and 20th. Centuries is that you would have these massive, gatherings sometimes stadiums. You know where they borrow the temple from the local sports religion. For a night. And they have a preaching service there and they announced God's grace to sinners and the Lord Jesus Christ and people raise hands, come forward, whatever.

You get the report of how many people got saved. And yet. You can get the numbers, I didn't take the time, it wasn't. The particular numbers aren't interesting but a very small fraction. Of those people. We're actually converted actually had changed lives. After a few weeks or let alone months or years.

Were. Any part of the Church of Jesus Christ. Or. Growing in the faith, But those whom the Lord saves, by his words, those whom the Lord brings to the part of his salvation that is saving faith justifying faith. He also sanctifies by his word, that's part of his salvation, too.

Jesus doesn't have save. Right. He tells the Romans, the spirit tells the Romans by the pen of the Apostle. Paul Romans chapter 13. I believe it is maybe 14. I'm pretty sure it's 13. That their salvation is nearer to them now than the day that they first believed.

So the first way that the Lord strengthens his churches is through follow-up ministry of the word and recognizing that as much as you can have. Of the ministry of the word, the preaching and teaching. And and shepherding by means of the word of those whom Christ has gifted and called to that ministry, as much as you can have of it.

You should seek to get that you and your congregation and the churches may be strengthened in the faith. So, don't settle. For the current condition of your soul. Don't tread water spiritually, just waiting and thinking well I'm saved and really can't make much progress in this life anyway. And you know, there's a vertical spike at the end of my sanctification curve, that's going to come with my last breath.

Well, I'll just coast along and and be worldly and, you know, get just get just enough worship and just enough preaching and just enough teaching to stay respectable in the church and, and put out, you know, any any, you know, flares up of conscience. No, What the Lord Jesus does with those whom he is saving with those churches in which he's not removing the lampstand, but which he is going growing in multiplying, He strengthens them in the faith.

If you trust him for the salvation of your soul, trust him, for what he wants to do it, not to do with it. Now, Trust him for how he grows. You, trust him for the, the program. For your life. Seek strengthening from Christ by his Spirit, which means follow up.

Follow up upon the word with the word. Some of you are actually appointed instruments of the Lord Jesus in your home. How do I know? Well, because you're married. And so your husband to is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, especially with a view to her being based cleansed purified, spots being taken out wrinkles being ironed out.

That's the way the Lord is with his bride. He washes her with the water is by the word and that's how particular husbands particular. Christian husbands are to be with their brides Or you're a father or you're a mother, In which case you are now in the Lord's. Christian education, school system.

You're appointed a giver of the discipline and instruction of the Lord. You don't just get, you don't get to sit around and say well I sure hope my children grow in Christ, but it's up to them. No, it's up to Christ in Christ has appointed you Dad and you mom.

For the training up of your children. Don't settle for the current spiritual condition of your own soul, or of your own home, or of your congregation. Don't, don't be. An outside observer. Of the Lord strengthening Hopewell in the faith. An increasing hope well by number. Increasing, Hopewell and number.

And don't just even worse than an outside observer one, who the stronger the congregation gets in the faith. The more you feel like an outlier, Like the Like a body where the guy always skips leg day and it becomes cartoonish He's got these spindly knobby, little legs, and Don't be the legs.

As the other parts of the body are being strengthened. And then you become out of place and eventually you say, well, things have changed. It's not the way it is. Praise God. It's not the way that used to be. That's Jesus's plan for the church. That it wouldn't stay the way it was.

But it's Jesus's plan for you. That you won't stay the way you are. But the jewel grow that you will be strengthened. In the faith. And so, follow up, follow up at home all week, long, follow up morning and evening in your home, set times. Why are you? Are there even mornings and evenings?

I mean, God didn't need a break. At the end of each creation day and it didn't need warm up, time to get ready at the beginning of the next creation day. Are the mornings and evenings, not like the Sabbath. Things that God did in order that God followed for our sakes.

So that he would then come and and say, let his word be in your heart and speak of in speak of the speakers word with your household when you rise up and when you lay down, This is a whole point of rising up and laying down but not the whole point.

Also, our utter neediness that we would expire and collapse. If we didn't spend a third of our existence in this world, unconscious, How weak we are. How needful and if needful bodily how much more needful spiritually

Make use of all that is offered of the means of grace. If there's a preaching series in Romans, In the middle of the week. Yeah, try and schedule the rest of your life so that you can come here Romans preached. Not because It's like Lloyd-Jones, I won't be like Lloyd Jones.

But because anything good, that came out of Lloyd, Johnson's preaching of Romans was Christ's ministry by his spirit, through his word. There's the same Christ and it's the same word and it's the same spirit. Make use of all that you can, all that the Lord has been pleased to give you That you possibly can.

That is offered. Of the means of grace and one of the ways of following up wasn't just Congregational generally but will will consider it more closely in a few chapters when we get there. But in acts 20 verse 20. There wasn't just proclamation of the word in public but then also from house to house, The implication being that the apostle and And then the elders as they were learning from the apostle, were going to the homes.

And with that more personal, more individual face-to-face interaction. Now, how have you been doing with this? Part of what we, what we heard preaching, Did you notice this from that passage? You know, I know that your son or your daughter or this thing and in your life that there's a there's a there's a particular connection there isn't it, Did you notice it?

I've been praying for you about it. Are you even praying for yourself about that? This is a place. Where, The minister in this congregation is fallen woefully short. What we common we say, do we not want what Jesus wants for his church, that it would be strengthened in the faith and increase in number.

Well how does he do it? One of the first ways that he does it in this passage is follow up ministry. Is by follow up ministry by fallible men. The minister of this congregation isn't the first foubible, man, that we hope that God would use. And the strengthening. Of his church in the faith and the increase of his church.

And number Barnabas is a very fallible, man. I You know, when, when I was younger in Bible study and hadn't noticed, some things in some places, it wouldn't this one? I had pretty high view of Barnabas. He almost felt to me like Joseph or Daniel about whom you can scarcely find a corrective word or any indication that they needed.

That they needed to grow or be sanctified. Well, but If you're paying attention in Galatians 2, you find that one just Peter Who moved his. Tray from the Gentile table at the fellowship Meals. When some people came down from Antioch, He says even Barnabas. Got sucked into that hypocrisy.

He's a fallible, man. And here we have two foulibal men, Barnabas and Paul is actually Paul who's initiating? Who has the initially?

Greater if we can say, or at least he's the initiator, we'll just leave it at that. Of wanting to have this follow-up ministry in the churches and then when they have their contention between them verse 39, that becomes. So sharp you notice The Barnabas takes Mark in sales to Cyprus, we don't hear about him what we hear about Paul in verse 40, but Paul chose Silas and departed being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.

It's actually does not cast Barnabas. In the best light here. It's Paul who wanted to, it's Paul whom this the spirit brings to submit to and seek the commissioning. We trust that this commending them to the grace of God comes with fasting and prayer. Like we have seen several times now.

In the book of Acts. So Barnabas. Miss fallible. John Mark is also fallible. That's the problem. That's what the contention is over. Last time, John Mark got as far as Cyprus and then when they were When they were leaving Cyprus, John Mark went home. He washed out a seminary, his first time up.

And Paul has looking to. Not just encouraged the churches, strengthen the churches. But as we're about to see, he's also looking to train. To give intensive training to a new minister of the word. To a new. Preacher. Who ends up being Timothy? His judgment. You know, John Mark has not demonstrated the requisite character.

Now. You know. Paul is maybe not necessarily wrong about this particular decision. In this particular event. The Lord doesn't give us Comment on that. But Paul does some growing too. He comes around. Second Timothy chapter 4. He's writing to Timothy. Paul has been abandoned by pretty much everyone. To whom he administered and he says, when you come make sure you bring Mark because he's useful in the ministry.

So there's growth on Paul's part there by the time we get to the end of the book of Acts. Paul is actually going to be prevented by God's providence. From offering a blood sacrifice. That

which was necessary for the finishing of the vow in order to Compromise with the Let me compromises is too hard.

To. You know, when he comes back to Jerusalem and The church in Jerusalem wants him to. To ingratiate himself. With the with the Jewish background believers. That's the point at which he was. In, in the court about to make the offering, That they raise the ruckus and he gets arrested, and it's just God's providence in making in making Him to be arrested before he can.

Demean the ones for all sacrifice of Christ.

God uses fallible men. Timothy, we know as a fallible manner, two whole letters. Trying to help him. Get stronger and bolder. For the ministry that to which he is called. Even when ministry cannot continue together, it may yet continue. Holy Spirit. Doesn't say, you know, what, Paul you couldn't, you couldn't reconcile things with Barnabas.

You're done. You sit out now. It's pretty amazing that in a context in Acts 15 and 16 taken together at least to the end of the The portion that we're in today in a context where they unity going forward and the peace of the Gentile background and the Jewish background in the churches, being forged by this Jerusalem, synod, in chapter 15 and and the application of it that is still taking place towards the end of our portion.

This morning or this noon, and say this afternoon, what it looks like we're right on it. That in the context of this unification and peace in the church, you have this Disagreement that is so sharp that Barnabas and Paul are unable to minister together. But their sinners. There's still being sanctified.

And Barnabas can still continue ministering in one place, while Paul continues. Ministering in another place. We need to have perfect expectations of Christ. And progressively sanctifying expectations of others. Doesn't mean we don't change our standards. The former Presbytery former denomination. There was a, there was a man who Had had an argument with his session.

And, That man was in the right. But actually the session kind of had an argument with him. They wanted rid of him. And there was an OPC church that was ready to call him. And he was ready to take the call, but the Presbytery suddenly decided that every man has to be reconciled in every relationship.

Before he can continue, the minister, they wouldn't release as His credentials. So, that he could so that he could. Take this other call. Now. Thankfully, there is a minister got up and he just Red the end of Acts 15. He said you don't have to be reconciled with everyone in the world.

Does not have to feel good about you in order for you to continue in the ministry. Yes man is not harboring bitterness, he just Wants to go The fact that other people don't feel good about him doesn't mean that he can't go. But that has application to us. That we first of all we shouldn't expect infallibility from our elders or our ministers.

We shouldn't expect even when there's a desire. To be reconciled, that it will always be possible.

We should not respond. To their fallibility by doubting your despising, what Christ may do through them? I mean, what does Paul, what is Barnabas, Where do you use? Paul's language to the Grinch is what is Paul, What is a Paulus, What is Peter, Are they not instruments that the Lord Jesus uses?



And it doesn't use them, he does. Grow them and grace them and make them examples unto the church. This isn't excusing and immature or ungodly ministry. But we, we shouldn't think. That just because there are still sinners or just because some of their weaknesses are being exposed in the providence of God that the Lord wouldn't use them.

I mean, how dreadful would it be if Paul and Silas. Are in Syria or Cilicia, or Derby and Lister or Lystra. And there are men saying, you know what, I heard that you couldn't reconcile with Barnabas. I don't know why I should listen to you. Some. Advocate of peace in the church.

You are Paul. And undoubtedly there were people who responded like that. Because they didn't want to be reconciled with those new Gentile converts. And, it's very easy to take the fallibility of the man. And use that as an excuse not to benefit from Christ's ministry. Through the man. You know, where else?

That's very easy to do. At home. Family worship. Nobody knows the sinners of that, man. Better than his wife. Nobody's been the object of more of his sin than his wife. He sent, you know, if they've been married for any length of time, he sends more against her. Than he has probably anyone else on earth.

But she still needs to see her husband as Christ's appointed. Teacher and pastor in her home. The one who day by day. If not week by week in the assembly, your husband's, the elder, or the pastor and presents an even greater obstacle. Or your dad. Or your mom. How necessary?

Is that learning to keep the fifth commandment from the heart, dear children? So that you honor your father and mother and learn to do so because it is Christ who made him your dad, it is Christ who made her your mom. Because Lord blessing you bringing you to faith.

You're gonna have a season in which you're growing in grace, not only through the public ministry week by week in the assembly, but in the ministry, in the home, day by day, from your mom and dad, And he uses fallible dads and fallible moms. You know why? No other kinds of dads or moms exist.

And so you must learn that not just submission to them for the sake of Christ. But confidence in what Christ is using them to do in your life.

Use your nearest relationships. As the proving grounds. The training ground in seeking Christ's blessing Christ's way. And as you do, so in the home, are you not all the more prepared to do so in the congregation in the church? We just marvel at the grace of Christ, more and more.

When we see, The men whom he uses. So follow up ministry, fallible, men, future ministers. Why not John Mark? Well Paul gives some of his reasoning they should not take with him. The one who had departed from them in Pamphilia and had not gone with them to the work.

Verse 38 of chapter 15. I think we see part of the reason that that's a problem when we get to verses 1 through 3 of chapter 16, Now, Paul isn't just looking for a Barnabas or when Barnabas is no longer. An option Silas. He's looking for Timothy. Someone who can be trained.

For that preaching and teaching ministry in a much more intensive way. Sure, Paul had taught and trained and ordained the elders in every city. But, Or finite people are not just fallible. We're finite. And for the preaching and teaching ministry for those. Who are? Not just worthy of double honor.

As he says, by the Spirit in another place. But those whose labor who's Labor is in preaching and teaching. There is. Benefit necessity and for that more intensive. Training apprenticeship. Ministry. Paul was looking for a seminarian. And he wasn't looking for a seminarian that has washed out. And so he gets to Luestra and he finds A felony named Timothy who is well spoken of by the brethren.

Timothy. As we're going to see, or as we are seeing, if you are following along and doing the study. And First Timothy all, Already. Timothy is going to be one who can teach and train other elders but especially who's going to take patterns of sand words. And he is going to do with them.

What Paul has done with him. There's both in what Paul is. Is doing with Timothy wants to do with Timothy here. You see the Lord uses the ministry of his word. And if the Lord uses the ministry of his word, then we should be invested in future. Ministers. Every one of you.

Who has a son? Ought to be ministering the word to him, day by day bringing him whenever you can. The public preaching and teaching seeking from God. That he would sow, not just safe, but sanctify, your son, and strengthen him in the faith. That even if God never calls him to the eldership or calls him to the ministry, He would be a great instrument in God's hand as the husband to his future wife As a father to his future children.

And then seeking from God that He would make him a minister. It's not that other vocations. Don't have. I don't have. Every. Every bit of necessary. Dignity for the service of God in this world and whatever the calling is But the church needs. These ministers, whom the Lord uses.

It's almost. It's almost opposites If you have a son. You train him hoping that he will be a minister first praying that he will be a minister first. And then if the Lord is unwilling to call him to the ministry, then he can do some, you know. Lesser thing like cure cancer or You know, fix the economy or Whatever.

If you're the young man. You should be seeking from God with all your heart. To be strengthened in Christ. And you should. Tried to do anything else, but the ministry, If the Lord's going to call you, He's going to call you. He won't let you Do something else. For your minister of the gospel.

Your elders will recognize your Presbytery will recognize. Or ought to. With their healthy.

But we should be aiming. That future ministers because future ministers are part of What the Lord Jesus uses by his Spirit, to strengthen the churches and faith and increase them in number. Pray for future husbands fathers elders, preachers. Prepare them. Invest, especially in young men. That they not be silly.

And worldly. Giving their attention and their time to Anything else? But that, which would be useful for the strengthening of households and the strengthening of churches. But they not be lazy. They're not be. Ones, who easily give up like John Mark. Who washed out? They not be selfish. Pragmatists, who manipulate things for their own outcomes, rather than principled, according to the Word of God.

As you see, first Timothy 3, Versus one through seven. That you you focus on those character traits. That's Where we were getting that list from. Just now. You know who has a great effect. On these younger men. Well, first and foremost, dad. But you older, boys.

The kids should be learning from you. Not about, you know. The latest thing that Apple. Devised to drain your bank account. Or. You know, someone else is devised to drain whatever

time. You have. And the games and the entertainment. And They should be learning from you. What it looks like.

To listen to sermons and take them to heart and implement them in your in their lives. To honor their dad and mom by talking about them. The way they learned from the older boys in the church. The way those boys talk about their dad and mom, Come up with plans.

About how they're going to serve. Notice and pray for. Those who are unwell in the congregation of the community.

Invest theologically in spiritually in your wife. Husband. She is going to have a lot more time. With your children from the early at least in the early parts of their life. And you will not be able. To. Disciple them without her help. She is a helper suitable, unto your needs suitable.

Core. Exactly. Corresponding to you because you are finite and that's by design. Men who spends all of his time, discipling, his sons and none of his time discipling his wife. Isn't just sinning against his very own flesh. Bone of his bone and flushed on his sinning against those sons too.

Because that wife is part of Jesus's training program. For them. And he better be discipling, his daughters. And helping his wife disciple, his daughters. They too. The hope is in the Lord. They would be called to the office that far more women, get called to To be mothers. Bearing, the covenant children continuing in the faith with them.

Than men who get called to the eldership. And we see that the end of first, Timothy 2, And every one of them. Boy. Girl, man. Woman. Part of the body. One of those joints, that mustn't be put out of place. One of those members that does its share. Ephesians chapter 4.

Who knows? Dear children. Dear daughters in particular. Whether you might be a Bathsheba to a Solomon. Or Mrs Machin to Jake. Gresham. You ever notice that? Solomon and Absalom. Had the same dad. What was the difference? Was not one of the great differences. Their mom. No wonder. Proverbs contains so much instruction.

For listening to and respecting the words of your mother. Solomon had heard much of God's Word from his mother.

Mention. Credited his mom with more of his spiritual training than all of his seminary education combined. Future ministers. The last place. When we see that. Here the Spirit Christ's Spirit didn't just use follow-up ministry and fallible men and future ministers, but faithful maintenance. Of doctrine practice. You see as they go through Syrian cilicia strengthening the churches.

We assume that that's the same type of ministry. Derby, Celestra sorry. Derby. Lystra, Iconium. And as they go through the region verse 4, then went through the cities, they delivered to them, the decreased to keep Which were determined by the Apostles and elders. Jerusalem. In other words this wasn't just a doctrinal agreement that the Church of Jerusalem and the church in Antioch had Had come to.

But as we've seen in the last couple of sermons, this was the doctrine of scripture, the doctrine of Christ, these were necessary things. This is what seemed good to the Holy Spirit. The churches are to be unified indoctrination and practice. This idea of Of late. 20th century, early 21st century the this emphasis on contextualization contextualization can textualization and what they mean is different doctrine and different places and different practice and different places.

You know, the papers have been doing it for hundreds of years. You know, we even jokers should be careful of coming up in the Academy and in the professional ministry, with things that those who have hated God and obfuscated, the gospel and and profaned his worship for centuries. Have been doing.

There were wonderful at contextualization, which of course you can do as long as you're making up your religion.

But Paul and Silas and Timothy are taking the same doctrine of Christ in the scripture, the same practice that Christ commands in the scripture and delivering it. When it says determined by the apostles and elders of Jerusalem, it doesn't mean the apostles of the Jerusalem church and elders of Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Church. You remember back in 15 verse 2 that Paul and Barnabas were delegates to that Synod do. And there were certain others from the church in Antioch that were at that Synod, too. That's Christ's apostles and Christ's elders in a synod that took place at Jerusalem. Would be like, if Said, the That deter, they deliver to them.

The decrees to keep, which were determined by the elders at Von Clarkin. And would that there would be more of an out and analogy in the faithfulness of those bodies, But it wouldn't mean that the, it was the elders of a church that was at Mount Clark. It's referring to the location of the Senate.

And as we saw even though there were apostles, Who. Have immediate revelation from the Holy Spirit, the decision of this in. It was ultimately determined by Scripture.

Now, they don't just teach this one doctrine and one practice of all the churches. In every church. But Paul himself. Seeks to pursue the same spirit, the same desire for unity. It's very instructive that. Paul takes Timothy in circumcises, him in verse 3. Because of the Jews who are in that region.

Because the Synod had said that requiring that circumcision would be a denial of the gospel.

And yet. That which That would have been gospel denying to require. It was gospel promoting for Paul and Timothy to do voluntarily. They give up much. Timothy gives up. His liberty in Christ, not to be circumcised. You know, this would be something that would take some explaining. As they're delivering the decree of descended on the one hand.

And on the other hand, they just circumcised Timothy. And so you'd have people in the churches saying well, which is it, Paul, Are we supposed to be circumcised? Are we not supposed to be circumcised? And say, well, it was not necessary to circumcise him. If it was necessary to circumcise him, Then that would deny the gospel.

But it was permissible to add circumcision to his baptism. If it gave. If it removed a hindrance. To the preaching of the gospel. We also probably some indicator of the work that the Lord had done through Lois and Eunice, You remember Timothy's, grandmother and mother. As we were talking about the training of future ministers, his mother was a Jew who was a believer.

His father was a Greek and it doesn't say he was a believer in the implication here and where Paul talks to Timothy about his mother and grandmother implies. That dad wasn't to believe her But what must the Lord have done in this for all practical purposes Christian, single parented?

Boy, man. Now What work must? He have done that, despite all of the other obstacles, The apostle settled on him as the most likely, apprentice or protege.

And yet, as As they embarked on this ministry, they pursued that peace among the brethren That was. Part of the principle. From which they operated in the scripture. That there is one church. Gentile and due together. Even. Going back to Noah. You know, of all the pet, all the factors.

That are presented in this passage. It's this. Delivering the unified doctrine and practice in verse 4. That is most directly connected to the strengthening and increasing in verse 5. So or more literally translated, then the churches were strengthened in the faith. And increased in number. Daily. When we come back to again, The.

Faithful sharpening of the theology of the church. According to the Bible, the faithful sharpening of the practice of the church according to the Bible. That is how Christ strengthens His churches. By his spirit And that is how Christ increases His churches. By his spirit. You can gather 110,000 men in a building and teach them to sing the same song with all their hearts.

With a football game. That is not increasing. Detergent number. If you want the church to increase. In number, If you want the church to be strengthened in the faith, Then the number one way that we see the Lord doing and we've seen it several times now. The ministry of his word.

The maintaining. Of biblical doctrine and biblical practice. Like we noted I think it was last week or maybe, The previous sermon. And 1st Corinthians. Chapter 1 Speaking, the same things. Thinking the same thing's. Coming to the same judgment. Diversity of theology is not a Christian value. Diversity of background from which we get saved, is

So let us learn at least specifically here to be slow to require of others. Especially lest we require something of others that the Lord doesn't, and therefore become deniers of the gospel ourselves. But let us learn as Paul and Timothy are here to be quick to give, that which is not required of us.

To be willing to sacrifice some liberty. And some extra effort. Sure, Paul was signing up for a lot of Extra instruction. By circumcising Timothy when it wasn't necessary. But let us be slow to require of others, but quick to give That which was not required of us. For the peace of the church for the strength of the church for the growth.

Of the church. No. A little more, generally, let us seek to master the doctrine and practice that the Bible teaches. We have a wonderful pattern of sand words. That's the point of the Westminster Confession of faith and the larger and shorter catechisms. Is that these patterns of sand words.

These arrangements of Bible doctrine to which Paul refers when he's training Timothy. That these are ways that we maintain. Faithful doctrine and practice in the churches. And of course, must be distilled from scripture. But there is this delivering of that, which the Lord through his faithful ministers. Have. Have given the church as encapsulated summaries of what the Bible teaches us to believe and to do.

Study your confession Study. The catechisms and use them to facilitate your study of Scripture. Because it is their Submission to scripture. And distillation of Scripture that in, which we find their actual value, They're useless whenever they don't, If ever, they don't Teach or direct that which is the Bible.

And then especially in places where you are resistant to the patterns of sound words. Seek to be. Seek by the ministry of the Word to be brought into more conformity with the scriptures. I'm eager to help you. I can say with a fairly high degree of confidence wherever the Westminster Confession or the larger shorter.

Catechism rub you the wrong way. It's because you don't know the Bible well enough. The reason I can say that is because there are lots of parts that used to rub me the wrong way. You know why? Because I didn't know the Bible well enough.

Seek by the minister of the Word to be brought more into more conformity with the scriptures and seek to bring what the scriptures teach into your practice especially any parts to which you feel resistant. You don't like what the, what the? Patterns of sound words summarize about the working out of the second, commandment or fourth commandment.

It's probably the place that you most need to study and submit I mean, what would you think of someone who in this particular context where the thing that was scrupled against was the ongoing usefulness of the ceremonial law, and then you have a Judaizer who comes along. He says, you know, I love, you know, 99% of the apostolic preaching and teaching, but, but that little summary they gave from that Jerusalem.

Synod, You know, that's the part that. Yeah, I don't really go along with that. Well, isn't that as was that not the very most important critical place? For someone who is a Judaizer at that point to say, I didn't agree with that but these these men whom Christ is using to minister to me and summarize the teaching of his word.

That's what they came up with. I need to see that from the Bible. I need to be corrected and instructed and move my tray. To the Gentile table. That the fellowship meal. What was exactly the place where they needed to be corrected?

Now. Lord Jesus. Uses follow-up ministry of the word. He uses fallible men, He uses future ministers. And he uses faithful maintenance. Of the doct of the doctrine and practice of the church. To strengthen his churches. And increase them. In number. Since it is Christ, His Spirit works among us.

And these ways. Let us seek His spirit's work by these means. But as we use the means, let's not forget. That the whole point of the means is that it's Christ. Who uses them? And so, in the means that must be his spirits work. That we see. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for giving us your Son. To be the one who has not just faithful in your house as a servant. But faithful over all your house, As a son, we thank you. That even your visible church. Full of fallible men. Who need? To be grown in grace congregations, that need to be strengthened.

That are often weak and even And many cases to the point of dying. That it is your son. Who is head over the visible church on her? And then it is your spirit by whom he works. Even through some of these means that we have heard. We pray. Lord that you would glorify Christ that you would glorify.

Your spirit in the work that he does. That you would glorify yourself. Father, to the praise of your glorious, grace. By working out in the lives of these believers. The lives of these households gathered here, the lives. The life of this congregation. The way that you glorified yourself. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And the churches and households, and Believers. In Syria and Silicia and Lystra and Derby and Iconium. Keep doing the work. We pray until it is done. And give Christ his return. All of that glory that he has earned. In a glorified church. We ask it in his name. Amen.