

Message #39

I Timothy 6:20-21

The church is, in many ways, a team. In fact, it is a family. Different gifts, different abilities and different ministries are all needed to make the team work. But the truth is when you get right down to it, you have to have leadership and a minister that moves the church in the direction God wants or the church will never finish a champion in eternity.

Leadership in the church is not man's idea; it is God's. A minister is not gifted because he wants to be; he is gifted because God ordained it. The church is God's church and if it is to become a pillar and support of the truth, it needs leaders and it needs a minister who will take the church and move it in the direction that pleases God!

IF THE CHURCH OF GOD IS TO BECOME A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH, IT NEEDS A MINISTER WHO WILL GUARD EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO HIM.

He will guard his own life. He will guard the truth. He will guard the church. The church that will become what God wants it to become is one that will stand for the right things and stand against the wrong things.

No church will ever be a pillar and support of the truth if it has wimpy leadership. Those leaders who take the church and their responsibilities seriously will see God do and accomplish powerful things.

FINAL THOUGHT #1 – What the minister is to guard. 6:20a

The words “O Timothy” are very personal, very special and very rare. The inflectional particle “O” is used in Greek to add a special force and definitiveness to one being addressed (Dana & Mantey, p. 71). The words “O Timothy” are aimed straight at Timothy and are specifically designed to get his attention.

Now Paul gives Timothy a command—“Guard” what has been entrusted to you. That verb “guard” is an imperative and it is also aorist tense. What this means is that Paul is commanding Timothy to make a one point in time decision to guard everything that has been entrusted to him. Paul does not want Timothy struggling with this the rest of his life; he wants him to make a one-time decision to guard the entrustment.

The word “guard,” according to G. Abbott-Smith, is one that means to guard in the sense of protecting and watching over something so that it may be kept and preserved (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 475). This word suggests an intense monitoring, an intense guarding.

Now we may also notice that Timothy is to specifically guard his entrustment. The sacred deposit or trust given to him by God would include his salvation, his spiritual gift, his specific ministry, and certainly the truth and doctrines of God.

In view of the following context, which speaks about “empty chatter,” there can be little doubt that Paul specifically had in mind Timothy’s job as a minister to guard the truth of God. Paul wanted Timothy to see to it that in the church of Ephesus, God’s Word and doctrines, which had been entrusted to him, were continually and clearly taught in the church.

One of the commentaries I have truly enjoyed is “*I Timothy*” by John MacArthur. He has a powerful statement on this verse. It is worth reading and printing:

“The most important yardstick by which a church can be measured is not how large it is, how good its fellowship is, or how interesting the pastor is. It is not how good the music is, how well the grounds are kept up, or how respected it is in the community. The most important measure of any church is how it handles the Word of God. Whether or not they teach and live out divine truth is the key issue, because the church’s responsibility before God is to guard and proclaim the truths of Scripture. Consequently, the most severe crime against God is to mishandle His revelation, thus portraying a false, idolatrous image of Him to the world. Scripture must be treated with reverence and care because it is the self-revelation of God. . . . And if the church fails to take God seriously, why should the world?” (p. 288).

FINAL THOUGHT #2 – How the minister is to guard the entrustment. 6:20b

Now Paul gives Timothy some specific help in guarding the entrustment of God’s truth and that is continually avoid worldly and empty chatter and any verbal talk that is “falsely classified” as knowledge that opposes the pure truth and doctrines of God.

The participle “avoiding” is present tense which refers to a continual and habitual avoidance. Paul wanted Timothy to make turning away from something a habit. He wanted him to turn away from empty, meaningless, worldly gibberish in the church. Paul wanted Timothy totally focused on God’s Word.

There are some in the church who like to get into what they consider to be scholarly discussions. These types of discussions are “falsely called knowledge” by classification of God. These discussions do not square with the truth of God. They may seem interesting, but they are worldly and empty. And the Greek word “opposing” indicates that these discussions are the antithesis of what God wants happening in His church.

FINAL THOUGHT #3 – What the minister and the church have. 6:21

Paul wanted Timothy and the church to remember that they always have God’s grace. God’s grace is always sufficient.

God’s grace is able to take any individual or church and make it become a pillar and support of the truth. God’s grace is always sufficient for every task. When the task is to become all God wants us to become, God’s grace will enable it to be accomplished.