

An Ordination Charge to Pastor Kellett and the Church

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Bible Text: 2 Timothy 4:1-5
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If you have your Bibles, would you turn to 2 Timothy 2, please. Here is a copy of all the slides that you'll see tonight. This is your personal copy so that you can keep track of your charge.

First, I want to recognize Bill and Kim. Would you both stand, please? You are responsible for bringing this young man into the world. You are the instrument that God used. You have made an impact in his life beyond what you understand and, perhaps, only eternity will fully reveal to you the gift that you've given us in this church. Thank you very much.

It is with the greatest degree of sincerity – Brother, will you switch with Joey because I want to be looking right at him and I don't want to see you, especially seeing you are from New England and all that, you're not a Southerner like us. I can tell you that after only a short time of engaging Joey, I knew he was called to preach. Perhaps you don't understand that but once you have a call to preach, God gives you and I'm not going to say supernatural or anything weird like that, but an ability to recognize God's call in other men's lives. I knew that we needed to explore that call and I'm so thankful you were obedient to that. I believe that in this church, there are other men that are resisting that call. I do, I believe that. I believe that there are other men in this church that have a call to minister and you are holding on and I would want to say to you, "Let go." I want to encourage you from the word of God so the text that I have selected is the words that Paul the apostle gave to Timothy and I would like to read them and then I would like to exegete them.

"1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

Verse 2. The very first words that Paul pens after the words "I charge thee" are the key to all of it and it says,

"2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," or teaching. "3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to

themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

Our Father in heaven, would you come now through the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit both in me and in Joey and each of the believers in this auditorium and do the work that only you can do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

In this text, Joey, verses 1-5, we have nine imperatives. Nine imperatives in five verses so the first thing I want to do is to define the word “imperative” and once again we find that Webster gives us a great definition and the definition is “constituting the grammatical mood that expresses the will to influence behavior.” That's awesome. What a great definition. That is to say, that in the structure of the Greek, Paul is clearly communicating that he intends to influence Timothy and since I've selected this preaching text, I intend to do the exact same thing. I want to use these words to influence you. I want to give you the charge that I wish was given to me. I want to give you the charge that Paul gave Timothy.

Verse 1, church, puts everything in perspective. Everything, because this is what verse 1 says, “I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus who will judge the quick and dead.” So, here is this message to each and every one of us: you and I and all of us are going to stand before Christ one day. Now, that puts everything into perspective. That is why we are here tonight. That is why we make the decisions we make, the choicest we make, the priorities we make and so tonight I remind you, Joey, that you will give an account for the manner in which you execute this your ministry and that's serious. That is a serious reality. The God of the universe is going to judge Joey. James the apostle said it like this, “Not many of you should choose to be teachers.” Don't jump into this teaching thing haphazardly. This is very serious. When you say, “I want to teach the word of God,” you are saying, “I am willing to accept a greater degree of judgment than the average Christian because I am willing to say, Thus saith the Lord.” And you now will speak on behalf of God to the people of God. So, the gravity of the charge is magnified by the reality that at Christ's return and at the establishment of his kingdom, Christ is going to judge Joey.

The reality that each of us are also going to stand before Christ and account for the way we prioritized our lives is serious. Yes, our sin is forgiven, glory hallelujah, but everything isn't sin. Some things are a failure to prioritize. It may not be a sin to do such-and-such but you could have made a better choice. That better choice is what we often will give an account for.

So now, five imperatives. Here they go: 1. Preach the word. Preach the word. Now, the reality is, Joey, I can't say this enough: you and I already had a conversation one time about pursuing some additional training and counseling and I immediately told you “no.” No. We have a major problem with this in the church in America and the problem is more and more preachers are choosing to be counselors rather than preachers but the admonishment to Timothy was not “counsel well.” No, the admonishment was. “preach

Christ.” This is the beauty of this amazing word here, it's logos and so, “The word became flesh and dwelt among,” and so we preach the word of God and in preaching the word of God, we keep it Christ-central. Christ-central and so you have this responsibility to preach the word.

If you'll please look back at your text, you will see that there is this admonishment at the end of this with the word “doctrine,” more appropriately is this “teaching.” So, the verse begins with the word “preaching” and the verse ends with the word “teaching.” So, that's what you have to do: you have to preach and you have to teach the word of God. I want to talk about that. I want to unpack that for you. Here's the Greek word for “preach” - these are great definitions, let's take the time to go over them: “to be a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after a manner of a herald; always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and authority which must be listened to and obeyed.” The truth is, many people in this auditorium are older than Joey. That is very intimidating when you're preaching to people that are older than you. That is often a difficult task. Let me remind you that your authority is not in who you are but the God that you're proclaiming for and the word that he's given so you have the authority because you're proclaiming the text, to challenge the audience to be obedient not to you but the text and that should be your focus. “To publish; to proclaim openly something that has been done and is used by the John the Baptist, Christ, the apostles and other Christian leaders,” so you're in good company, brother.

Now, the next phrase is a little bit awkward. Let's talk about it, “instant in season and out of season.” The Greek word here is “to be ready; to be present; to be in place.” To be ready, to be present, to be in place. When it's “in season” that's convenient and when it's not. It won't always go family, church. That's nice, that's a wonderful goal but there will be times when it's not convenient. When it's not convenient. There will be times when the phone rings, the text happens and you have to drop everything and it won't be a preaching of the gospel from here. It may be a preaching of the gospel at a funeral home. It may be the preaching of a gospel next to a hospital bed in which a spouse is dying and it will not be convenient. You will have plans already and everything in a moment for the rest of the week, will instantly change. That's going to be difficult. You need to be aware of that. This is a ministry and you'll actually feel like you're taking the back seat and you are, at that given moment you are and there is no way around it. You're working in the out-of-season realm. You cannot resent that. You have to see those as divine opportunities to preach the gospel to a family that needs grace.

The next three imperatives are not pleasant and church, you're not going to like these imperatives. I don't like them and you don't like them. Nobody likes to be reproved. Nobody likes to be corrected. Nobody likes to be rebuked. It's just the reality; we don't want that to happen in our lives. I want each and every one of the members of the church to understand that this man is given to us to rebuke us with the word of God. Now, that's not pleasant. Let's all just ante up and say, “That's not pleasant.” Okay? But we, as mature believers, need to be aware of the idea that God could be using a man half my age to rebuke me. Put that in perspective through the power of the word of God. Now, oftentimes, our sin nature creates in us, “Hasn't even lived enough to... Once he's raised

this many, then he can..." and on and on and on. Recognize that that's not coming from the Holy Spirit. That's coming from a fallen man.

Exhort, encourage, challenge, get alongside. So, let's put it all together: preach the word which is Christ and his gospel, do it with an amazing amount of patience and make sure as you're preaching, you're teaching. We really don't need a whole lot more just in-your-face hollering unless it's coupled and surrounded by an amazing amount of teaching. Just teach, teach and teach some more.

So, verse 3 communicates that what you are expected to do in verse 2 will become progressively more difficult. Joey was born in the year I graduated from high school so there's about two decades difference in life. That means the world that he will preach in, I'll be dead and he'll go on. You can expect to see the church lose its tax-exempt status. You can expect to preach in a day and time in America in which there will be things that they'll tell you are unlawful. Candace, that is going to be unbelievably difficult for you, that when the day comes and I'm speaking prophetically right now, when Joey will have to choose to obey the Lord over the laws of the land and it could cost him his job, you're going to really need to be in love with a sovereign God at that time. Because it's coming, folks. It's coming.

All you have to do is look at the way the church has changed in ten years and the way America has changed in ten years and you say, "What will it be like 20 years from now? What will it be like 30 years from now?" Because, my dear brother, if your health holds well, you'll have four decades of ministry. Four decades. And what does the Scripture say? Paul makes it abundantly clear. He speaks to it and says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," they will not endure sound teaching, "but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." Look at the verse in the ESV with me, it's even clearer, "The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching." They're not going to endure it but instead this is what they do, "having itching ears, they will accumulate to themselves teachers to suit their own passions." We're there. We are there. "I want to be a lesbian so I only go to a church where there is a lesbian preaching or someone who endorses that behavior." That's it right there, folks. "I want to know that Christ died for me to have a rich lifestyle so I only go to churches in which I hear that being taught." So, the truth is, you may not be able to build a giant church. It's just a reality and Satan will tempt you on a regular basis with a thought that you're a failure because numbers measure success in the world that we live in.

But you have to remember that the imperative that I'm charging you with through the power of the Scripture, is to preach the word. Don't take it personal. When people aren't interested in serious study of the word of God, don't take it personal. You know where I'm going with 1 Samuel 8:7. That's when Israel was calling for a king, do you remember that? "Give us a king! Give us a king!" and Samuel took it personally and Yahweh said to him, "They're not rejecting you, they're rejecting me." Now, the truth is, Candace, it's going to hurt more you than him. When people reject your husband and they walk away from him, you're going to hurt for him and you're not going to be able to console him. In

fact, the way you console him will be an irritant to him because you're wired differently. What you have to remember, my dear brother, is that they're not rejecting you, they're rejecting him.

Verse 4, "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth." We're living there. We're there. We're living in a day and age in which once you establish objective absolute truth, immediately the crowd says, "No way. You can have your truth but don't put that on me." This is what they do, "They shall be turning to fables." The post-modern world denies absolute truth and suggests that those who believe the Bible believe in fables. Amazing. We are exactly upside-down. They believe that they have the intellectual edge and they, in fact, are not believing in fables and we would say, "It is absurd to suggest that a molecule created a human being." So, we're completely upside-down and we're not surprised about that.

Now we get to our last verse, verse 5, with four quick final imperatives: "Watch thou in all things, be sober." Be calm, be collected in spirit, have a temperament that's self-controlled, circumspect. I've got to tell you, brother, you're there. You have a maturity above your age and that is a gift from God. Don't lose it.

"Endure afflictions." The charge is to him but it's you, sister. You're going to hurt for your husband. You're going to hurt for your husband. Not now. Now is the honeymoon. This charge is not for today. Not now. No, it's when the very people that voted for you to become the Senior Pastor abandon you as fast as they voted for you that you're going to say, "What happened?" And it's not a matter of "if," it's a matter of "when," because it will happen. And Mom, there's nothing you can do about it. He's just got to suffer through it. You can't fix it. There's no Band-Aid, kissing it won't make it better. It's gonna stink and there's no way around it. You're going to suffer for Christ.

"Do the work of an evangelist." Herald the gospel. Know the gospel inside and out. Find every means you can to proclaim the gospel. Look for every situation to apply the gospel. Never stop preaching the gospel.

Finally, let's wrap it up with "make full proof of thy ministry." Make full proof of thy ministry. Verse 1 explains why you must make full proof of your ministry because you will give an account before Christ for this your ministry. Remember, your ministry is a gift from God with a particular stewardship responsibility to Christ. Your ministry is a gift from God to you so first and foremost, you are accountable to God for this office or ministry that's been bestowed on you. But more than that, the local church is involved in this and here is the reality: you can make this ministry shipwreck; you can disqualify yourself. Paul speaks of this in two different ways: first, in 1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul says this, "I discipline my body and keep it under control lest after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified." So, my dear brother, you have to put within your life boundaries. Boundaries of protection. Boundaries. You have to guard yourself from the evil one who seeks to destroy your ministry. This is serious.

Now church, you have to understand that. You have to understand those boundaries and if you're of the female gender in this church, you're going to feel like you're almost a second-class citizen. Of course that's not the case, nor would we ever want you to feel that way but an amazing amount of boundaries must be put in place because, let's face it, the two primary ways that Satan desires to make your ministry shipwrecked is sexual affairs and money. So, you have to guard against both.

Candace, you have a giant role in this. A giant role in this and it is twofold: make your intimacy all that it can be and love your husband and be content with the wages that he has because if he feels that the wages he earns is not sufficient, he'll be tempted to figure out a way of getting more money. Folks, you know it's true. All you have to do is look at the headlines. It's every other week, it's every other month and it's happening.

Finally: I have a triangle up here, Joey, because I want to remind you that you've got to preach to three groups. First you've got to preach to yourself. You have to preach to yourself so you have a preaching ministry to yourself. You say, "That seems odd." If you're not preaching to yourself, how do you conform yourself to the will of the Lord? If every bit of this text is always for someone else and it's never for you, then you won't grow as my brother said. You'll become stagnant. So, each and every time you enter the pulpit in order to preach to others, preach to yourself first.

2. Then you have to preach to your family. Now, again, the way you preach – don't misunderstand this. We're not talking about, "Repent!!" No. Preaching doesn't always mean standing behind a pulpit. It is the heralding of truth. So, the way you bring truth to Candace and the way you bring truth to your son, Hutch, and all the future children that God's going to bless you with, will be different than the way you preach to yourself or the congregation but I remind you here that you have a threefold ministry.

Then you preach to Christ's church. You teach and preach to Christ's church and you keep God as the focus.

Now, the final thing I say to you is you must be a man of integrity and if you disqualify yourself, the ordination is null and void. You don't get to go and hang a shingle up in another city and start your own church. We are laying hands on you and extending an ordination based on your commitment to the gospel, true theology, moral purity and baptistic doctrine and that's exactly what Dr. Wilson is going to come right now, brother, and he's going to ask you the questions of accountability.

*Father in heaven, I would ask that you would bless the Kelletts in Jesus' mighty name.
Amen.*