

07-01-2018

Message: Christ's Charge to a Younger Pastor

Text: 1 Timothy 4:1-16

Introduction

A. In Christ's apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy, Christ is using Paul, a shepherd in his 60s, to encourage and undergird the ministry of a younger friend and pastor, Timothy, likely in his 30s. So this text seems appropriate for this occasion when we elders, several of us in our 60s, on behalf of our risen Lord Jesus and with the unanimous affirmation of this body, will confer upon our younger friend, Ryan Perz, the office of pastoral ministry to this local body of believers, Three Rivers Baptist Church.

B. The apostle Paul hoped to join Timothy in Ephesus (in modern day Turkey), where Timothy was in charge of pastoring the church there. Previous to our text in chapter 4, Paul encouraged Timothy to promote apostolic doctrine in the church, godly worship in the gathered church, and qualified leadership in the church. Paul then concludes chapter 3 with these words:

1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that **you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.**¹⁶ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

C. Now in chapter 4 to encourage Timothy to Christ-pleasing pastoral conduct and service, and to encourage the church to support such conduct and service, Christ, through Paul, now issues the following commands to Timothy (and thus to all pastors).

I. 4:1-7a Expose, refute and reject unbiblical fallacies.

1 Timothy 4:1 **But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,**² **by means of the hypocrisy of liars** seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,³ *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.⁶ In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.⁷ But **have nothing to do with worldly fables** fit only for old women.

A. We are challenged by a cultural shift away from supporting many Christian values and Christianity itself to an outright opposition that permeates our educational, political,

judicial, scientific, and industrial, institutions, along with our media our entertainment industries. And sadly, churches have been impacted.

1. Among competing world-views with Christianity is post-modernism, which denies any objective reality or truth, regarding these as only a matter of personal, subjective perception. No one can say what is true or false, right or wrong for everyone.
 2. There is some truth to the maxim, “the law is a teacher.” People often justify whatever the law allows them to justify - same sex marriage, legalization of recreational marijuana, rejection of genetic gender identity, no-fault divorce, abortion on demand, etc.
 3. Toleration is considered the ultimate virtue, except when it applies to Christianity.
- B. The Spirit says these world views will impact the church. Hypocrites claiming to be Christians will speak lies with no conviction of conscience, and people will fall away from the faith. And they speak by the spirit of the Father of lies, the devil aided by his demons. “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (Eph 6:12), but against ... spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.”
- C. Like the Good Shepherd that He is, Christ instructs all of His undershepherds to protect His flock by exposing, refuting, and rejecting all that is contrary to God’s truth. And Christ wants His churches to hear and support these instructions. Some believers become uneasy when we expose what is false about other world views or doctrines of some religious communities, fearing we will offend people. One pastor of an emergent megachurch called for a 5 year moratorium on speaking about homosexuality.
- D. Yet what good does it do to bring people into the church, the pillar and support of God’s truth, and hide the truth from them. This is not love, but cruelty and hatred. People are deceived and led away from Christ by the unexposed, unrefuted lies of the evil one. Whether in season or out of season, culturally acceptable or not, pastors much preach God’s Word of truth to all people, exposing, refuting, rejecting all that is contrary to the Word and will of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even **expose** them;

Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, ... ⁹ holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to **refute** those who contradict.

Titus 3:10 **Reject** a factious man after a first and second warning,

II. 4:7b-11 Discipline yourself for godliness.

1 Timothy 4:7b On the other hand, **discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;**⁸

for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**⁹ It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.¹⁰ For it is **for this we labor and strive (agonizo)**, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.¹¹ Prescribe and teach these things.

- A. Labor and strive to grow in conformity to the image of Jesus by a faith and hope fixed on Him. Major on what really matters to Christ, on what has lasting value, for Jesus said, (Mark 8:36) "**For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?**" What does it profit our daughter if she is valedictorian of in the eyes of her school, but is in the eyes of the Lord what He calls in Proverbs a fool? What does it profit our son if he becomes a world renowned heart surgeon, but has no heart for Christ? What does it matter if our children receive sports trophies from this world but do not receive from Christ the crown of life?
- B. Why labor and strive by faith for godliness? This has benefit for the present life, and most importantly for our eternal future. Hebrews 12:14 tells us to "pursue ... the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Justifying faith always produces godliness. So prescribe and teach this to others.

III. 4:12 Establish your credibility by your character and conduct.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* **in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.**

- A. It is the good, wise, will of the Lord for younger believers to learn from older believers.

Proverbs 23:22 **Listen to your father** who begot you, and **do not despise your mother when she is old.**

Titus 2:3 **Older women** likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, ... teaching what is good,⁴ so that **they may encourage the young women**

- B. Yet credibility does not come by mere age, but by character and conduct. Your credibility will come from your godly life and character, regardless of age. Ryan, we called you, not because your education or skill sets exceeded those of other candidates. Your humble, Christ-like character is what endeared you to us.

IV. 4:13-16 Be devoted to the spiritual gift of the pastoral ministry of God's Word that His Spirit has given to you to shepherd His people.

1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, give attention to the *public reading (anagnosis) of Scripture*, to **exhortation** and **teaching.**¹⁴ **Do not neglect the spiritual gift (charisma) within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery (presbuterion).**¹⁵ **Take pains with these things; be**

absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ **Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things**, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

- A. Ryan will be sharing in the ministry of public reading, exhortation, and teaching of God's Word. The Greek word "anagnosis" translated "reading" is used (in noun or verbal form) elsewhere of public reading of Scripture (Neh 8:8 LXX; Luke 4:16; acts 13:15; 15:21; 2 Cor 3:14).
- B. Ryan will need to decide for himself if he sees the Scripture's teaching on spiritual gifts as I do - that they are ministries, and not mere skill sets. This is one of the texts that leads me to this conclusion. Notice that Timothy did not possess this spiritual gift (charisma) of this particular ministry until he was appointed/ordained by the body of elders ("presbuterion," presbuteros = elder) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, similar to when in Act 13 the Holy Spirit had the churches leaders set aside and lay hands on Paul and Barnabas to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Notice also that the gift of God's grace (charis) given to Paul is a sterardship/ministry to be an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles. This gift of God's "charis" to minister is a "charisma."

Ephesians 3:7 of which **I was made a minister**, according to **the gift (dorea) of God's grace (charis)** which was given to me according to the working of His power. ⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, **this grace (charis)** was given, **to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ**,

- B. Ryan is no longer a pastor of his former church in Iowa, and he is not yet a pastor of this church. But Lord willing, we will see with eyes of faith in a few moments our risen Christ, in real time, conferring upon Ryan through the laying on of hands by Christ's undershepherds, the gift of ministering to us as one of Christ's shepherds/pastors. With eyes of faith we will see the kindness of Christ's love for His church, His people, and I hope when we do we will bless the Lord.
- C. Ryan, like all of us pastors, is told to take pains with this ministry to Christ's body and to be absorbed with it. Why is this ministry to be taken so seriously?
- D. What is at stake is his and our salvation, not the conversion of believers, but their preservation. Paul calls Timothy in 1:2 "my true child in the faith." The salvation of believers here is not their reconversion unto faith but the preservation of their faith, which comes from hearing the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this **you will save (sozo) both for yourself and for those who hear you**.

- E. Those who minister God's Word do so to save themselves and others, by converting the lost through the gospel and by preserving the faith of themselves and other believers through

the hearing of that same gospel by which they first came to faith in Christ. God's Word teaches that ...

1. The Lord is our only Savior. He is the only primary agent of our salvation.

Isaiah 43:11 "I, even I, am the LORD, and **there is no Savior besides Me.**

2. But the Lord uses secondary agents to bring out His salvation.

1 Corinthians 9:22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, **so that I may by all means save some.**

James 5:20 let him know that **he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death** and will cover a multitude of sins.

Jude 1:23 **save others**, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

- F. John Piper, Brothers, We Are Not Professionals, "Brothers, Save the Saints."

I used to say my goal as a pastor-teacher was the salvation of sinners and the upbuilding of the body of Christ - winning the lost and edifying the saints. But there was an erroneous assumption behind this goal. The assumption was that my only role in saving people was to preach the gospel to the lost and pray for them. Then after they were converted and joined the church, my instrumentality in their salvation was over, and I was simply God's agent in their relative degree of edification or sanctification.

My error was in thinking that only the salvation of the lost depended on my preaching, not the salvation of the church.

For a time, therefore, it seemed strange to me that the Puritan pastor preached to his flock as though their eternal lives depended on it. ...

The Puritans believed that without perseverance in the obedience of faith the result would be eternal destruction, not lesser sanctification. Therefore, since preaching and the pastoral ministry in general are a great means to the saint's perseverance, the goal of a pastor is not merely to edify the saints but to save the saints. What is at stake on Sunday morning is not merely the upbuilding of the church but its eternal salvation.

- G. If we believe that God has sovereignly determined to save for Himself a people who will declare His praise, then we find great comfort and joy in Jesus's words, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28).
- H. God's elect will hear the Word of God, God's elect will repent and believe the Word of God, God's chosen ones will love the Word of God because they love the God of the Word, and will by faith they will obey and grow in the knowledge of God's Word. And

by God's grace in Christ Jesus, all of God's elect will be saved. But God will save every one of them by one way only - a continuing faith in Christ Jesus that is continually protected by God's power through being "nourished on the words of the faith and of sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:6). So Ryan ...

1 Timothy 4:6 **In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.**

Conclusion

- A. Going forward - answering 2 questions
- B. Happy to bless the Lord