

Preach the Word

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[0:00] Interesting, our last lesson in Second Timothy was December the 8th, and so it's been a while.

! Things just didn't work. We did a Christmas message, we were off for the holidays and then I couldn't be here for basically three Monday nights. But it's good to be back with you all, and we'll be finishing up Second Timothy this month, and we'll be starting Titus, the book of Titus.

And my plans are that we'll finish Titus and then we'll take our break for the summer and we'll start something new in the fall. Either I will or if I can trick somebody into doing it, we'll turn it over to them.

But I've been doing it since this thing started, and anybody that wants to come volunteer, I'm not perfect for sure.

Tonight, I had to ask Jonathan, I said, where'd I end up? And fortunately it was exactly where I thought. But Second Timothy, Chapter 4, first few verses that we'll be talking about here this evening.

[1:33] Something interesting here, though. You know, last words are important words. They're important. They're the things we remember.

You know, if we knew that we would not wake up on this earth in the morning, what would we say to one another? Or what would we say to our families? I remember the lady, woman was asked, she had a husband and young kids, and said, if you only knew you had an hour to live, how would you spend your time?

She said, I'd be making lists. You know, here's how you load the dishwasher. Here's how you do the, you know, here's how you boil water, you know. When we come to Chapter 4 of Second Timothy, the Apostle Paul knew in his heart, I'm convinced, that these are going to be his last words to the church.

His time on earth was drawing to a close. He had run the race that God gave him to run. And he knew his departure was at hand.

Fittingly, Paul reserves his last words for his beloved protege and son in the faith, Timothy.

[2:55] He gives to Timothy what in essence is a final charge. That charge is to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ until his time, that being Timothy.

Until his time on earth was over. Now, most of those in here are not ministers in the sense of a Don or a Jonathan.

But there is much we can learn from Paul's final words to Timothy. And the beloved Timothy was there, and God used him primarily as an apologist.

And you always have to add in there, an apologist is not someone who apologizes. An apologist is a defender of the faith. And that's really what Timothy was.

He defended the faith. There were many defectors from the church, and they had been led astray by false teachers and false preachers.

[4:03] And, you know, we live in a time where we have a quantum leap in the number of false teachers and false preachers. They're everywhere. It was Timothy's call to preach sound doctrine to his congregation so they too would not be led astray.

And all of us have been called to be defenders of the faith so we can learn from Paul's instructions to Timothy that Paul was leaving as a defender of the faith.

Well, what was it that drew Paul to Timothy? And I'm speaking here in human terms. It had nothing to do with Timothy's success as a minister. Paul was impressed with the commitment that Timothy had for the truth of the gospel and for the Lord of the gospel.

Timothy was committed to the Lord Jesus and to his gospel. Whatever Timothy did, he did to the glory of God. And that is exactly how every one of us should approach church service. Whatever you've been called to do, do to the glory of God. I gave a speech many years ago now at Voice of the Martyrs. And, you know, I said to them, look, I said, most of you will never venture outside the United States.

[5 : 36] And I said, you may be in your capacity here, you may be thinking, well, you know, I'm not a Tom White. He was still alive then. I'm not this person, that person. I said, maybe you lick stamps for VOM.

That's how far back it was. You don't have to lick them anymore. Maybe you lick stamps. If that's your role, that's what God's called you to do. You do it with enthusiasm and with zeal, and I promise you, your crown will not look any different than anyone else's out here.

That's just the way that it is. That's just the way it is. Timothy did not strive necessarily for success in ministry.

Timothy set his sights on being an excellent Christian. And with that, once he achieved that, and I don't mean excellent in terms of perfection, but in terms of commitment, he was an excellent minister.

He did not attain to perfection in this life, neither will we, but it was the direction of his life. He was striving for perfection.

[6 : 45] He was striving for holiness. And that is to be our direction, and that's what matters most to God. So Paul begins with a charge.

In verse 1 there, chapter 4, he says, I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

God, through Paul, gives Timothy a serious commission. He gives him a solemn charge. It is a divine order.

It conjures up an image of a military commander giving a soldier in combat instructions, an order to carry out.

Now, Timothy understood that his commissioning was ultimately coming from the one who sits on the throne. And Paul wants young Timothy to understand the seriousness of the commission and to be in awe of it because it comes from God.

[7 : 58] If God's called you here to be a teacher, to be the janitor, to be a deacon, an elder, whatever God has called you, that is a serious commissioning from the judge of the universe.

And note that Paul says this charge was done in the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. And on the one hand, we can certainly say with authority that the persons of the Trinity were present for this charge. Interestingly, though, the Greek construction here could also be translated God, even Christ Jesus.

Isn't that interesting? So it may well mean God, even Christ Jesus. This may be what the Holy Spirit had in mind because he is next going to talk about judgment.

And they judge judging. And we know that all judgment has been given to Christ by the Father. In fact, how Timothy would handle this charge is one day going to be, and I'm sure has been, subject to scrutiny of the eternal and perfect judge of the universe.

[9 : 16] I mean, when you get to heaven, the Lord is the divine scorekeeper. He may say, well, let's see how you did. I don't look forward to that, but some of you probably can look forward to it.

Let's see how you did, and let's see where you could have done a little better. I don't know if that will happen or not. He also talks about the appearing of the great judge, Christ.

And that word appearing is interesting. It means to shine forth. The shining forth. One day, Christ will shine forth.

And he's going to destroy the Antichrist and judge both the living and the dead, ultimately, at the great white throne judgment. And Paul next gives to Timothy the content of the commission, and it's really quite simple.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to grasp this. He says, Timothy, preach the word. What else do we need to say?

[10 : 19] Timothy, preach the word. Don Coleman, Mike McBride, whomever, preach the word. The word preach there means to proclaim publicly.

Paul knew this was a challenge to Timothy. Timothy had a timid spirit. How interesting that he and Paul would be linked up together because Paul was anything but timid.

He was anything but timid. He was bold. He could be very bold. Very vocal. Sure had a temper. Probably not as bad as Peter, but he still had a temper.

And Timothy had no formal training in ministry. He was taught by God through Paul. I always remember when Dr. McGee, young in his ministry, and he went down to Sherman, Texas for a revival, and he gets there, and the preacher, the deacon, picked him up at the airport and said, well, you'll want to see Granny while you're here.

And Dr. McGee said, oh, okay, you know. Got to the church, and the secretary greeted him and said, while you're in town, you'll want to meet with Granny. The preacher came out and shook hands and said, I want to take you over to see Granny.

[11 : 39] He said, I want to go see Granny. I want to meet this woman. Granny was like 89 years old, had been blind for almost her whole life.

She was blinded at age 10. And Dr. McGee said, we sat down in Granny's parlor, and she opened up the scriptures to me, unlike any professor at Dallas Theological Seminary had done while he was working on his degrees there, including his doctorate.

She opened up the scriptures. And he said, I was just spellbound and just sat there for hours listening to Granny. And when it was all over there driving back to church, and he said to the preacher, did she go to seminary?

No, no. She went to the, as far as the third grade or fourth grade. Did she have any training? No, no. Well, who taught her all that?

Said the Holy Spirit of God. What an instructor. You know, Timothy had the Holy Spirit of God that was teaching him. He was young.

[12 : 46] He was young. And, you know, when you're young, and I've passed from that scene, but when you're young, older people may have seen this as an additional handicap.

Jim Merrick preached here. Jim later became president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And he's a real interesting guy, if you ever have a chance to meet him. I stayed in his house when I was in the FBI up in Kentucky, and we had a great time and spent the night there.

And Jim graduated from Southern Seminary when it was liberal. And he was an interesting guy, and he literally had to hire a lawyer to get his doctorate because they didn't like his conservative views. That's how bad it was back in those days. But Jim was invited to come down to be interviewed for the role of pastor at First Baptist Dallas.

And Dr. Criswell was still there, but he was going to take pastor emeritus status. Well, you know, you can see that coming at you. But anyway, Jim went down there, and it was unwieldy.

[14 : 06] It was like a 17-person committee. And they had a woman on there, been in the church for 100 years. And they said, one thing, we have to be unanimous. Can't be any no vote.

They go around the table. Boy, they were voting yes, yes, yes. They got to her and said, nope, too young. That was her. He preached. The congregation loved him. She said, nope, too young. It died. I think he was later sitting on a nice bouquet of flowers, particularly after Joe Gray was there for a while. He tanked. How do you follow Dr. Criswell, you know? But Timothy was young.

And that may have been seen as a handicap by some of the older folks. He was also under persecution. He was under persecution from Rome and from the Jewish leadership in the area. This church was suffering persecution. But Timothy did have with him the abiding presence of the Spirit of God living in him.

[15 : 10] Timothy was here called to preach the word, meaning the whole counsel of God. Timothy was a possessor of the divine nature and therefore a protector of the divine nature.

By preaching the entire word of God, the Lord would be addressing the people himself through his anointed minister. This was an awful lot to handle for a young preacher who basically didn't have a sea legs quite yet.

By preaching the word, I am personally convinced the Holy Spirit meant the expository preaching of the word. You go through word for word. That's preaching the word.

Preaching that is systematic and goes verse by verse. Most of the great preachers now and back in time agree with that interpretation. By preaching in this manner, a number of things happen.

Such preaching lets God speak instead of men. That's God's word. I have people all the time say, you know, if God would just come down and talk to me.

[16 : 23] If God would just come down and tell me what his will is for my life. If God would do this. It's all there. We pray. That's us talking to God.

We open up his word. That's God talking to us. He speaks to every generation through his word. It's eternal. It changes not. What was good in the first century is good in the 21st century.

Such preaching brings the mind of the preacher into direct contact with the mind of the Holy Spirit, the author of the word. Such preaching forces the preacher to proclaim all of God's revelation, even truths that are difficult.

Don't be like an acquaintance of mine who when he saw a word they didn't particularly agree with, he skipped. We can't do that. Some of you might remember Charles Ramsey.

He used to belong. He's dead now. He was in a class where a guy would skip words and Charles said, you missed some words there. No, I didn't miss anything. Oh, yeah, you did. You can't skip around if you're preaching the word of God.

[17:32] Let me figure out where I'm at here. Such preaching promotes biblical literacy in a congregation because we have to learn God's word and also we grow to love God's word when we sit under the preaching of God's word.

Such preaching promotes the belief that God's word is authoritative. It has authority for our life and sometimes that brings us great comfort and sometimes that brings us great turmoil and it's troubling.

Such preaching is right because it transforms the preacher, but it also transforms the students who are listening to the word of God. And I dare say most, maybe all of us in here have or are being transformed.

Such preaching is right because it promotes the only word we have from God. Fellas, there's nowhere else to look. I mean, God's not giving new revelation in spite of that charismatic guy I heard on the radio one day driving through Arkansas.

So I jammed my fingers trying to reach through the radio to put a chokehold on him. I couldn't do it. But he said, I have a word for you from God.

[18:47] And if it conflicts with what you read in the Bible, remember, I have the latest word. So what I say countermands the Bible because I have this new fresh word from God.

And so I quickly turned the channel over to Country Western or Classical or something else. I didn't want to listen to that guy. Well, how was Timothy to preach in light of his commission?

Paul's going to tell him by the power of the Spirit in the second part of verse 2. Be ready. Okay, well, we can handle that. When?

In season. Okay. Anything else? Yeah, also out of season. Isn't that great? That covers the whole thing, right? It covers the whole thing.

Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction.

[19:50] So first of all, Paul tells Timothy, Timothy, you've got to be ready to preach. You have to be ready to preach. And if you're going to preach or teach, you've got to do one or two things.

You've either got to be ready or you've got to steal it. And if you're going to steal it, steal it from good guys. Don't mess around. I'm a firm believer.

Charlie Graves was in our church 20 plus years ago. And he was a pastor at Nichols Hill, probably the richest church in Oklahoma.

And I think Charlie's passed away now. But it was interesting because Charlie was a comfortable. He'd wear cowboy boots, string tie. And here he's sitting with these people that had \$1,000 suits and, you know, Cadillacs.

But they loved him. These are 25 years. We had a music guy named Lonnie Parsons. I don't know if that name ever. And Lonnie, we had like a four-day revival.

[20:52] And right off, he would try and sell his tapes. First thing, out of the bat, he would try to sell tapes. He had a whole table out there. And he'd say, I've got these tapes out there. On about night three, Charlie had a gut fall.

And Charlie stopped Lonnie in mid-stride, pushed him out of the way, and he said, I'm thinking about writing a book called The 25 Greatest Sermons I've Stolen from Other Men.

And if you'll give me \$25 and your name and address, I'll try to remember your name and address.

And if it gets printed, I'll send you a copy. And I saw him years later, and I reminded him of that.

He remembers saying that. But he said, I had to stop it because a couple old ladies kept coming up wanting to give me \$25. He said, I'm not going to write that book.

You've got to either dig into it, and I hope that's what you'll do. So Paul says, you've got to be ready. The preacher must feel that he is compelled to preach.

[21:56] You know, there may be some young guys in here that maybe God's working on your heart about whether or not you're going to be a preacher. Maybe he's calling you to that, you know. I had someone tell me this one time.

If you think you want to be a preacher, but there's anything else you'd rather do, do that. Just do that. If you'd rather be a police officer or dig ditches, go do that.

But if you're miserable and God's bringing you back, then that will probably be the call of God on your life. But this guy, this was a preacher telling me, he said, if there's anything else you can do, do it.

The preacher must approach the pulpit with a sense of readiness and a willingness to serve the Lord at any time, at any place, at any cost.

If someone comes up to you tomorrow and says, please tell me about Jesus, are you ready? Can you serve him by telling him about the true Christ? And could you do that out of a sense of serving the Lord, serving him?

[23:09] Now, how ready are we to serve the Lord? We are to be ready in season and out of season. That means we are to be ready when it is most convenient and when it is most inconvenient.

And, you know, that's a divine appointment anyway. God's going to choose that. So just be ready. Convenience is not the issue. Well, Paul next gives Timothy three commands.

He says to Timothy, you are to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. And we see that two of those are negative and one is positive.

I can't already say that. Reprove and rebuke are closely related. Reproof carries with it the idea of correcting misbehavior or correcting false doctrine.

And we know there's a lot of false doctrine out there, right? And let me say something about doctrine. Doctrine is under assault in this world today, in the Western church especially.

[24:18] We had a former member of this church who started a church years ago. And Dr. McBride said, well, what's the doctrine? Well, we don't have any doctrine. No, we don't have any.

Divisive. It divides people. What do you do? Well, we sing and we play instruments. And he said, well, that sounds like a jam session. I mean, you don't get to the Word? No, no, no, no.

That's divisive. We don't do that. But doctrine is the glue that holds us all together. That's the foundation. That's what we have in common. We believe certain things about the Lord because the Bible teaches us that.

And that unifies us. And that's doctrine. So we are to correct, be ready to correct false doctrine.

And that all has to do with the mind. Rebuking has more to do with the heart. That is where a person is brought under conviction. And rebuke is ultimately designed to bring a person back to genuine repentance.

[25:22] If their behavior is such, if their belief system is such that it is a cause for rebuke, you must always have in your mind to bring that person back into a state of repentance.

And that he will see the error of his ways and repent. Paul also tells Timothy he is to exhort. After reproving and rebuking, we are to come alongside one and then build them up through exhortation of the word.

And Paul adds some words here that are really, really genuinely wonderful. He says, do that not just with patience but with great patience and instruction.

With great patience and instruction. Now, why was Timothy's commission so urgent? Well, Paul's going to give the answer. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires.

[26:40] And will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. Anyone want to speculate whether or not we're there in this age?

I mean, it's amazing. It is amazing. I'm not about to call names of churches. But I was talking to a minister today and he was terribly hurt that a real solid church in our community has joined, basically joined forces with a church that endorses homosexuality in our culture, homosexuality among ministers.

I mean, he says, how can, you know, he was asking me these rhetorical questions. I didn't dare answer them, but he was saying, how can they do that? I said, it has to do with doctrine.

What does the church believe? I mean, how can you read that book and see an endorsement, for instance, in homosexuality? Just one topic. We could pick a thousand topics.

That's just one. How can you read that and see an endorsement of that? Paul wants Timothy to be an excellent preacher. As he works toward that goal, he now informs Timothy he will come under intense opposition.

[28:06] Well, thank you. Timothy, I want you to be an excellent preacher and they're going to hang you in effigy, you know. I mean, that's essentially what Paul's telling him. The word they spoken of here is the unbelieving world and especially those unbelievers in the church.

And let's be honest, every church has unbelievers in it. Every church has unbelievers in it. There is also a strain of prophecy here because we live in a day when doctrine is mocked and trampled on. We live in a day when there are itching ears. We had a family that I was pretty good friends with that left this church. Said, when we leave Highland Park, we want to feel good about ourselves. We don't want to be called sinners and we don't want to be called, you know, this and that.

And we just want to go out there and feel great about ourselves and we'll be back next Sunday.

Okay. Well, they found a church that would do that and there are many of them out there.

So, we have this strain of prophecy that doctrine will one day be mocked and trampled on. And like Timothy, we are to endure such things, meaning we, how do you endure it?

[29:24] We hold fiercely to the truth of Scripture as given us by God the Spirit. Hold on to the truth. The truth is under assault.

There's an onslaught and you've got to hold on to the truth. Just hold on to it. What was true with Timothy and for all true preachers, the more accurately and boldly you proclaim the message, the more faithless some people will become.

You know, the truth drives people to it or drives people away from it. Just the way it is. The way it's always been. And that is certainly true in our day.

And we have people that want to have their ears tickled. You know, and, you know, I saw a deal several years ago, but it was churches in California. And they would advertise.

They were competing. And like one of them said, you'll never hear my sermon go over seven minutes. The other church had an ad that said, we have no sermons.

[30:39] Drop in on your way to soccer. Your clothes don't matter. We have people in shirts, no shoes, shorts. You know, come as you are. Drop in for 20 minutes, grab a cup of coffee and sit down.

I mean, it ran the gamut. And those people want to have their ears tickled. They want to get their ticket punched. Believe me when I say this. I was in the corporate structure for 10 years.

There's a lot of people in this town that go to church to get their ticket punched. It's expected of them. It's expected of them. That ears tickled is a comment on messages that are not biblical and do not require anything from the hearer, especially things such as holiness or striving for holy living. People that want their ears tickled will also accumulate men and women that will teach what they want to hear. It will teach what they want to hear. By doing so, they turn away from the truth.

And so what will fill the void when a person turns away from the truth? Well, Paul says myths. Myths will fill the void when truth is driven away.

[31:58] But let me give you some myths today. Easy believism. You know, with all these formulas. If you will say the right words at the right time, you're in.

You're in. And I tell you, guys, that I'm not being critical, and I may be stepping on some toes or hearts here, but I hear a lot.

I don't hear as much as I used to, but for 30 years all we heard about was the sinner's prayer.

Sinner's prayer. I understand what people mean by that. I prayed that prayer 440 times.

But the closest you will come in the Bible to the sinner's prayer is the tax collector who could not lift his eyes toward heaven, beat his chest, and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

That's the closest you will come to a sinner's prayer in the written Word of God. But, you know, every one of these tracks right here, they all have a little different formula, and they just, they're not valid.

[33:03] So, we have men who want their ears tickled, and they turn away from the truth, and myths follow. One prevalent myth today is easy believism.

Another myth, positive thinking. God wants you to be positive about yourself. And that goes hand in hand with a church or a movement that is man-centered and not God-centered.

If you want to feel really good and positive about yourself, you're going to have a man-centered church. You may want, in fact, to enjoy your best life now.

And I won't call any names on the author of that book, but Joel Osteen wrote this book, and he says, Your Best Life Now. You know, have you ever really thought about that title? There's great irony in that title.

I mean, it's a great title, except Joel didn't understand that he was writing a great title. Your Best Life Now means you're going to hell. Because the only way this can be your best life now is if you're going to go to hell.

[34 : 11] If you're going to go to heaven, it's going to be infinitely better. But if you're going to hell, then, yeah, this is your best life now. So, you better enjoy it or do something about your future.

Timothy was charged to have a certain attitude that would assist him in ministry.

What was that attitude? And I am really glad you asked that. Paul says, But you, and he's talking to Timothy, But you, Timothy, and by extension, every believer, be sober in all things.

Wow, be sober. In how many things? All things. All things. Now, literally speaking, there's a reference here to intoxicants.

But it goes beyond drinking. It means to be level-headed, to be in control of your faculties.

I have dealt with a lot of intoxicated people in my career. And a drunk is never in control of himself and, may I say, herself.

[35 : 27] We get those, too. A boxer that beats the air without striking his opponent is not only not under control, he's going to get knocked out.

If all he's doing is beating the air. I'll tell you, go on YouTube and type in, Marine in Asia knocks out boxer or something like that.

But this guy comes out, this Asian guy, and there's thousands of people. And he's dancing around. He's doing somersaults and handsprings. And he's flipping.

He flips backward. He flips forward. Well, the referee's already said fight. You know, he won't do it. He's just playing. And finally, he turns this flip like Anthony's the Marine. He turns this flip and he lands on his feet and comes up.

And that Marine goes, wham, and knocked him out colder than a wedge. And then the Marine just walks off and the fight was over. I mean, you've got to be under control. Don't box the air.

[36 : 24] You've got to be under control. A boxer, or for that matter, any athlete, has to bring his body under control so that he will do it. The body will do its bidding.

The preacher must be under control so that he will be effective and not disqualified. And that takes commitment to the unchanging Word of God.

Faithful preachers today should refuse to be trendy. Well, if I had every preacher in Marvin here, they wouldn't like that.

These guys that are trendy. These guys that buy into the latest fad. Come to our church and stop off at the coffee bar. Grab coffee. Grab donuts.

Listen, we'll have some waiters or waitresses walking through the congregation during the service. And it's only \$1.50 a glass. And, you know, get away from trendy things, compromising things, ear tickler things, man pleaser things.

[37 : 29] We're to be God pleasers, not man pleasers. Paul said this in Galatians. For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Well, what a question.

Ask that any time you do something spiritual. Or am I striving to please men? If I were still striving to please men, I would not be a bondservant, slave. That's doulous.

I would not be a slave of Christ. For what I would have known, brethren, that the gospel which is preached by me is not according to man. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord. And remember where Paul came from as Saul. I'm convinced he was on the fast track to be the high priest. And he was currying favor with all these men. He was a man pleaser and not a God pleaser.

Well, there's a cost to Timothy's commission. Paul says, Timothy, you're going to have to endure hardship. There's going to be hardship.

[38 : 31] Endure hardship literally means to suffer evil and was used by Paul early in the letter to describe his own suffering. For the Lord.

He suffered evil at the hands of sinful men. Jews and Romans. A few verses earlier, the apostle had used a closely related verb.

He said, suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Paul was great with sports metaphors and military metaphors. And at the time when he wrote those, he said two verses later, I'm already being poured out as a drink offering.

For many years he had suffered countless hardships. Let's recount some of them. Second Corinthians. I was beaten without number.

Often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews 39 lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked.

[39:37] An eye in a day. And I've spent in the deep. I've been on frequent journeys and dangers from rivers. Dangers from robbers. Dangers from my countrymen.

Dangers from the Gentiles. Dangers in the city. Dangers in the wilderness. Dangers on the sea. Dangers from false brethren. Dangers in the sea. I have been in labor and hardship through many sleepless nights and hunger and thirst.

Often without food. In cold. And exposure. You know I can identify with Paul because one time I came to church. It was winter and our heater had broken.

And I had to sit there with my coat on and listen to the sermon. I suffered for Jesus. I told that group of brothers over in Vietnam. So they said tell us about your church. How you all suffered for Jesus. They looked at me like wow. Paul says to Timothy endure hardship in the service of his Lord.

[40:35] He also says Timothy you're going to have to do the work of the evangelist. Now it's important here. Paul did not call Timothy an evangelist. But he says do the work of the evangelist.

Probably not a lot of guys have been called to be evangelists. But we're all called to do the work of the evangelist aren't we? Because we're to share Christ. We're to share Christ. I shared Christ last Thanksgiving at our meal in Waco, Texas.

And I told the 13 people. I said there's no guarantee a year from now every one of us will be around this table. Some of us may have died. Never realizing that my wife's uncle who was hosting the dinner would be him.

Thank God he was a very solid believer in Christ. Solid believer. Do the work of an evangelist, Timothy. In other words, proclaim the gospel of salvation.

It's important. Proclaim the gospel. But you know, Timothy was not just an evangelist. He preached. He taught. He pastored those who already belong to the Lord.

[41:50] And he was to confront the lost. Confront the lost. Confront nominal Christians within the church who need a Savior.

It was Dr. Graham who said, The most fertile grounds of evangelism in the world are on the church rolls. Guys, this church at one time, and it's before most of you were here, there's just a handful of us, we had around 1,400 people on our row.

And Dr. McBride had the courage to say, We're going to purge that. There's people in there we hadn't heard from in 25 years. There's people that were already dead and buried. There's people that had joined other churches.

There were people that had dropped out of Christianity. There were people that had joined cults. And we went through them name by name by name. And we got that down to about 800 for a couple of years.

And we did it again. We did it again. And we did that. There are on the church roll some fertile grounds for evangelism.

[42:59] And it's also important to note that the purpose of evangelism, whether by one of you guys to a neighbor, by a pastor to the unsaved in the congregation, by an evangelist to the general public, is to carefully but simply help unbelievers become aware of their sinfulness and their lostness and proclaim Christ as the only Savior and Lord.

And you know what? We can't do that through human manipulation. I feel for a young woman who was working at the police department as a janitor, one of our custodians.

She actually lost her job last week. See, they have five or ten accounts, so she'd go from place to place. She is so fervent for evangelism.

She spent her time going office to office telling people about Jesus. She wasn't doing her work. Well, she's being paid to work. And we're commanded to work. And she lost her job.

And she wrote me a real tearful note. And it was almost funny. You know that quote by Jim Elliott about he who keeps what he, you know, that deal? And she put Jim Elliott. I have a retired detective named Jim Elliott.

[44:23] And my officer said, I wonder what Jim Elliott had to do with this. I said, you got the wrong Jim Elliott. I had to explain to them about the missionaries in South America.

But I want to sit down with her. I'm going to say, look, I don't challenge your zeal, but you have to understand something. And it took a while for me to understand this. I trust everyone here understands this.

Your call is to throw out the seeds. You tell them about Jesus when the Spirit moves, but you are not going to save anyone.

That's a work of God. God gives the inquiry. Salvation is of the Lord. Say, I'm sure this young lady would look at this and say, I shared the gospel. And the guy walked away, said he went in and said, I failed.

She didn't fail. And I'm going to have to convince her of that. She didn't fail at all. I used to think if you had a church service, the preaching of the word, and nobody came forward, that we failed.

[45:30] We didn't. The pastor was faithful to his call. He preached the word of God. He preached the word of God. And then finally, he says, Timothy, there's a goal here for all this.

Fulfill your ministry. Fulfill your ministry. In relation to a person's work, this carries the idea of eagerness and wholeheartedness.

Be eager and be wholehearted about the work that you've been called to. This is what Paul had to say to the church at Colossae. Of this church, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God.

It says, That's the new covenant.

It says, It comes to live in you, never leaves you, never forsakes you. You are in Christ. That's the mystery that was hidden for a long time.

[46:57] Christ in us. That's the hope of glory. And we proclaim him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to his power, which mightily works within me. Wow. You can take that to the bank.

The apostle wanted Timothy also one day to be able to say what he himself was about to say.

Because I started just telling you his departure was at hand.

And next time we'll get to verse 7, he says, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. He wants to replicate that through Timothy. And he wants Timothy to replicate that through others. We're in the business of reproducing ourselves within the church.