

The Qualities of an Excellent Minister (Part I)

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[0 : 00] I've been teaching about 34 years, and I've done that for a reason.

I've done enough reason to be in teaching.

I don't know. I figured out I could learn by doing that. And the Lord has really been instructing me through what I've been teaching of late.

Yesterday, I taught in here on the qualities of a faithful minister from the 20th chapter of the book of Acts. Tonight, we're going to learn of the qualities of an excellent minister from the book of 1 Timothy.

I've been teaching Sunday morning and Monday night on false teachers and the warnings that Paul gives concerning false teachers. John and I meet on Mondays for lunch, and they're doing a book study, and we're talking about false teachers and false prophets in the church.

[1 : 27] And so it's just all kind of interwoven, and I'm really enjoying it. How do churches typically measure the success of a pastor or of his ministry at a church?

Well, usually, it is judged based upon growth. The pastor is expected to grow a church, and by grow, I mean in numbers of people and in the area of finances.

If he comes up short in either of those categories, a lot of people will brand that ministry as unsuccessful.

Who's ever got the most people and whoever's got the most money? And a lot of people take that to be a sign of the evidence of God's blessing.

Well, we have a lot of people, so, you know, obviously God is blessing. Well, that never has been the sign. The Jehovah Witness fills Shea Stadium. Okay. Big clamor now because John MacArthur did the Strange Fire Conference, and they said, how can you do that?

[2 : 55] There's 815 million charismatics. John said, there's a billion moslems. I mean, you know, numbers aren't what it's all about.

The question, then, is how does God judge a ministry? That's what we should all be concerned with. I say all of us, and I say that for a reason.

Everyone in here that's born again, more specifically born from above, follower of Jesus Christ, is a minister.

You have a minister. You may never stand behind a pulpit, but you are a minister in God's economy.

I gave a speech at it a few of them once. I said, your minister may be licking stamps. Do it with zeal because God's called you to do that.

[3 : 56] Surely we would all agree that it's much more important, God's judgment on a ministry, than how fallen, finite men pass judgment on a minister or a ministry.

This is what the Puritan John Owen had to say. A minister may fill his pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is, and no more.

And I've been on a lot of pulpit committees in my life, not quite as many as Mike and James, and we've been on them and others.

And I typically now ask a candidate, tell me about your prayer life and tell me about your library, because you can tell a whole lot about what a man reads.

This week and next week, we will discuss the qualities that go into an excellent ministry. And that is vitally important to the church, particularly in our day, when so many churches have bought into the world's marketing standards and marketing ploys.

[5 : 29] I didn't have the benefit of hearing the world's greatest expository preacher last night. I had to settle for John MacArthur at 830 because Don wasn't in the pulpit last night.

But it was interesting that he was talking about this same subject as to what goes into the qualities of a minister and how important it is to the church today because the church today buys into all kinds of stuff that's unbiblical.

He had lunch with a man who had a big church, like a mega church. And the guy said, my whole approach to ministry has been revolutionized.

I bought a book by Dr. Such-and-Such at Harvard Business School, the chair of the Department of Business and Management, and I read that book on management techniques to grow your business line or grow your company, and it's just revolutionized my thinking on the church.

And John said, isn't the Bible enough? And he said, not in our day. And then John said, well, what about all the successful churches before this guy wrote that book?

[6 : 53] What about them? And he said, it kind of got silent after that, and we finished our meal and parted. Every believer is a minister.

You may not stand behind a pulpit, but the Lord gives to every one of his children a ministry to carry on from drawing out of the various gifts he uses to equip and serve the church.

So we're going to dive into it. An excellent minister is, first of all, a servant. Paul says in 1 Timothy 4, verse 6, You will be a good servant of Christ Jesus.

Talking to Timothy, getting him ready for ministry, knowing that Timothy was going to get other men ready, and those men were going to get other men ready, on and on and on down to our time.

Be a good servant of Christ Jesus. This passage and this truth is the key to effective, excellent ministry.

[8 : 02] Everything else we're going to study tonight and next week flows from that central truth. Be a good servant of Christ Jesus. Conversely, a man that is not a servant will never be a successful minister based upon God's standards.

He may be successful based on the world's standards, but who cares? Let's use God's standard. The word here for good means noble, admirable, or excellent. And it's joined to this word servant, diakonos, from which is the Greek word for servant.

We normally use that word to describe deacons, but it can be used in a general sense, and I think it is here, of a servant. Anyone who serves in a ministry on behalf of God is to be a servant, have a servant heart, a servant mentality.

And in the Gospels, who is described as the greatest servant? Christ. Christ. He came to serve, not to be served. Now, Paul has been equipping Timothy throughout this book to evaluate men who are suited to ministry.

[9 : 26] Paul knew this was vitally important because he's been issuing warnings to Timothy and others in 1 Timothy, in Acts, at lunch.

He's been issuing warnings about false teachers infiltrating the church, specifically the church at Ephesus.

But I'm sure there were others. I know there were others because you can read about them in the second and third chapter of Revelation, starting with the church at Ephesus. Paul knew that the best way to defeat false teaching and false doctrine was not only to denounce it and refute it, although that may be necessary, defeating false teaching is bringing to the church true teaching from true teachers.

That will defeat false teachers. being exposed to truth sanctifies people. And that's what we're on earth for.

God has not yet called us home because He has something for us to do, and primarily He is sanctifying us, recreating us more and more like Jesus. And when our sanctification period is over, He'll call us home.

[10 : 50] He'll call us to glory. So Paul's challenge to young Timothy is to be an excellent minister of Christ Jesus. And I'm telling you, if Paul was here today, he would say, Don, Mark, James, Mike, Jonathan, Shane, whomever, be, first of all, an excellent servant of Christ Jesus.

Point two is an excellent minister warns his people of error. In 1 Timothy, again, chapter 4, verse 6, in pointing out these things to the brethren.

This was huge for Paul as he's equipping Timothy. Paul knows he's leaving. He's been in Ephesus three years. And it's time to move on, and he's going to be moving on.

Having a negative attitude and being able to warn others of error should be viewed as two different things. Pointing out error is essential to the spiritual and scriptural health of a church.

It is absolutely essential. Interestingly, the words pointing out, which is one word in the Greek language, does not mean ordering or commanding or forcing.

[12:12] It has this idea of gently and humbly persuading men as to the truth. We just give them Bible truth. That's what we need.

Paul was consumed with warning the church about false teachers that were infiltrating their ranks. And they're coming.

They're coming. We know that from Paul. We know that from Peter. We know that from Jude. We know it from John when we see the disastrous impact on the churches in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey.

You know, seven churches there, only two of which receive no condemnation. The other five receive increasing condemnation until we get to Laodicea at the end, which is not even a true church.

They don't have any believers in it because Jesus is outside. So Paul is consumed with warning the church about false teachers. Next week in my class in here, the very verse I will be teaching from the book of Acts is this one that I'm reading tonight.

[13:21] Acts chapter 20, verses 29 to 32. Paul talking. Paul talking. I know. That's pretty strong. How do you know?

He walks with God. I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

And from among your own selves, men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore. Now, why is therefore important?

When you see therefore, figure out what it's there for. It's referring to what he just said. Therefore, be on the alert. For what? For the wolves coming in.

Be on the alert. Remembering that day, that night and day, for a period of three years, I did not cease to admonish each one of you with tears.

[14:19] And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. That's believers.

Paul says in our 1 Timothy passage that the brethren, the believers in the church, are to be warned about unbiblical, demonically inspired, false teachings.

Paul says, I don't want my children to be tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming.

He wrote that to the church in Ephesus in 4.14. We are called. We're pretty removed from all this. 21st century.

We are to battle false, satanic teaching by being grounded in the truth of the word of God. And I don't have time to develop it, but the very book Jonathan and I are reading is, don't fool around rebuking demons.

[15:29] You stay close to the Lord Jesus and to the Father, praying always on your knees, interceding. You go to them.

Let them do battle with forces of evil. And so much of the church wastes time and energy now, you know, rebuking the God of bad weather, the demon of bad weather or the demon of snow or the demon of, you know, my finances.

Now, at this point, I'll inject a question. Given the fact that knowledge of the word of God is an essential to living a godly life, it's an absolute essential, and carrying on an effective ministry, don't blurt out an answer here, how many hours will you and I spend alone with God this week in prayer and Bible study?

That's a rhetorical question, okay? But for the believer, that's an essential. I say that not to humble any of you, I say that to humble me.

because not enough. Not enough. Saturday, I walked down to the mailbox and I had a tape from John MacArthur and he was talking about some of the early days and he started at Grace Community Church, I think in September.

[16:59] He said in June, July, and August, he took off preparing and he said, I decided I really wanted to make a study of sanctification.

So he said, I spent 8 to 10 hours a day in June, July, and August studying Romans 6, 7, and 8. I mean, 90 days, 8 to 10 hours a day in three chapters of the Bible.

I mean, that's immersing yourself in the word of God. Third point. An excellent minister is an expert student of Scripture.

Again, 1 Timothy 4, 6, the latter part of that verse, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

This is basic to sound ministry. It is largely missing in many churches today. Weak preaching has produced weak churches that are failing at missions and are failing at being salt and light to a dying world.

[18:14] And they abound everywhere. They're in this town, they're in every town, they're all over television. Most pastors, quite frankly, don't have the time to spend in the study of the word of God.

Isn't that something? But they don't. Now, who's responsible for that? Primarily, the memberships. The memberships of the churches. We certainly share in that because we have saddled the pastor with everything pertaining to the church.

Everything. When Dr. McBride was here, I saw one of our men. He was so mad at Mike because he'd been in the hospital and Mike never visited him. You didn't come visit me.

He said, did you tell me you were in the hospital? No. Did you tell anybody? No, I didn't want anyone to know. And he was furious.

Mike just shook his head, you know. We need to return to the days of the reformers and the Puritans. Those pastors were first and foremost men who labored at teaching and preaching the word of God.

[19:32] Just a few of the men who were students of the word would include Luther, Calvin, Owens, Richard Baxter, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Brooks. There's a lot more.

There are but a few. I am personal friends with a pastor who spends 30 hours of study to deliver a one-hour sermon.

That's his pattern. 30 hours in the word of God putting together the Sunday morning message.

William Tyndall was a 16th century English reformer and Bible translator who while in prison and his execution day was approaching very close, the guards kind of took a liking to him.

He was a gracious man, a gentle man, a godly man. And they said, Pastor, do you need anything? He's going to be executed in like 48 hours. He said, could you get me a Hebrew Bible and a Hebrew dictionary so I could better study God's word in the Old Testament?

I mean, he's fixing to die. You know? And he says, just get me a Hebrew Bible. I need to be studying the word of God. Paul says, we are to be constantly nourished by the words of faith.

[20:52] That is an essential for men to engage the enemy in ministry. Guys, you've got to be grounded in the word of God if you're going to do business with the enemy.

And you're not going to attack the enemy. You're going to go to God with his words. John MacArthur spent, again, three months, eight to ten hours just in three chapters so he'd understand sanctification.

An excellent minister must read the word, study the word, meditate on the word, master the word. That's what it's all about.

And we are all ministers. When I'm using ministers, don't think of Don and Jonathan exclusively. We're all ministers. What happens if we will do that?

Master the word. Know the word of God. Well, let me tell you one thing will happen. You will be approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed handling accurately the word of truth.

[21:57] 2 Timothy 2.15 which we'll get to about next Christmas. Paul mentions the word of faith, the word of the faith specifically.

Those are the body of Christian truth contained in the scriptures. We must know the word because it is inspired by God. It is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3.15 3.16.17 We must be firmly grounded in sound doctrine. I've told you before that doctrine is the glue that holds us together as a church.

And it is also one of the missing ingredients in a lot of modern preaching. It's a missing ingredient. Bottom line, we must be excellent students of the word of God.

We cannot give out what we do not take in. We must take it in if we're going to properly share it with a dying world, a needy world.

[23 : 11] An excellent minister must avoid the influence of unholy teaching. And this verse is 1 Timothy 4.7, the first part. I reviewed this with Diane before I came here.

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. That's Paul talking, not me. Have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.

There is a two-sided coin pictured here. One says, be strong in the Lord, flip that coin over and it says, avoid false teaching.

Two-sided. Can't separate a two-sided coin. Don't have your strength dissipated, I hope that's a good word, I put it in there, by wasting time with ungodly teaching.

And if you're watching Christian television and you're not on channel 378, you're not watching Christian television. I'll just tell you right now. You're not watching it.

[24 : 23] I remember a man in this church, good friend of mine, good guy, several years ago, he couldn't wait for his newspaper to arrive. It would get there, he would pour over the horoscope every day.

And he was telling me about it. I asked him, I said, why do you waste your time with such things? And he said, I just believe God can speak to me through the horoscope. God speaks to us through that book.

That's why it's so vitally important we pick it up and if need be, dust it off and start reading it. I was in meeting a couple of years ago with 10 or 12 brothers and we ran around the room describing books that we were presently reading.

When it came to me, I think I kind of upset him because I said, you know, they were naming all these books and I said, well, book of Romans and Jude and Galatians.

You know, that was my answer. We had to make a list, a written list. You know what the number one book was for that year? The Shack.

[25 : 36] The Shack. How many of you know what The Shack is? Have you ever, you know, The Shack, and they said to a man, and these are good Christian men, I know them, I've known them for years, how God had spoken them through that book.

For those of you who don't know, The Shack, and I think there's now Shack 2, there's a sequel, is a fictional account of the Trinity appearing to a man who has lost his daughter through a crime. She's been kidnapped and brutally murdered. The Trinity comes down and appears to this man and the whole book is woven around that. God the Father takes the form of an African-American woman who calls herself Eloisa, and there's a character, Papa, that's Jesus Christ, and he's a Middle Eastern carpenter, and the Holy Spirit physically appears himself as an Asian woman named Sarayu.

That's The Shack. And we spent an hour talking about how The Shack, and I'm thinking, man, get me back to my room so I can do something else.

I don't want to be unkind, but there are 66 books that make up the inspired and authoritative Word of God. The Shack is not number 67.

[27 : 12] It's just not. I don't have time for fictional books like The Shack. I've read one fictional book in the last 10 years, and I can highly recommend it because I happen to know that deep down it's really not fiction, but they had to write it as fiction, and it's Randy Alcorn, Safely Home.

Excellent book, and a lot of it true because Randy got it from VOM. He came and hung out at VOM, and it's about a persecuted brother in China, and I can recommend that book because I happen to know that most of it is factual.

So anyway, I don't have time for The Shack. That term fit only for old women. I promised that I would clean that up. It was an epitaph used in philosophical circles in that day to describe something as lacking credibility.

We may not fully appreciate or understand that term, but the Ephesians would have understood the use of that term, although my wife didn't. She's not an Ephesian. She's a Texan.

An excellent minister disciplines himself for godliness. 1 Timothy 7-9 On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness, 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.

[28 : 58] It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. We cannot be an excellent minister, regardless of what our ministry is that God has given us, without personal godliness.

And we're in a battle, aren't we? We're in a battle. I understand that. Ministry, though, is an overflow of a godly life. That is why when high-profile ministers fall to sin, the resounding explosion is heard

throughout the world, especially in our day of instant communication.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote that spiritual ends can be achieved only by spiritual men who employ spiritual methods. Makes a lot of sense.

Spurgeon, and you've got to love Spurgeon, right? Spurgeon described a godless minister in ways that only Spurgeon could. He's talking about a guy he knew.

He's a graceless pastor. That's how Spurgeon, I mean, I don't know why he shades this, you know.

A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing upon sight and vision, discoursing upon and distinguishing to others the nice shades and delicate bleedings of the prismatic colors while he himself is absolutely in the dark.

[30 : 39] This is a godless minister. He goes on. He is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music. Boy, he's getting personal now.

You think that's personal? Listen to this. A deaf man. I can't hardly hear. A deaf man fluent upon symphonies and harmonies. He is a mole professing to educate eagles.

Then I love this one. He is a limpet elected to preside over angels. Now, what in the world is that? I had to look that up. A limpet is a type of ocean animal that has a shell and it is able to attach itself to things like rocks very tightly and just hold on.

There's the greatest Baptist preacher that ever lived, Charles Spurgeon. Discipline is a Greek word from which we get the English word gymnasium or gymnastics.

It means to train or to exercise. It is the form of training that is rigorous, strenuous, and self sacrificing.

[31 : 51] It is the type of training that a world class athlete goes through to prepare for the games, for the Olympics or whatever games they are going to be participating in. The Ephesians would have understood the analogy.

They would have understood that. As athletes train the body, we are to train for purposes of godliness. How do we do that? That is our exercise right there.

That book right there. This, by the way, is a present tense verb, meaning it is a continual action and a constant pursuit from rebirth to death or rapture, whatever comes first.

I will take either. We are to train for godliness. Like Timothy, we are to train continually our inner man for the purpose of godliness.

godliness. So, specifically, what is godliness? We have been batting that term around. Let me boil it down this way. It is having the correct attitude toward God.

[33 : 02] It is making a proper response to God in all circumstances. Godliness is a preoccupation of the heart with those things that are pure and holy.

Godliness is the very heart and soul of Christian character. It is to be our present life pursuit until Jesus calls us home.

Godliness is our life pursuit. God told the Corinthians, be imitators of me just as I am of Christ.

That's powerful. Paul says, I'm imitating Christ so you can imitate me. I mean, that's a form of imitating Christ, right? An excellent minister is committed to hard work.

for it is for this we labor and strive because we have fixed our hope on the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

[34 : 14] I looked at that and said, well, wait a minute, how can he be the Savior of all men? Well, he is the Savior. We don't make him Savior and Lord. He is Savior and Lord. And it is especially beneficial to believers.

I mean, unbelievers will be judged by our Savior and Lord. We have been accepted by him through his sacrifice. Heaven and earth meet in a believer pursuing excellence.

I like that phrase where it says, heaven and earth kiss in a believer that is pursuing excellence through the study of the Word of God. And I don't think any study of the Word of God can exclude prayer.

God's got to reveal this to you. You ask him. Give you wisdom. So what do we mean? To be excellent in the ministry God has given you will take a heavenly pursuit demanding divine power and it is an earthly task demanding hard work.

They meet. They kiss. Divine power, hard work work at the same time. And he won't do it by osmosis. I tried.

[35 : 30] You know, I've got 3,000 books and 34 Bibles. And it just, you have to pick them up. You have to pick them up. The word labor means we are to work to the point of weariness or exhaustion.

we are also to strive and that's from the Greek word and let me mispronounce this quickly so Don can correct me. Agonizomai and it's not different to figure out what English word comes from that. The word agony. We are to agonize over this pursuit of godliness through the study of God's word. We are to engage in a struggle as we pursue the ministry God has given us.

Whatever ministry you have, pursue it with vigor, with struggle, with strenuous exercise like you would as an athlete preparing for the games. I hope most of you have heard the name Henry Martin.

You may not have. I've got one of his books. Martin, M-A-R-T-Y-N. He was a great missionary to India and to Persia.

[36 : 45] We would call Persia today Iran. When called to the mission field, Henry Martin prayed a prayer. He said, let me burn out for God.

Like one man who said, it's better to burn out than rust out. Henry Martin's prayer was, let me burn out for God.

ministered in those two countries and died at age 31. Another great missionary was David Brainerd. He ministered to Native Americans.

Aren't we glad, Mike? he ministered back to Native Americans. He died before he was 30 years of age. I'm going to show you an interesting connection here.

these guys ministered a total of 61 years. Were these lives wasted? Of course not. Ministers of God are engaged in a work of God, meaning that it is an eternal work.

[37 : 56] The ripples of those missions or ministers are still going outward. They're still going outward. Let me give you an example of that.

Today, when a man or a woman is saved in India, you've been there, haven't you? Plus your head. He or she will probably, if you could trace it back enough, somehow be connected to William Carey, who is considered the father of modern missions.

Guess what? He became a missionary after reading Jonathan Edwards' account of the life of the late Reverend David Brainerd. That's when Carey got called to missions.

Jonathan Edwards, the most brilliant theologian America ever produced, David Brainerd was going to be his son-in-law, but died before the wedding. See the connection that God used here?

William Carey went as a missionary to India after reading about a missionary American Indians. So he goes to India after reading about American Indians. It's real interesting. I love the account of Robert Thomas.

[39 : 12] I didn't put this in my notes, but Robert Thomas felt this urge to witness to what today we would call Korea. I don't think they called it Korea then, but there was no north and south.

It was one nation. They were savages. He studied. He learned the language. He prepared. He got jobs to pay for the Bibles, kind of like the 3,000 Hmong Bibles, but he had hundreds and hundreds of Bibles in the language that they spoke then.

Goes over there, lands on the beach, and they execute him. And one man that was part of that party said, and he told the group, said, you know, I think we have killed a good man because he was smiling, he was talking to us in his language.

I really think we've killed a good man. And that one man picked up the duffel bags full of Bibles, went to his hut, tore the pages out gently, and wallpapered the hut.

And for a couple of generations, people came and read the walls. And people got saved, and they formed churches by reading the walls.

[40 : 37] Was that a wasted life? No, God had all that figured out in his sovereignty. A minister is not motivated by instant gratification. If we are, we're in the wrong business.

Dare I say, most gratification will come in the next life, not in this one. If you are into immediate fulfillment, you probably should re-examine your walk.

You might not see results in this life, but in the case of many missionaries, they continue to receive jewels in their crown even after they are in glory.

And the William carries a good example of that. He's still bearing fruit. He's still bearing fruit. I remember, I believe it was George Whitefield who prayed for a lost man that he'd known forever, and he prayed every day on his knees for that man.

Finally, a friend of George Whitefield said, why don't you give up? And he said, the Holy Spirit would not lay that man on my heart if he wasn't going to save him.

[41 : 52] And the man got saved at George Whitefield's funeral. He got saved. Our church has now published and distributed a Bible in native languages in Vietnam.

We've done more than one. The total distributed thus far is probably around 7,000, including one that Diane and I did and one that Trinity Baptist did.

What impact will that have won the kingdom of God? We are seeking to uphold the world, to save it from the curse of God, to perfect the creation, to attain the ends of Christ's death, to save ourselves and others from damnation, to overcome the devil and demolish his kingdom, and set up the kingdom of Christ, and to attain and help others to the kingdom of glory.

And are these works to be done with a careless mind or a lazy hand? Oh, see then that this work be done with all your might. Study hard, for the well is deep and our brains are shallow.

I love that. Study deep. The well is, study hard. The well is deep. Our brains are shallow. Whatever your ministry, and I remind you, if you're saved, you've been given a ministry to fulfill.

[43 : 15] Remember, it cannot be done in the power of the flesh. Don't even try. Christian ministry is done in the power of the Spirit of God. Paul understood this great truth, and he passed it on to the Colossian church.

We proclaim him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose, I also labor, striving, there's that word striving again, according to his power, which mightily works within me.

Colossians 1, 28, 29. The ministry God has given you takes hard work. It can and should only be pursued by the energy of God's power working through you.

As you yield to him, submit to him. An excellent minister teaches with authority. This is the last one. Prescribe and teach these things.

I was really concerned about that word prescribe. I said, wait, Mark will know what that means. Prescription. The Holy Spirit riding through the Apostle Paul issues a command.

[44 : 36] That is what the word prescribe means. God commands his ministers to teach truth. true ministers teach truth and false ministers don't.

And there's all kinds of those guys around. And you can see them on TV all the time. And I don't recommend it. Don't make a dose of that. Don't put that in your diet.

God is telling Paul and Paul is telling Timothy, and Timothy would tell others right down to our day, teach these things. Teach truth. If we would be an excellent minister in whatever God has called us to be, we must do the task given us with authority.

God has called us to do this, so do it under his authority. This is how the Lord Jesus conducted himself during his earthly sojourn. He commanded his hearers to repent and to believe the gospel. God the Father commanded men to listen to his son and obey what he said. The Bible is filled with instructions to believe the gospel and every one of those commands, instructions to believe the gospel is in the form of a command.

[45 : 55] Every one of them. If we're to minister with authority, then that means we're to do so with boldness. This isn't a time to shrink.

This is a time, this is a call for boldness. What is the foundation of authority? It's fourfold. One, a strong commitment to the authority of God's word.

Commitment. If a man is unsure that the Bible is God's word, he will lack authority in preaching. I can't tell you how many men we have in this time that do not believe it is the inspired authoritative word of God in this time.

Two, a proper interpretation of scripture. A man that lacks understanding of the great doctrines of the Bible will lack authority in ministry. Number three, a concern for upholding the truth of scripture, even if it means administering church discipline.

Some of us have been involved in that. It's not very pleasant, but it is commanded and necessary. And four, the knowledge that the preacher of the word is not to be a man pleaser.

[47 : 18] He is not to fear offending men and women. Ministers are called to please God. And that's the question we should all ask. Is God well pleased?

Be able to go to Him and answer that. Lord, are you pleased with my life? And if you're not, show me what I'm doing wrong and what I need to do right.

Anything less than all that is not the gospel of Christ. We are all in ministry and we should do it with a bold fervor.

Do it with boldness. Thank you.