

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

A Good Pastor, Pt 2

1 Timothy 4:6-16

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SermonAudio Blurb: In this brief series out of 1 Timothy 4:6-16 Pastor Henry seeks to show the seriousness of the pastoral office and its responsibilities. In a time where pastors are expected to be anything and everything Pastor Henry brings the focus back to the essentials—and it is not what many people would expect.

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 1 Timothy 4:6-16
- B. Last week we started this series to examine the responsibilities and expectations Paul had for Timothy.
- C. In doing so Paul paints a picture of what a faithful pastor looks like.
 1. A difficult task was before him.
 2. A need to be focused on the main things rather than allowing himself to become distracted by things of little or no value.
 3. And in doing so Paul wants Timothy to be the example of godliness that is lacking in the false teachers who are present in the church at that time.
- D. I have broken this passage down to twenty different qualities of a faithful pastor. Last week we considered four of them found in vs 6.
 1. A good pastor says the hard things.
 2. A good pastor remembers he serves Jesus.
 3. A good pastor is in the Word of God.
 4. A good pastor is obedient to the Word of God.

II. Twenty Qualities of a Faithful Pastor.

- A. The fifth quality is that he doesn't get caught up in stupid arguments.

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1. Timothy is to stay away from, actively reject, the opponents' interpretation of the gospel.
 - a. Present tense here speaks of the continual need for Timothy's attention at this point.
 - b. It is used by Paul to reject a factious persons (Titus 3:10) and to tell Timothy to refuse to enroll younger widows (1ti 5:11) and to avoid stupid and senseless controversies because they only give birth to quarrels (2ti 2:23).
 - c. This tells us much of what the pastoral ministry can be like and it is good for you who are part of the church to understand this.
 - d. Also important to note that this is an imperative, there is no option here.

2. He uses sarcasm here to the fullest to rub the false teachers' doctrine and message in their faces.
 - a. "Worldly" (irreverent ESV) speaks of that which is ungodly, profane and irreligious.
 - b. The idea of fables fit only for old women is a term used in that day in philosophical circles. It was designed to express how little value the hearers placed in the thing taught.
 - c. The idea is that what they are promulgating is no different than the silly tales the women would come up with over the long hours while sitting with one another weaving and the like.
 - d. It is nothing more the empty prattle that carries no real power and no real purpose **other that to distract God's people from the gospel and true knowledge and godliness.**
 - (1) And that is the point. Satan is always attacking truth.
 - (2) He will do it through false teaching. He will do it through weak teaching.
 - (3) But another trick he uses is simply a distraction. Where he can get the people of God caught up in focusing on stupid, silly, worthless issues.
 - (4) The result is that they fool themselves into thinking that they are practicing godliness because they are so passionate

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about this issue; when in fact they are often not practicing godliness in the least.

- e. Sometimes a simple refusal to enter into, or continue, a conversation is a sign of wisdom.
3. To get a sense of the idea of 'worldly' it is worth our time to look at James 3.
 - a. Vs 1 sets the tone of the entire chapter and it is about the teachers in a church. The command is to not desire to be a teacher because with it comes a strong level of judgment from God.
 - b. vss 2-12 he shows why it is not wise to be too eager to be a teacher. The tongue is a very restless, evil thing and it can do massive harm with the greatest of ease.
 - c. vss 9-12 bring a specific example of blessing God and then cursing man with the same tongue. Here is where we begin to connect with what Paul is warning Timothy.
 - (1) So many times you get pulled into stupid arguments and before you know it your mouth has said things that are foolish or plain evil.
 - (2) How many times have you read comments online to a post or an article and see nothing but harsh rhetoric taking place?
 - (3) Or, face to face you keep ratcheting it up higher and higher until your emotions take over and evil speech comes flowing out?
 - (4) Paul tells us, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." (Rom 13:14 NAS)
 - d. vss 13-18 then shows the idea behind "worldly fables" in our passage.
 - (1) They are the kind that are designed to divide and create jealousy.
 - (2) They are driven by arrogance and so they are defined as 'earthly, natural and demonic.'

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- (3) In other words, the same garbage that the false teachers in Ephesus are giving--'doctrines of demons'.
4. A pastor can easily be drawn into these things through various means.
 - a. Through denominational ties where politics flow back and forth with great intensity.
 - b. Through giving a voice in the church to those who should not have a voice.
 - c. By not remembering that every question has a purpose that is obvious.
 - (1) There are many people who like to bait others into an argument.
 - (2) A way around this is to ask what the purpose of the question is and why they are asking it and listen for specifics rather than "I am just wondering." Questions don't just come from the air.
 - (3) By trying to sound wise and wanting to be accepted as one who knows, the pastor does not exercise restraint when receiving questions.
 - d. We can get sucked into these things so easily as a pastor.
 - (1) Pray for us! Pray that we always stay focused on the main thing—the Cross of our Lord.
 - (2) It is a real tight rope that a pastor has to walk, for we are to confront and speak against false teaching and yet we need to know when to pull back so that it does not become the centerpiece of our lives.
- B. The sixth is to exercise diligent self-control to promote godliness.
 1. Remember what Paul has just addressed in the first part of chapter 4—men who are telling you that godliness comes from asceticism. By not eating certain things, not marrying, not this or that.
 2. Now he shows that it is not done through legalisms but through discipline and practice.
 3. Discipline doesn't make the Christian life easy, but it makes it easier.

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4. The comment about bodily training most likely is due to the tremendous focus in that culture for exercise. It was part of the Greek culture that remained during the Roman empire.
5. Notice the point that he is making here though. It is not to denigrate physical exercise, but rather it is to show the limited value that it has.
 - a. The point is found in the last part of vs 8.
 - b. Physical exercise has value in the present life. But that is all. There is a natural limitation on it.
 - c. But godliness extends into eternity.
6. Present tense demands a habit. The opposite of moralism and legalism is not a life licentiousness and laxity, but rather a life disciplined toward true godliness.
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:2-5.
 - b. I think it is fair to believe that his opponents would be accusing him of not being as godly as they were because he would eat any food and not disdain other restrictions such as marriage. He just isn't as serious as they are.
 - c. But the answer is to be diligent in pursuing godliness that would become another contrast with the cheap alternative that they had to offer.
7. Remember 3:16 about the mystery of true godliness—it is not what you do or don't do. It is not how much you do. It is what Jesus has done and who Jesus is.
 - a. Does my action and decisions make me depend on God's grace more or less? Does it magnify God more?
 - b. You know you are growing in godliness when it becomes less about you and what you are doing or not doing and more about what Jesus has done and continues to do in you.
 - c. Choices begin to be made not on my rights or my wants but whether it enlarges my heart toward a satisfaction and delight in Jesus.

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- d. This is where true godliness begins to flow. You love Jesus and you therefore keep his commandments.
 - (1) When you are immature, then the obedience is immature, but it is there.
 - (2) As you grow wiser and your love of Jesus is more mature your obedience begins to be deeper and richer and even more subtle.
 - (3) So the discipline is anything that enlarges my love of Jesus.
 - (4) Which means Scripture intake, prayer, meditation, evangelism, discipleship.
 - (5) They are not done 'just because' but to see more of Jesus.
- C. The seventh is to remember is to focus on what is eternal.
 - 1. I have already mentioned this briefly in the point above, but want to develop it a bit more separately.
 - 2. The reason godliness is better than physical exercise is because it is eternal and has eternal value.
 - 3. This a constant challenge for anyone, most certainly a pastor is not exempted from this issue.
 - 4. In Hebrews 12:1-2 we are instructed to run the race before us as Christians by fixing our eyes on the goal, Jesus Christ.
 - a. Prior to that was a listing of persons in the Old Testament who had lived by faith, yet never saw the promise of the coming of Jesus actually happen.
 - b. Yet they were a people of faith and therefore they persevered and pressed on even in the midst of great trials.
 - 5. Jesus tells us not to store up our treasure on earth, but in heaven.
 - a. All that we store here shall be lost.
 - b. All that we store in eternity shall be ours for eternity.
 - 6. Parents are to train and discipline their children with an eye toward eternity.

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7. Pastors must always keep this in view.
- D. The eighth is to labor to have his people fixed upon God as their greatest delight (10-11).
1. A good pastor is not merely an intellectual or speaker.
 2. A good pastor is one who constantly strives to know God better with the goal that those he shepherds knows Him better as well.
 3. “For it is for this we labor and strive. . .” The ‘this’ is not pointing to what follows, but what has just been said.
 - a. The idea is that, we are convinced that there is more to life than what we see here and now.
 - b. We are convinced that there is to be a new heavens and earth that is to come. One where sin and death are no longer found, where Satan is banished and we are not hindered by our frailties and the hangover of sin in us.
 - c. This is why then Paul says, “because we have fixed our hope on the living God.”
 4. This passage in vs 10 has confused many and I want to try to clarify what it is saying and not saying. At the same time I don’t want to create problems that are not necessary.
 - a. This is a popular passage for the universalist and the Arminian (explain each).
 - b. The Universalist Interpretation - "God is the Savior of all men" means that all who have ever lived will be saved. This of course is contrary to passage after passage in the rest of the bible. Along with that, the rest of the verse would have no meaning whatsoever when it says "especially of those who believe."
 - c. The Arminian Interpretation - Usually says it this way: God wants to be our savior but only if we believe, then we are saved. The reason is the free will of man keeping Him from actually being our Savior. The problem is that it does not say God wants to save, but that He actually saves: He is actually the Savior (in some sense) of all men.
 - d. An explanation:

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- (1) Note first that the death of Jesus or even his person is not the focus here. The “living God” most likely speaks of God the Father.
- (2) Next, understand that we tend to look at a word like “savior” and make it mean “savior from sin or wrath or condemnation.” But that is not its only meaning.
 - (a) The word means to deliver, rescue or preserve/sustain.
 - (b) The point in this passage is that He is the ‘living’ God, not merely some dead idol that cannot do anything.
 - (c) And as the living God is the One who sustains or preserves all of mankind. We call this common grace. He is the giver of all good gifts to all people. He brings the sun and the rain upon all people. He is the giver of life and breath to all people.
 - (d) But, in a more specialized, unique way, He is the Savior to those who believe. It is here that we come to the more technical meaning of Savior.
5. Back to the actual point of this verse though....
6. Paul and Timothy are laboring, striving (very strong words speaking of agony and exhaustion) to bring about true godliness into the lives of those they care for.
7. Why? Because they are serving the true God, the only God, the living God.
 - a. And He is their savior and they desire others to believe in Him as well for their own salvation.
 - b. They have fixed their hope on God alone and they then point their people to the same God, showing them the way, being the example of what faithful persevering looks like.
 - c. When a pastor has only a passing interest in God it will manifest itself in how him ministers and speaks.

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- d. But when He finds God to be his passion, then he will labor and strive to make much of Him before the people.
8. There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. (Psa 86:8-10)
 - a. Notice that the reason the nations shall worship God, the reason that there is none like God is because God is great and is the only God.
 - b. To know you have been saved by the living God, the great and only God is something that you never fully comprehend.
 - c. And as you see more of God and plumb the limitless depths of God's greatness things happen in your heart and life.
 - d. If we saw the greatness of God as it is, there would not be boredom, there would not be lusting after things that do not belong to us, there would not be bitterness or fear.
9. And this is what is the task of a good pastor, to show the greatness of our God, show that this world is not our purpose for existence, and live it before the people.
- E. The ninth is to not fear man (12).
 1. "Let no one look down on your youthfulness..."
 2. The point here is that there are those in the church at Ephesus who have decided that their best argument against Timothy is that he is too young to be taken seriously.
 3. Paul is telling him not to take their opinion serious. And this is true for any man who wants to be a good pastor.
 4. Ultimately a good pastor has to do and say what he believe is God-honoring and biblical.
 5. He says the hard things, he speak from the Word of God and he cannot let other people be the basis for what and why he does things.
 6. This is harder that you think, especially in a smaller church.
- F. The tenth is to be an example.

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1. Instead of being intimidated by others, the pastor needs to establish himself as an example in pursuing God. The word “but” is a very strong word, making a strong contrast between being looked down upon and being an example.
2. The word for example speaks of a mold that presses into the lives of others until they take on the same shape. This is the task of the pastor, be an example.
3. The original Matthew Henry said it well, “those who teach by their doctrine must teach by their life; else they pull down with one hand what they build up with the other.”
4. He gives five key areas in which this is to take place.
 - a. “In spirit” is in the KJV but does not appear in the best manuscripts and should not be there.
 - b. He has both the outward—speech and conduct.
 - c. And the inward—love, faith, purity.
 - d. Speech and actions are what get a pastor in trouble.
 - (1) Speech is what a pastor does the most of and therefore has the greatest potential for criticism.
 - (2) Closely following that is how he acts. People are always watching, a lot more than we realize.
 - (3) Young men emulate what a pastor says and how he acts, therefore he needs to be wise.
 - (4) Think about the context and realize how his speech and conduct should show a true thankfulness to God for the rich gifts of creation and the ability to righteously enjoy them.
 - (5) His words are gospel-centered and pointing to God’s grace rather than the bondage of moralism.
 - e. But he also needs to promote the growth of love and faith and purity as well.
 - (1) To the degree that these are enlarged in his life and heart, his speech and conduct will also become enlarged.

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- (2) He is to be a man who loves God and loves mankind.
 - (a) You will quickly learn if a man is truly pastoring out of a love for God and the people or merely for his own interests.
 - (b) A pastor who loves well is one who will endure, overlook offenses, and bring the light of God's word into the lives of the people.
- (3) He is to show others what it looks like to trust in God, to rest in the gospel promises, to live in the peace that is found through Jesus Christ.
- (4) Lastly he is a man who values purity.
 - (a) This can refer to sexual purity, which may be the focal point due to the great immorality that existed in Ephesus.
 - (b) But it also refers to a purity of mind and heart. A high level of innocence and integrity.
5. Thomas Brooks it was who said that example is the most powerful rhetoric. The single greatest support of the truth in your preaching is the power of an exemplary life.
6. You cannot make people respect you, and it is impossible to really confront. The best way is to overcome it through a life of example. And that takes time.
7. This is something a pastor never graduates from, rather he is always to be growing in these areas and therefore pushing that mold deeper into the lives of his people.
8. I might add also that this requires that a good pastor be among his flock in all of life's situations. Not merely on a Sunday.
- G. The eleventh is to be centered upon the Bible.
 1. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel (Ezr 7:10 NAS)
- H. The twelfth is to be passionate for the growth of your flock.
- I. Thirteen, you are a teacher first and foremost.

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- J. Fourteen, you seek to develop your gifts to the fullest.
- K. Fifteen, you watch your personal life, knowing that you are a sinner.
- L. Sixteen, you watch your teaching, knowing that you are a sinner.
- M. Seventeen, you stay the course.
- N. Eighteen, you press yourself to persevere in the faith.
- O. Nineteen, you press your people to persevere in the faith.
- P. Twenty, you recognize that in some way you are responsible for the salvation of your people.

III. Conclusion.

A.

Small Group Questions

- What are ways that people can seek to intimidate a pastor into doing things or not saying certain things?
- Why is example such a key component to leadership?