

STEVEN J. LAWSON
THE COSTLY DISCIPLINE
OF A GODLY PASTOR

JOHN MACARTHUR
PREACH THE WORD: FOUR COMPELLING
MOTIVATIONS FOR THE FAITHFUL EXPOSITOR

DEREK W. H. THOMAS
PREACHING AS
WARFARE

EXPOSITOR

A PUBLICATION OF ONEPASSION MINISTRIES



Preaching *the*
Pastoral Epistles



ISSUE

05

MAY/JUN15



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Faithful Preaching

Throughout church history, preachers who have left a lasting impact upon the church and their generation have always been known for their strong, biblical preaching. God’s work is to be done God’s way if it is to know God’s blessing. This necessitates the centrality and primacy of biblical preaching in the church. If we are to see another Reformation, Puritan era, or Great Awakening, then we must see a return to expository preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul commanded Timothy to “Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4:2). In this present hour, we must see again preaching that is *biblical*, preaching that is *authoritative*, and preaching, quite frankly, that is *dominant*.

These inspired words in 2 Timothy are the last words the apostle Paul ever wrote. In weeks, if not days, he will be beheaded on the Ostian Way, west of Rome. The gospel torch is being passed down from the aged preacher to his young son in the faith, Timothy. This is the apostle’s final admonition to his disciple. The truths that Paul shares with Timothy are the same truths that stand preserved for us in Scripture. They are God’s admonition to all preachers in every place who would step behind the sacred desk.

Paul says here that there is no season that is not either “in season or out of season.” This is a colloquial expression, meaning that preaching the Word of God is *always* in season. The apostle asserts that the Word of God must be preached morning and evening, day in and day out. It is to be preached the entirety of our lives in every situation of life—both when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient, when it is welcomed and when it is unwelcome, when it is well received and when it is not received at all. Paul is charging Timothy, “Young man, *always* be ready to preach the Word.”

This is as true for preachers today as it was for Timothy. There is never a time or a place when the preaching of the Word of God is out of place. If the church ever gathers and the ministry of the Word of God seems to be out of place, then cancel that meeting and cancel that ministry. There is no reason for the church to be gathering if the Word is out of place. Martin Luther said, “In the worship service, everything is negotiable except the preaching of the word of God.” The church can meet for the preaching of the Word of God, or the

church can assemble with singing and prayer to supplement the Word. But the one non-negotiable that is absolutely essential is the preaching of the Word. There *must always* be the exposition, the proclamation, the application, and the exhortation of the Word of God. Timothy is to discharge this calling, faithfully, to believers and unbelievers alike, to princes



and paupers. He is to be always fulfilling this duty.

Martin Luther said, “The pulpit is the throne for the Word of God.” A heaven-sent revival will come to our churches only once the pulpit is enthroned again with an open Bible and a humble servant stands behind the pulpit to give a clear and compelling exposition of God’s Word. In these days, the church so desperately needs men who will not play at preaching, but who will preach the Word, the *whole* Word and *nothing but* the Word. This is why it is so critical that we hear again this final charge by the apostle Paul to his young son in the faith, Timothy—“preach the Word”! ♦

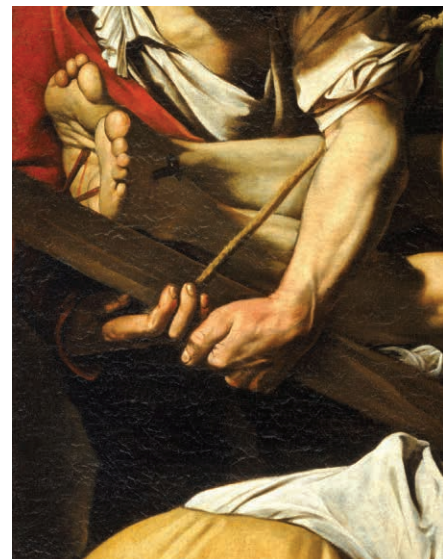


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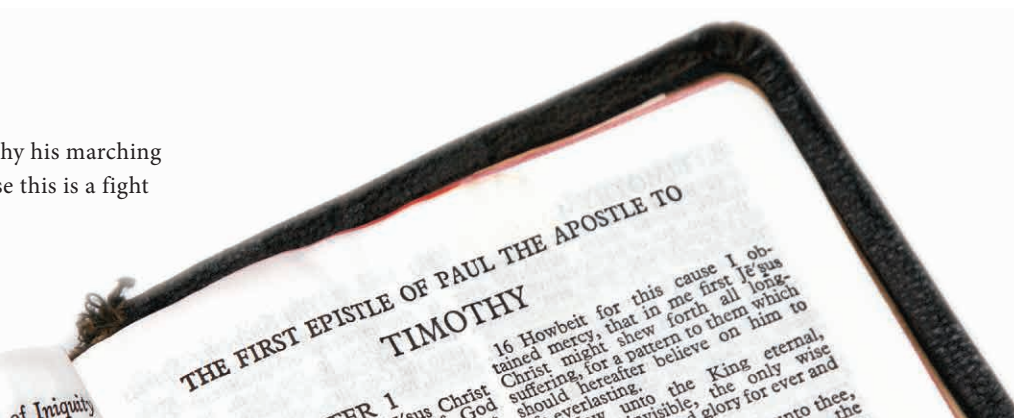
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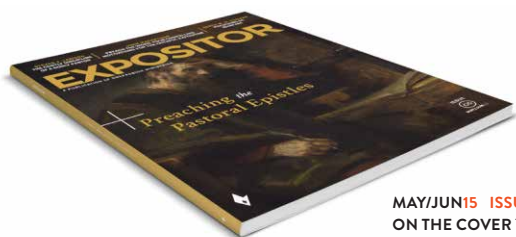


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MAY/JUN15 ISSUE 5 PREACHING THE PASTORAL EPISTLES
ON THE COVER The Apostle Paul, ca. 1657 (oil on canvas), by Rembrandt van Rijn

EXPOSITOR

ONEPASSION



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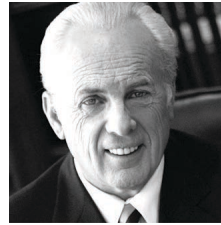


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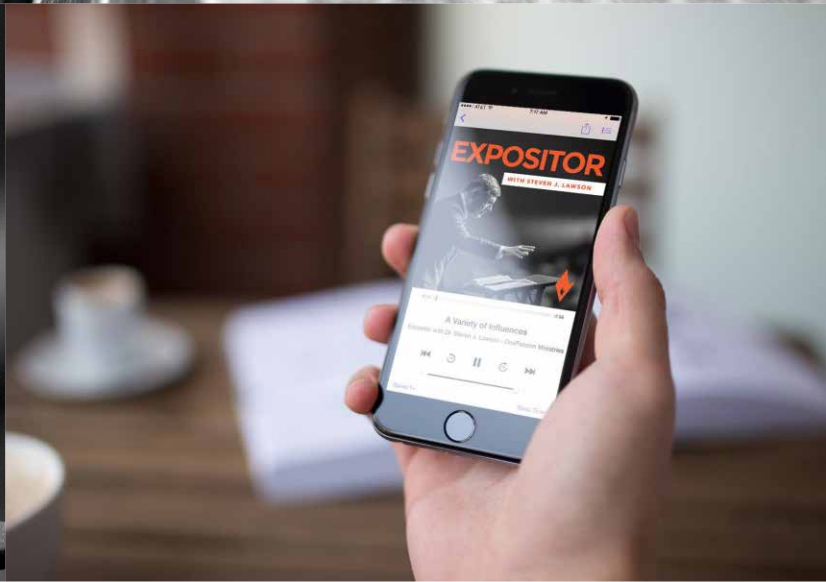
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Podcast with Steven J. Lawson

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Expositor, hosted by Dr. Steven J. Lawson, provides an informal look into the life and ministry of the expositor. Join us three times a week as one of today's leading Bible expositors examines the details of sermon preparation and delivery, ministry, and other matters addressing the biblical preacher and teacher. Each podcast offers a glimpse into the calling and life of one who preaches and teaches God's Word.



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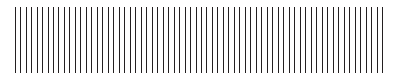
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THE COSTLY DISCIPLINE OF A GODLY PASTOR

by Steven J. Lawson



The young, zealous pastor of Dundee, Scotland, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, who flamed out for God at age 29 and gave himself to the work of God as perhaps no young pastor has so uniquely given himself to God's work, said before he died, "The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness." M'Cheyne understood that the effectiveness of his pastoral ministry, including his pulpit ministry, depended in large measure upon his personal godliness. M'Cheyne saw himself as a chosen instrument in the hand of a sovereign God, a minister who must be a pure instrument.

M'Cheyne said to other pastors in his day, "How diligently the Calgary officer keeps his saber clean and sharp. Every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember, you are God's sword, His instrument. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection of the instrument will be its success." He then added, "It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon

in the hand of God." M'Cheyne rightly saw that the power of his ministry depended upon the purity of his life. M'Cheyne prayed, "Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be."

M'Cheyne asserted, "Your whole usefulness depends on this." This must be our prayer and this must be our passion. Down through the centuries, those who have been the greatest preachers have understood that the power of their ministry has been largely measured by the purity of their lives.

The towering Puritan theologian, "England's Calvin," John Owen maintained: "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." That is, no preacher's ministry can advance beyond his own personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles H. Spurgeon established this same priority in his *Lectures to My Students*:

It will be in vain for me to stock my library, or organize societies, or project schemes, if I neglect the culture of myself for books and agencies, and systems, are only remotely the instruments of my holy calling, my own spirit, soul,

◀ **THE CONVERSION OF
ST PAUL, 1767
(OIL ON CANVAS)
BY NICOLAS-BERNARD
LEPICIE**

and body, are my nearest machinery for sacred service; my spiritual faculties and my inner life, are my battle axe and weapons of war.

Spurgeon says here that a loss of purity will guarantee a loss of power in your ministry. Your life is more important than your library, and your soul is more important than your shelves. This is precisely what the apostle Paul prioritized with Timothy, his young son in the faith, when he wrote, “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (1 Tim 4:7).

Timothy was serving as pastor in the church at Ephesus, placed there by appointment of the apostle Paul himself. This young minister was surrounded by waves of problems within the church that were threatening to submerge him. He had unqualified elders and deacons. He had aggressive women who were overstepping their bounds in ministry in the church. He had neglect of the care of widows. There was a growing heresy called “Gnosticism” encroaching on the life of the church. Layer upon layer of carnality was threatening to suffocate Timothy as he found himself in this challenging ministry situation. In the midst of this turmoil, Paul says to Timothy, first and foremost, “address the spiritual condition of your soul.” External challenges in ministry must never cause this young minister to lose sight of what is most important: to keep his sword sharp and clean within his own heart and soul.

We who are ministers and shepherds in the Lord’s church must maintain this same priority at all times. We, too, must discipline ourselves for godliness. We must keep our minds pure and our hearts clean. We must keep our souls unstained and our lives holy. We must be, as M’Cheyne said, “A pure instrument in the hand of God.” We must be a battle axe that is sharp and fit for our Master’s use.

The Command Issued

Paul begins this ministerial charge to young Timothy by calling him to discipline himself in his inner spiritual life. Paul pointedly writes, “discipline yourself.” Advancement in the Christian life requires self-discipline. Nowhere is this more important than in the life of a pastor. In fact, all successful ministry starts with the spiritual life of the pastor. There can be no spiritual discipline in the pew until there is spiritual discipline in the pulpit. Like priest, like people. A disciple, after he has been fully trained, will be exactly like his teacher.

The verb translated “discipline yourself” is drawn from an athletic background and drips with athletic imagery. The Greek term (*gymnasō*) comes into our English language as *gymnasium* and means to exercise or to train. Literally, the word conveys the idea of being naked, because an athlete would go into a gymnasium and strip down. He would remove anything that would restrict the full movement of his body, so that he could expend himself in training and build himself up. Paul is saying to Timothy, “You need to look at the athlete, and learn from him. You need to be just like the athlete in your spiritual discipline.”

As men in the ministry, whatever our age, we must be like athletes who are disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness. Just as any athlete who is serious about getting in shape must go to the gymnasium, strip down, and go through the workouts, Timothy, and all pastors, must do the same spiritually. As a man of God, Timothy must get his heart and life in shape. Paul charges him to lay aside every personal encumbrance and the sin that would entangle him. He must deny himself many Christian liberties. He must remove all excess baggage and whatever would hold him back from being in prime shape. Timothy must get into God’s gym and work out in the Word. He must pump iron in prayer. He must exercise his muscles in faith and obedience. He must shed

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the baby fat of self-centeredness and get in shape if he is to be a lean, muscular preacher. Timothy cannot be passive about this. He must take charge of his spiritual life.

It is absolutely necessary for every man of God to discipline himself spiritually. We must get in shape for the pursuit of holiness. We must work up a spiritual sweat. We must lose excess weight. We must tone our spiritual muscles. We must monitor our heart rate for God. We must do the heavy lifting of confessing our sins. We must beat down our fleshly desires. We must restrict our spiritual liberties to only that which is expedient. We must build up our endurance. No matter if you have been called into the ministry long ago or if you are new in God’s service, whether you are a pastor, a teacher, a seminary professor, a seminary student, a lay elder, you must get in shape.

The Character Required

There is a great and glorious goal for this self-discipline. The chief aim of our discipline, Paul says, is to discipline ourselves “for the purpose of godliness” The word “godliness” (*eusebia*)



comes from a Greek root word that indicates reverence and awe. It refers to the inner condition of the heart, the inner attitude of the soul, the inner life of the human spirit. The heart of the minister must be gripped with a proper fear of God. Such a pastor is a God-fearing man. Philippians 2:12 tells us that we are to work out our salvation in “fear and trembling.” Progress in sanctification is never realized casually or flippantly. God has worked it in. We must work it out with great fear.

This pursuit of godliness means that the soul is dominated by a supreme devotion to God. Godliness involves cultivating an inner life that is God-centered, God-focused, and God-honoring. It is the antithesis of being casual toward God. It is the opposite of being kicked back and laid back toward God. Godliness, is a central theme in 1 Timothy, woven like a thread through the fabric of this book.

In 1 Timothy 2:1–2 Paul says, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” Godliness and dignity go hand-in-hand. Godliness is a feature of the inner life, and dignity is the outer expression of inner godliness. Godliness entails conducting oneself with dignity as a representative of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It means walking in a manner worthy of the high call upon one’s life. A person is godly on the inside when he takes God very seriously. Godliness means giving God the highest respect and proper reverence.

Paul is saying to young Timothy, and to every spiritual leader today, what we *are* is more important than what we *do*. Our godliness is more important than our giftedness. What we *are* before God takes precedence over what we *do* before men. Our private life takes priority over our public life. How we live is more important than where we labor. Our walk with God is more important than our work for God. The size of our hearts is more important than the size of our church. Our maturity is more important than our platform. Our purity is

more important than our programs. Our integrity is more important than our ministry. Our soul is more important than our success.

This is the character required. Every man who preaches the gospel must discipline himself for the purpose of godliness. If not, our knowledge and our books and our theology is worth little to nothing.

The Comparison Made

Paul is a master teacher, and he now gives an illustration of what he has been saying in 1 Timothy 4:8. A picture is worth a thousand words, and Paul wants Timothy to see clearly what he is saying. So, Paul paints a picture in Timothy’s mind that is vivid. He gives the illustration of bodily discipline, and then he applies it to spiritual discipline. He says in verse 8, “For bodily discipline is only of little profit.” The athletic imagery is based upon what he has already articulated.

In the first century, athletes were placed on a pedestal, just as they are in our society today. There were statues chiseled out of Italian marble that would line the streets leading into the major cities where the Olympic Games, the Isthmian Games, and other noted competitions were being held. The gyms were everywhere and well attended. Young men aspired to become iconic athletic figures in the Greek culture of the Roman Empire. They were all working out in the hopes that they would attain to the victor’s crown to be awarded to the winner of the games. Such champions would be granted tax-exempt status. They would be given free extended education. There would be laurels tossed at their feet. They were highly motivated not to be halfhearted in their training, but to pour themselves into the discipline required to be a world-class athlete.

In the midst of this body-glorifying culture, Paul says, “For bodily discipline is of little profit.” To be sure, there is physical gain in working out, but it is only little profit. He admits such profit is one-dimensional, because it is only for the body and

not for the soul. It is only for time and not for eternity.

Paul adds, “But godliness is profitable for all things.” When he says “godliness,” implied is the spiritual discipline required to achieve it. If there is little discipline in spiritual matters, there is little godliness. Stagnant discipline produces stagnant godliness. There is no easy path for any minister to model the message that he preaches. Bodily discipline was of little profit, but spiritual training is exceedingly profitable.

The apostle states, “For all things,” meaning it is profitable not only for the body, but also for the soul. Spiritual disci-

plined. There must be no doubt in Timothy’s mind regarding the truthfulness of what he has asserted. To drive this home to his young son in the faith—and to every one of us today—Paul writes what he does in verse 9. His aim is to drive the stake down and to punctuate what he has just said. Verse 9 states, “It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.” This is the same as Jesus saying, “Truly, truly, I say unto you.” Certainly, everything that Jesus said was inerrant and infallible. But some words He spoke rise to a higher level of importance. So it is with Paul here. This is an affirming statement that the apostle uses throughout his three pastoral epistles to highlight what is extremely important. “A trustworthy statement” means it is both important and certain. The statement that follows can be counted upon. It must be accepted and received.

At the end of the verse, Paul adds, “deserving full acceptance.” Timothy must do more than merely agree with it mentally. He must embrace it. Sometimes in the pastoral epistles, the “trustworthy statement” to be received follows the statement. At other times, it precedes the statement. In this case, the faithful words are found in the previous verse, a reference to “bodily discipline is only a little profit, but godliness is profitable in all things.” The reliable saying also includes what is at the end of verse 7, “discipline yourself for godliness.” This is the trustworthy statement.

If young Timothy is to progress in his sanctification, if he is to further develop into the image of God, if he is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, if he is to

increasingly put to death the deeds of the flesh and advance in holiness, then he must be like a world-class athlete entering into strict training. In his spiritual life, Timothy must be buffeting his body and pushing himself under strict regimentation as though in training. He must do everything he can do, by the grace of God, for the purpose of godliness.

The Confidence Fixed

Paul is so convinced of the need for spiritual discipline unto godliness that he charges Timothy in verse 10: “It is for this we labor and strive.” When Paul writes we “labor,” what is the “this” to which he refers? “This” refers to the previous command, “discipline yourself for godliness.” This word for “labor” means to work hard, to toil, to labor to the point of exhaustion. It requires that one expend himself such that he is so wearied he has nothing left to give. He exerts himself in resisting sin and obeying the Word of God to such an extent that he is spiritually exhausted. To pursue holiness is the very antithesis of “Let go and let God.” To the contrary, he must

To the degree one advances in godliness, to that same degree there will be greater enjoyment of God and a fuller manifestation of His glory in us.

pline yields gain not only for time, but for eternity. What a high-octane motivation this ought to be for us to roll up our sleeves, get into God’s gymnasium, and be in the Word of God and prayer. We should be inspired to meditate and fast, to resist temptation, and to buffet our body. We must do all of the things necessary to be spiritually in top shape.

It is truly worth it to be disciplined spiritually. For the present life, it brings joy, happiness, spiritual power, and blessing. Paul adds, “And also for the life to come.” Think about that moment, when, after having run the race that He has set before us, we stand at the judgment seat of Christ. If we have paid the price to give ourselves to spiritual disciplines, it will lead on that last day to an exponential increase of joy. To the degree one advances in godliness, to that same degree there will be greater enjoyment of God and a fuller manifestation of His glory in us.

The Confirmation Stated

Paul underscores the absolute certainty of what he has just

strive to incorporate the truth into his life, by the enablement of God, with every nerve fiber in his spiritual being.

Paul further implores Timothy to “strive.” This is the Greek word *agonizomai*. It describes the athlete in the wrestling match and the runner in the marathon. It is used of the soldier fighting in war against a formidable foe. Timothy must agonize in his pursuit of godliness. He must push himself to the point of painful agony—no pain, no gain. These two verbs—“labor and strive”—are in the present tense. Timothy must be always laboring and be continually striving, because the flesh within him is always ready to raise its ugly head. The devil is always prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Timothy cannot let his guard down. He cannot take time off from his pursuit of spiritual discipline.

In order to maintain this, Timothy must have “fixed [his] hope on the living God.” It is this hope—a steadfast, unwavering certainty—that allows him to look to the future with confidence in God. In this hope, he looks beyond the present to the future when every person will stand before God and He will complete every believer in the image of Christ. This hope in God is what is motivating him and empowering him to labor and to strive.

This future hope should likewise widen our stride and generate spiritual energy within us. At the end of life’s race, every believer will find his place before the judgment seat of Christ, where the Judge will be seated upon His throne. No matter where any minister finished in the race, whether last or first, he will come and take his stand before the Judge’s seat. Those who have trained and built up their muscles and expanded their lungs for greater endurance ministry and who have competed according to the rules will be recognized by the Judge. He will call out their individual names and put the crown upon their heads. Every preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ must push themselves, knowing that one day they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He will reward those who have faithfully pursued godliness.

“I Have Been Before God”

One noted minister who sought to discipline himself for the purpose of godliness was the renowned Colonial Puritan of the eighteenth century, the venerable Jonathan Edwards. At the young ages of eighteen and nineteen, Edwards wrote seventy resolutions that would serve as a moral compass for his spiritual life. He would read these statements of intent as a means of staying on track in his pursuit of Christ-likeness. He purposed that he would live every day as though it were the last day of his life. In this effort, he was determined to discipline himself in the use of his time, tongue, and talents.

On January 14, 1723, young Jonathan Edwards, age nineteen, wrote Resolution number 63: “On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world at any one time who was properly a complete Christian.” He rea-

soned there must be one man at any one moment in time who is regarded by God to be the greatest Christian alive. This one most embodies the virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ. With this goal fixed squarely in his gaze, Edwards writes, “Resolved: I will act just as I would do if I strove with all of my might to be that one who should live in my time.” It was by no accident that this nineteen-year-old young man, serving as an intern pastor on Wall Street in downtown New York, would become America’s greatest pastor, preacher, philosopher, theologian, and author. Edwards set a course for his life, when a teenage boy, that he would glorify God by striving to be the most complete Christian in his generation.

On January 12, 1723, Jonathan Edwards wrote this in his *Diary*:

I have been before God, and have given myself, all that I am and have, to God; so that I am not, in any respect, my own. I can challenge no right [to] this understanding, this will, these affections, which are in me. Neither have I any right to this body, or any of its members—no right to this tongue, these hands, these feet; no right to these senses, these eyes, these ears, this smell, or this taste. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained any thing as my own. I have been this morning to Him, and told Him, that I gave myself wholly to Him. I have this morning told Him that I did take Him for my whole portion, looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and His law, for the constant rule of my obedience; and would fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life; and that I did believe in Jesus Christ, and did receive Him as a Prince and Saviour; and that I would adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, however hazardous and difficult the confession and practice of it may be. Now, henceforth, I am not to act, in any respect as my own.

As Paul challenged Timothy and as Edwards charged himself, I call you to discipline yourself for godliness. I call you to labor and strive. I call you work out your salvation in fear and trembling. I call you to resist temptation and to put to death the deeds of the flesh. I call you to pursue holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. I call you compete according to the rules. I call you to forget what lies behind and to press forward to what lies ahead. I call you to fight the good fight, which is for your godliness and purity. I call you to fight the devil and to resist the world. I call you to be like a world-class athlete and bring your whole life under the control and the mastery of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I call you to battle against anything that would undermine your godliness. This is the costly discipline of a godly pastor. ♦

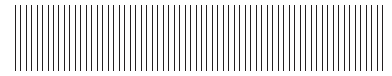




PREACH THE WORD

Four Compelling Motivations for the Faithful Expositor

by John MacArthur



For the biblical expositor, 2 Timothy 4:2 majestically stands out as sacred ground. It is precious territory for every pastor who, following in the footsteps of Paul, desires to faithfully proclaim the Word of God. In this single verse, the apostle defined the primary mandate for God-honoring church ministry, not only for Timothy, but for all who would come after him. The minister of the Gospel is called to “Preach the Word!”

As he penned this Spirit-inspired text, Paul knew he was about to die. The words of this verse stand at the beginning of the last chapter he would ever write. Alone in a bleak Roman dungeon, without even a cloak to keep himself warm (v. 13), the unwearied apostle issued one final charge—calling Timothy, and every minister after him, to herald the Scriptures without compromise. Paul understood what was at stake; the sacred baton of gospel stewardship was being passed to the next generation. That is why he prefaced his exhortation to pastoral faithfulness with the strongest possible language:

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: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Tim 4:1–2).

The heart of that brief passage, *preach the Word*, summarizes biblical ministry in one central mandate.

In the verses surrounding 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul provided his protégé with much-needed motivation to stand firm and persevere to the end. For Timothy, the command was clear: *preach the Word*; and the calling was deadly serious: souls were at stake. In order to equip him for the task, Paul gave Timothy four compelling reasons to persevere in ministry faithfulness. These motivations, found in 2 Timothy 3:1–4:4, are as applicable today as they were when the apostle wrote them nearly two millennia ago.

Motivation 1: Preach the Word *Because of the Danger of the Seasons* **(2 Tim 3:1–9)**

In 2 Timothy 3:1, Paul warned Timothy “that in the last days difficult times will come.” Used

◀ **ST. PETER PREACHING IN
JERUSALEM, 1642**
(OIL ON CANVAS)
BY CHARLES POËRSON

here, the phrase “the last days” refers not merely to the end of the church age, but to the entirety of it, from the Day of Pentecost to the parousia. Paul’s point is that, until the Lord comes back, the church will continually experience difficult times.

The phrase “difficult times” does not refer to specific points of chronological time, but rather to seasons or epochs of time. And the term “difficult” carries with it the meaning of being “savage” or “perilous.” Paul is expressing the reality that, throughout the church age, there will be seasons of time in which believers are savagely threatened. With his execution imminent, the apostle certainly knew a great deal about the difficulty that Christians might face. He also understood that Timothy was facing persecution and hostility, and that his young apprentice would be tempted by sins of cowardice and compromise. But that was exactly why Timothy needed to preach the Word. The looming threat made his ministry mandate all the more necessary and urgent.

In 2 Timothy 3:13, Paul wrote, “Evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Such men are “lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (3:2–4). They are externally religious, “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power,” as they “enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (vv. 5–7).

Being of a depraved mind, they are filled with sin, error, and destruction. They oppose sound doctrine and reject the faith.

Significantly, based on Paul’s description, it is clear that the greatest threat to the church comes not from hostile forces without, but from false teachers within. Like spiritual terrorists, they sneak into the church and leave a path of destruction in their wake. They are wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matt. 7:15), and it is their treachery that makes the *difficult times* of the last days so perilous. The “difficult times” that Paul spoke of

certainly characterize the contemporary situation. Yet, in the midst of this chaos and confusion, faithful ministers are still required to carry out the very task that Paul gave to Timothy. In fact, the only solution for the church today is for pastors to diligently fulfill their God-given responsibility to *preach the Word*.

Motivation 2: Preach the Word

Because of the Devotion of the Saints (2 Tim 3:10–14)

The faithful preacher is also motivated by his love and appreciation for those believers who have gone before him. Like a great cloud of witnesses, the examples of steadfast spiritual leaders from generations past spur the biblical expositor on toward greater commitment and ministry effectiveness.

In Paul’s case, he reminded Timothy of his own example, and urged him to follow suit. Thus, he says in 3:10–11, “Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!”

The gospel that Paul taught, Timothy was to continue preaching. The conduct, confidence, and Christ-likeness that marked the apostle’s ministry was likewise to characterize his son in the faith. Even the suffering that Paul endured, Timothy was to embrace as well. The young pastor was to stay the course, to follow in the same path as his mentor. Thus, Paul challenges Timothy with these words: “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become

convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them” (v. 14).

In exhorting Timothy to hold fast and endure, Paul calls on his disciple to remember his own example. Timothy did not need a new strategy. He simply needed to follow the pattern of faithfulness he had observed in the man of God who had gone before him.

Paul understood that uniqueness and novelty in ministry is deadly. The right approach is not to reinvent the paradigm.

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but rather to follow in the well-worn paths of those who have come before. The faithful preacher appreciates his spiritual heritage—he recognizes that he is linked to a long line of godly men from whom there can be no separation. Moreover, he understands that it is his responsibility, as part of the current generation of church history, to guard the truth that has been entrusted to him. Then, one day, he will pass it on to those who come after him (2:2).

The faithful preacher is motivated by the heritage left by prior generations of church history. And like the spiritual giants of past centuries, he is committed to the same ministry mandate as they were. It is a privilege to stand on their shoulders. But it is also a responsibility to carry on their legacy. Therefore, through both his life and his lips, he must *preach the Word*.

Motivation 3: Preach the Word

Because of the Dynamic of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15–17)

The faithful expositor is motivated, thirdly, by the nature of the Bible itself. He understands that Scripture is no ordinary book; it is the inspired revelation of God Himself. If the pastor desires to honor the Lord in his ministry, or to see the Holy Spirit's work unhindered in the lives of his people, he has no other alternative than to preach the Word faithfully.

Timothy had experienced the power of God's Word from a young age. Paul reminded him of that reality with these words: "From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (3:15). It was clear to Timothy where the power and authority in ministry lay.

The apostle appealed to Timothy's past, essentially asking, "Why would you do anything other than preach the Word when you know, from your own personal testimony, that it alone is the wisdom that leads to salvation?" When the mission is to present the message of salvation in all its Spirit-empowered fullness, the only option is to faithfully proclaim the truth of God's Word.

Having already appealed to Timothy's upbringing, Paul reinforced his point by emphasizing the Bible's true nature and dynamic effectiveness: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (3:16–17). This sacred book is "inspired by God," or more literally, *God-breathed*. And, as these verses indicate, it is not only powerful to save (v. 15), but also to sanctify.

With such a comprehensive work of both salvation and sanctification available through the power of the Scriptures, why would anyone be tempted to preach anything else? The pastor who cares about the spiritual growth of his people must make God and His Word the centerpiece of his ministry. In order to do that, he must *preach the Word*.



The most dominant force in the preacher's life and ministry is the realization that he will one day give an account to God. Serious ministry is motivated by that weighty reality.

Motivation 4: Preach the Word

Because of the Demand of the Sovereign (2 Tim 4:1–2)

Up to this point, Paul had prefaced his command to preach by warning Timothy about the dangerous seasons that will come, and by pointing to his own example and to the supernatural power of Scripture. But in 4:1, the apostle escalated his exhortation to an even greater level. Invoking God Himself, Paul expressed the seriousness of the situation in explicit terms: “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 in His Kingdom.”

Those piercing words should strike holy fear into the heart of every preacher. They stand as the apex of Paul's previous statements, and should serve as the most compelling motivation in the life of the expositor.

Timothy's call to preach came not simply from Paul, but from the Sovereign King by whom he was commissioned, and before whom he would one day give an account. Jesus Christ is the one who will judge the faithfulness of his ministers. As men of God, they are under holy scrutiny from the Lord himself. This is nowhere made clearer than in Revelation 1:14, where Christ is portrayed as surveying His church with penetrating eyes of fire. Those who are called to preach are under inescapable divine observation (cf. Prov 15:3). There is no relief from His gaze, no hiding from His evaluation (cf. Ps 139:7–12).

The most dominant force in the preacher's life and minis-

try is the realization that he will one day give an account to God (cf. Jas 3:1; 2 Cor 5:10). Serious ministry is motivated by that weighty reality. Popularity with people, recognition from peers, winsomeness in the pulpit—these are not the standards of success. God's opinion is the only one that ultimately matters. And His measure of success is *faithfulness* (cf. Matt 25:21, 23). Knowing this, the biblical expositor is driven to carefully, clearly, and consistently *preach the Word*.

Faithful to the End

Paul was under no delusions that the commission would be easy for Timothy, or for the faithful men coming after him. It had not been easy for Paul, either. Yet, in spite of the many trials he faced, the apostle had remained true to the end. As a result, he could say, “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (4:6–7). In this, his last appeal to Timothy, he invited the young pastor to likewise run the race with endurance (cf. Heb 12:1–2).

But Paul went to his grave not knowing how the story would end for Timothy. He had to trust that the Lord would preserve him. Would Timothy remain faithful to the end?

Church history provides a later glimpse into Timothy's legacy of faithfulness. According to *Fox's Book of Martyrs*,

Timothy was the celebrated disciple of St. Paul, and bishop of Ephesus, where he zealously governed the Church until A.D. 97. At this period, as the pagans were about to celebrate a feast called Catagogion, Timothy, meeting the procession, severely reprov'd them for their ridiculous idolatry, which so exasperated the people that they fell upon him with their clubs, and beat him in so dreadful a manner that he expired of the bruises two days after.

To his dying day, Timothy courageously confronted the culture around him with the truth of the gospel. That unwavering commitment cost him his life. Like Paul, he was martyred for his faithfulness.

At the end of Timothy's life, he, too, was able to look back on a ministry that had been devoted to honoring Christ through the preaching of His Word. In the same way that Timothy had received a legacy of faithfulness, he passed it on to the next generation of Christian leaders. Bible expositors today, though removed by many centuries, are the recipients of that faithful heritage. The motivations that drove Paul and Timothy ought to compel the current generation of preachers and teachers. God is still delivering His divine mandate to faithful men: *Preach the Word*. ♦

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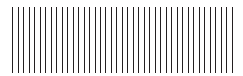
 **CROSSWAY**





PREACHING AS WARFARE

by DEREK W. H. THOMAS



Paul urges his younger protégé, Timothy, “wage the good warfare” (1 Tim 1:18). Preachers are caught up in a war of words and ideas, truth and falsehood, then as now. And Timothy is being given his marching orders—“stand your ground, because this is a fight to the death,” Paul is saying to him.

Paul met Timothy at Lystra and became a fellow traveler in gospel outreach and communication. They found themselves in such places as Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:2), Corinth (1 Cor 4:17) and Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). Timothy seems to have been present when Paul was imprisoned in Rome (Phil 2:19), and, together, they cooperated on six New Testament letters—2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Timothy is probably in his thirties when the charge to “fight the good fight (κλν)” is made, “a child in the faith” in Paul’s eyes (1 Tim 1:2). Some looked down on his youthfulness with disdain, but Timothy is urged to remember his calling and keep his focus on Christ and the gospel (1 Tim 4:12; cf. 2

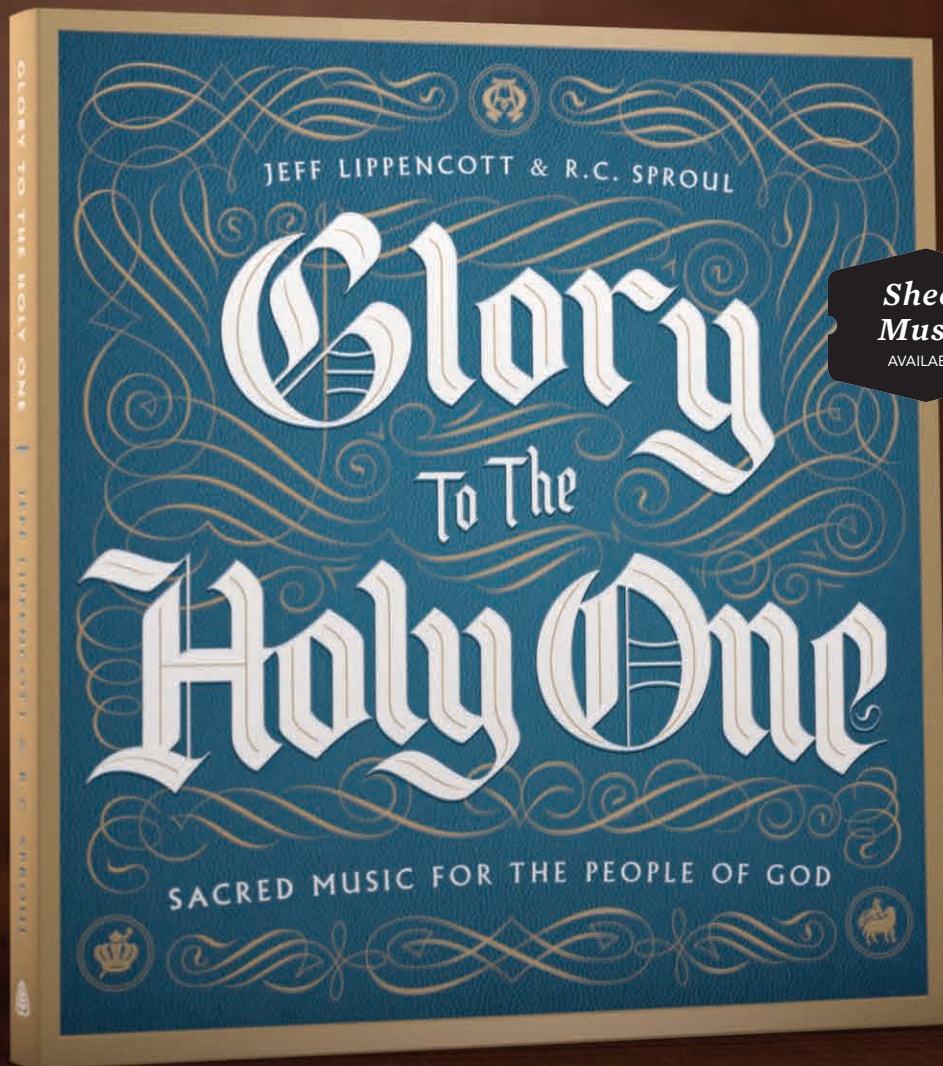
Tim 2:22). Given some kind of supernatural gift at the time of his ordination (when a group of elders laid hands on him, see 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14), Timothy’s life ever since had been that of a preacher.

Timothy’s call to preach came from God. Some, as C. H. Spurgeon wrote, “stumble into the pulpit” instead of being summoned into it. “It is a fearful calamity to a man to miss his calling,” Spurgeon continues, “and to the church upon whom he imposes himself, his mistake involves an affliction of the most grievous kind.”

Every preacher needs an assurance that he is “appointed to the ministry” (1 Tim 1:12). The work is too demanding, too exacting, to enter it without a summons from Almighty God. And what a calling it is! “To me,” Martyn Lloyd-Jones remarked, “the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.”

Following Paul’s release from prison (the event recorded at the end of Acts), Timothy remained at Ephesus. As Paul writes in 1 Timothy, urging his protégé to battle, Timothy has been the preaching pastor in Ephesus for perhaps a few months. Did Timo-

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thy write and ask for help? Or did Paul anticipate Timothy's potential problems? We do not know. Still, it is of interest to ask, what kind of warfare did Timothy find himself in at this point?

Paul hints at some of problems facing young Timothy—"myths and endless genealogies" (1 Tim 1:4), for example, that is, those whose sole interest is Bible trivia and speculative opinions. Then there are the "quarrelsome" (1 Tim 3:3; 6:4), who love to win an argument and demonstrate their commitment to "principle," but not for love of the truth. Their point is simply to argue for its own sake—for the "fun" of it. Some, for sure, were teaching "different doctrine" (1 Tim 1:3), an activity which Timothy is to do his utmost to stop. These false doctrines include erroneous interpretations of the Mosaic law (1 Tim 1:4-11).

Modern preachers live in similar circumstances to Timothy. They (we!) face opposition and temptation from myth-indulgers and false teachers, beckoning preachers to lose sight of the goal. With Paul's admonition to Timothy in mind, we need to ask ourselves, what kind of opposition do modern preachers face?

Four in particular come to mind:

1. The temptation to preach about ourselves.

This temptation is often a subtle one. Preachers desire to show how approachable they are, declaring aspects of their brokenness and frailty, revealing that they, too, are vessels of clay—a celebratory fragility that shows they have a past. All of this is done in the interest of asserting that the past is "under the blood"—forgiven and washed away. Thus, in the interest of preaching justification by faith apart from any degree of holiness on *our* part, preachers slide into preaching *themselves*, making much of past sins and failures in order to encourage equally failing disciples.

Sometimes, it is less subtle. Illustrations about preachers' families—sometimes funny, often not—can become the focal point of the message, and suddenly an all-too-human pastor is dominating the sermon.

Paul recognized this dilemma very clearly, and in his letter to Corinth he defiantly opposes a focus on self: "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor 4:5). Preaching must be about Christ and the gospel. Our stance must be to mimic the Master who alone can preach *himself*: "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Jesus may preach about Himself, but we dare not!

2. The temptation to be "well thought of."

Who doesn't want to be liked? Masochists and misfits, perhaps. Most of us find life goes a lot easier when others speak well of us.

Of course, you can make yourself unlikeable all too easily. Jesus' warning is not a call to be mean. There are preachers who seem to be permanently angry. Even when preaching the gospel and calling sinners to Christ, they seem to be angry about the state of those whom they address, forgetting that, sometimes, we need to be to be gentle, loving, kind, and persuading in our preaching.

Conversely, preachers sometimes feel the need to cut doctrinal corners in an attempt to be accommodating and tolerant. Hard-edged truths such as the need for eye-gouging repentance (Matt. 5:29), or countercultural loyalty to biblical assessment of homosexual practice, abortion, or the role of women in ecclesiastical office may be blunted in order to soften the contrast with contemporary taboos.

Jesus addresses this temptation to self-congratulation in clear language: "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to [a]treat the false prophets in the same way" (Luke 6:26).

3. The temptation to limited vision.

Every preacher has pet themes, ones that he is comfortable in addressing. And then there are other issues—equally or more important—that preachers avoid, perhaps because they are "too hot to handle" in a particular context. Every preacher must decide what is "first of all" and what is "second" and "third" (cf. 1 Cor 15:3, "I delivered to you as of *first* importance"). Not every issue is worthy of sacrificing a ministry opportunity. How, then, can preachers maintain a good conscience (cf. "a good conscience and sincere faith" 1 Tim 1:5; cf. 1:19) and offer loyal commitment to the Lord in all matters? After all, Paul told the Ephesian elders (in the place where Timothy now resides), "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). How can we make a judgment between what is "wise" or "expedient" and what are the demands of loyalty to the truth of God's Word?

In the long run, a commitment to faithful expository preaching, verse-by-verse exposition of the whole of Scripture, can assist in the prevention of theological hobby-horse preaching. It is not a guarantee against such failure—we can avoid preaching on certain books of the Bible, for example. But expository preaching will help in preventing pulpit mischief that is more about the preacher than it is about the faithful proclamation of the Word of God.

4. The temptation to hypocrisy.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne's commitment to "faith and a good conscience" (1 Tim 1:19) requires that a preacher *practice* what he preaches. Paul Johnson's important book, *The Intellectuals*—a *tour de force* examination of the lives of such men as Marx, Tolstoy, Sartre, and Chomsky—demonstrates all too clearly just how many of the leading social-philosopher thinkers were simply attempting to justify their own immoral lives.

Sadly, the same can be said of too many preachers. For example, preachers downplay the need for observable, measurable holiness by obedience to the law despite clear instruction to the contrary: Christ was sent “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:4). In a laudable attempt to maintain the purity of the gospel, including Christ’s obedience *for us*, active commands for ethical conformity on our part (as evidence of regeneration and faith) are turned into something passive—the obedience is viewed as Christ’s obedience on our behalf. Active sanctification is

We pastor-preachers find ourselves in a war—culturally, ecclesiastically, homiletically. There are truths to uphold, errors to combat, lifestyles to negate and emulate. Every time we preach, Satan is there attempting to hold us back from declaring the truth.

constantly turned into a forensic understanding of positional, definitive sanctification. Why? Perhaps—*perhaps*—to mask the lack of holiness in the preacher’s own life!

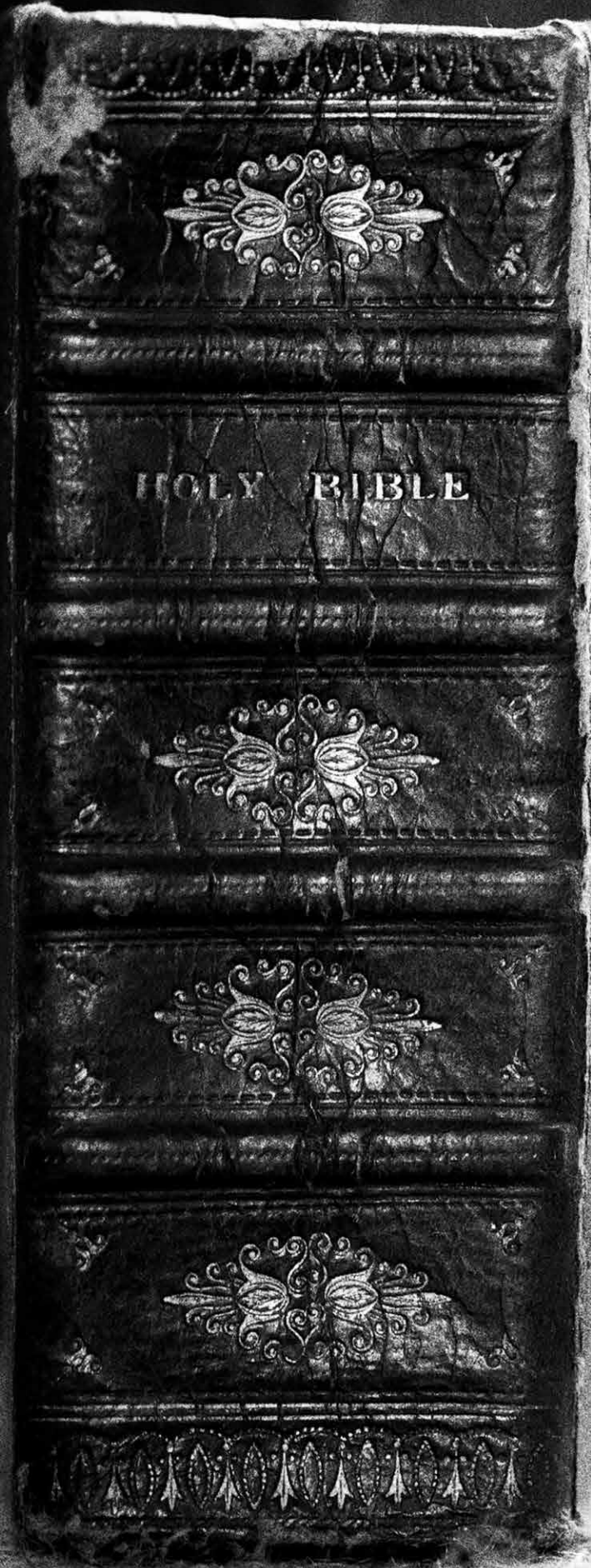
Robert Murray M’Cheyne’s haunting advice remains relevant a century and a half after he uttered it: “What your people need from you most is your own personal holiness.” I have lost count of the number of times I have repeated this to myself. Were I to have a personal philosophy of ministry summarized in one sentence, I think this is more or less what it would be. My congregation needs a pastor who is not only sound doctrinally and resolute in commitment to the truth, courageous in proclaiming the whole counsel of God without the fear or favor of men; it also needs a pastor who is sincere and honest. Paul knew how easily pride can mask the need for godliness, hence his warning to Timothy: “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim 4:16). The truth is, far too much ministry is motivated by personal ambition—ministry is viewed as another opportunity to pro-

mote an image—“*selfie*-motivated ministry.”

What preacher has not known the curse of Saturday Night Fever! A week spent in diverse (perhaps even legitimate) concerns has kept us away from the very things we wish to tell hurting Christians on Sunday morning. “I desperately spent feverish hours on Saturday evening,” one pastor confessed, “trying to get right with God in time for Sunday!” Have you known this? It is the curse of “*busy-ness*”—engaging in the good work of ministry (busy work) and forgetting (avoiding?) the best. What preacher hasn’t emphasized with great passion the need for personal prayer and Bible study only to have conscience declare as we preach—“Hello? Hypocrite! Are you listening to what it is you are saying?” It is all too real a possibility: “They made me caretaker of the vineyards, but I have not taken care of my own vineyard!” (Song 1:6). What a tragedy to have to admit: “I watched the flock, but I failed to watch myself. I gave other people fine advice about all kinds of relevant and thorny issues, and yet I failed to exhort my own heart.” *Preacher, fight this temptation with every fiber of your being, calling on the Holy Spirit to energize you.*

We pastor-preachers find ourselves in a war—culturally, ecclesiastically, homiletically. There are truths to uphold, errors to combat, lifestyles to negate and emulate. Every time we preach, Satan is there attempting to hold us back from declaring the truth. As preachers, we must “resist him, firm in [the] faith” (1 Pet 5:9), confident that the Holy Spirit can empower us above our natural ability. We must believe that God can help us on every occasion to stand firm for Him, no matter what the consequences may be.

Truth—*God’s truth*—is under attack by contemporary culture. And the fact of the matter is, this truth-denying culture has seeped into the life of the contemporary church. Soldiers are needed, ready to fight and be killed in defense of the truth. These must be godly men of discernment, conviction, passion, and focus who have one aim—to be faithful to the Master who has called them into gospel ministry no matter the cost. Will you be one of them? ♦



HOLY BIBLE

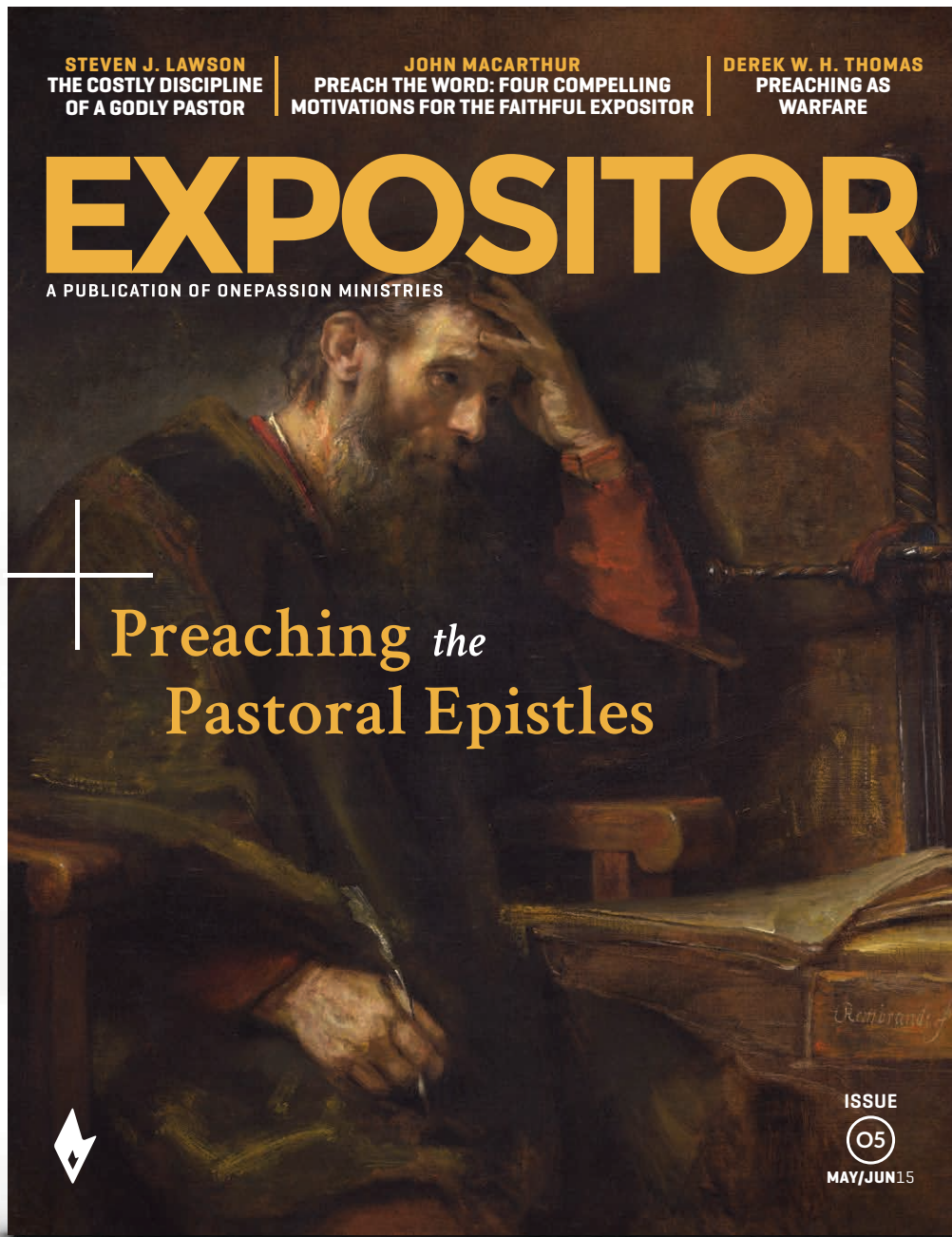


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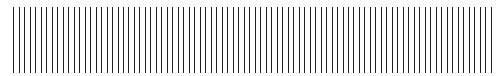
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THE PASTORAL EPISTLES AND THE OFFICE OF ELDER

by Iain D. Campbell



The church exists wherever God's people meet together in the name of Jesus Christ to worship God and to wait upon Him. As God communicates His grace through the Word preached and through the administration of the sacraments, God's people congregate around that Word, and they have fellowship with God and each other.

The Word and the Sacraments, therefore, are necessary for the church to be present in its simple, spiritual, essential form. But for the wellbeing of the church, Christ, its King and Head, has made provision for its regulation and government. In the words of Scottish theologian James Bannerman, "Man is not the lawgiver of the Christian Church"; Christ is "the present Head and Continual Administrator of the Christian society." And in the New Testament, He has furnished the church not only with the faith she must profess, and the ordinances that enable her to do so; he has also made provision for the government of His church through His own office-bearers.

John Murray reminds us that by invest-

ing men with authority in His church, Jesus does not curtail His own Headship, but rather establishes it. Jesus is exalted in glory, and He invests men with authority as under-shepherds of his flock. "The two aspects are correlative," Murray writes.

This is seen in Paul's exhortation to Titus to "appoint elders in every city" as Paul (Titus 1:5). By its very nature, this exhortation is assuming three things: the eternal permanence of Christ's Headship, the foundational but temporary nature of apostolic authority, and the permanent validity of office in the church. In the light of the pastoral epistles, let us explore the significance of Christ-exalting and Christ-established office in the New Testament church.

A High Office

We ought to have a high view of office in the church. We ought, of course, to have a high view of every aspect of church life. Church membership is a high privilege and responsibility, as God's people believe, confess, and live out their faith in the context of the family of God. But higher still, and, therefore, more responsible, is the role and office of those whose duty it is to feed the flock of God.

◀ APOSTLE PAUL,
1635 (OIL ON CANVAS)
BY REMBRANDT
HARMENSZON VAN RIJN

The conquering hero lavishes on His people the spoils of His conquest. Christ does that, too; as the risen, conquering Son, He gives gifts to His people to enable all of them to fulfill their ministry as the body of Christ.

There are at least three indicators of the weightiness of the office of elder in the New Testament. The first is that the office is in the gift of the exalted Christ (Eph 4:11–12). Paul finds in the reign of the exalted Christ a fulfillment of Psalm 68:18, with its magnificent image of victory, exaltation, and benefaction. The conquering hero lavishes on his people the spoils of his conquest. Christ does that, too; as the risen, conquering Son, He gives gifts to His people to enable all of them to fulfill their ministry as the body of Christ. Can there be a greater indication of the weightiness of the elder’s office than to know that it is Christ’s donation?

Second, there is the fact that the office of elder is a direct consequence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church. In addressing the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul identifies them as having been made overseers of the flock by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). Just as the Spirit commanded that Barnabas and Saul be set apart (Acts 13:2), so the Holy Spirit’s work is manifest in the setting apart of men to office. The proto-Deacons of Acts 6 were men “full of the Spirit and of wisdom,” not only as those who were indwelt by the Spirit, but as those who were commissioned by Him.

Third, office in the church is high and weighty because it is through the people of God that such men are appointed. The inward *desire* and aspiration of which Paul speaks in 1 Timothy 3:1 is balanced by the *appointing* of which he speaks in Titus 1:5. It is not in itself sufficient that a man should want to be a servant of Christ’s church; there must be a choosing, a selection, and an appointing. God’s people choose elders, and other elders gather to ordain and admit them to office (1 Tim 4:14). Maybe that is why John “Rabbi” Duncan, the Scottish Hebraist of the mid-nineteenth century said (tongue-

in-cheek, perhaps) that “all Christendom becomes presbyterian on ordination day”!

All three of the above combine to describe what Paul calls “a noble task” (1 Tim 3:1). There is an intrinsic excellence in the office of eldership, derived both from its origin and its aim. It is the gift of God, and it is fulfilled in a task. Ordination is to a particular work; calling is to duty. The “task” of the elder is oversight and spiritual nourishment. The first of these is included in the word *episkopos*, or bishop. There is an episcopal function to the eldership, as Christ uses the elders of the church to maintain a watchful and prayerful concern over his flock. But there is also a work of pastoring, of shepherding

the flock (Acts 20:28). That is perhaps included in the word *presbuteros*, which literally means someone older in years, but by extension also includes spiritual maturity and the ability to feed the sheep and lambs of the Great Shepherd (1 Pet 5:1–5).

A High Standard

Common to the epistles, to Timothy and to Titus, is a clear statement of the basic requirements of those who would be appointed to office in the church of Jesus Christ. These requirements are “necessary” (1 Tim 3:2). Without them, the people of God are exposed to danger and neglect. They require the careful appraisal of prospective elders and deacons, including candidates for ministry.

It is worth noting one or two general points. First, Paul assumes that elders will be male, heterosexual, evangelical believers. Office in the church is not a social status, nor is it open to females, nor is it open to homosexuals. These are the very points that defy the political correctness of contemporary society, with its clamor for human rights and equal opportunities. The gospel calls all without exception to come to Christ, but it does not affirm any and every lifestyle. And when it comes to office in the church, the New Testament includes among the qualifications for office that overseers be men, and, if they are married, that they be married to women.

Second, there is virtually no difference between the requirements for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8–13. The same basic standards are laid down as the requirements for both offices. But by its very nature a standard excludes as well as includes; Calvin’s remark, therefore, is apposite: “that it might not be thought that, by excluding women only, [Paul] admitted all men indiscriminately”

(Commentary on 1 Timothy 3). No women does not mean any man!

Third, there is little in the qualifications that is extraordinary. Paul does not call for elders to have academic qualifications to the highest doctoral level; nor does he insist that extraordinary gifts be evident. The phenomena of Acts—such as tongues-speaking or healing gifts—are not included. The requirements are actually what one would expect of any professing Christian; just that they ought to be present to an exemplary degree. The people of God ought to be able to look at their spiritual overseers and say, “That is the kind of Christian I ought to be.”

In the light of this, we might note that the qualifications themselves fall into three categories: theological, spiritual, and relational. First, elders ought to know the truth about God. The prohibition about a “recent convert” not being made an overseer (1 Tim 3:6) points to the need for the prospective elder to have had time to grow in grace and in knowledge of the things of God. The theological requirement is made explicit in the need for an overseer to be “able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2), and also in the need for him to distinguish between sound doctrine and false (Titus 1:9).

Second, elders ought to have experience of the grace of God. That is to say, their knowledge ought to be much more than an intellectual exercise; it is possible for any of us simply to rest in knowing *about* God without knowing *God* in any intimate or spiritual sense. But when it comes to office in the church, the New Testament is insistent: to be an elder among

God’s people requires a living experience of God’s grace.

Such is evident in the personal and spiritual traits that are to distinguish the overseers of God’s people. Self-control and gentleness (1 Tim 3:3) blossom as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23). In Titus 1:8, Paul uses the adjectives “righteous” and “holy” to describe these office-bearers. He could hardly be more explicit: among the basic requirements for elders in the church is the need to have a living experience of God that manifests itself in personal piety and prayerfulness. If a man loves too much wine, or is greedy for more money, then his suitability for office in the church ought to be questioned. Indeed, the quarreling itself makes his suitability questionable.

Third, elders ought to be living to the glory of God. The arena in which the elders are tested is not simply the church; Paul asks us to bear in mind that the way a man is in his social relationships is itself an indicator of his relationship to God. That is why a man’s marriage and family life are important in this connection. Is this man everything a loving and faithful husband ought to be? Does he exemplify the characteristics of a loving Christian father?

Important also are a man’s relationships within society and community. There, in his daily life and occupation, he ought to be “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2) and hospitable (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:8). He ought to be able to argue without quarreling, and to quarrel without being violent (1 Tim 3:3). Paul is not asking us to find perfect saints and make them overseers; but he is asking us to find exemplary ones, saints who are the embodiment of the transforming power of grace. This fact



is highlighted in Titus 1:10-16, where Paul mentions some cultural norms in Crete and says that if Cretans live down to their own reputations, they are unfit for the work of the kingdom, and must be rebuked. But if grace has done its work, and these men live up to the calling of the kingdom of God, then their fitness for office in the church is beyond question.

A High Service

There is another aspect to all of this. In all his discussion of the role of elders in the pastoral epistles, Paul use the distinct language of service. He talks about “caring for God’s church” (1 Tim 3:5) and about the elder’s being “God’s steward” (Titus 1:7). The *oikonomos* (steward of the house) serves the will of the master, making sure that the affairs of his house are all in order. Joseph had this role in the house of Potiphar (Gen 39:4), a slave entrusted with the oversight of the domestic affairs of his master. That service includes hospitality, which implies a sharing of one’s resources and time with others.

It also includes teaching, and exhorting “in sound doctrine” (Titus 1:9). Elders serve the church by opening the riches of God’s truth and instructing God’s people in what they are to know, believe, and profess. The language that Paul consistently uses, therefore, in the discussion of eldership, is the lan-

guage of service.

What he does not use is the language of leadership. Yet, today’s evangelical church has become overly fond of the terminology of leadership. We talk about church *leaders* where Paul talks about *elders*; we talk about *leading* the congregation where Paul talks about *servicing* it. I am aware of only one place in the New Testament where the language comes remotely close to the concept of leadership: Hebrews 13:17, where God’s people are to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls.” But even there, the exhortation is to the people to submit, not to the elders to act with modern notions of leadership.

All of this leads me to ask whether it might be time to return to the older language of service and ministry in connection with office in the church, and jettison our talk of church leadership and strategies for leadership. At the end of the day, eldership is a very specific and nuanced kind of leadership: one that operates by service and example, rather than by strategy and goals.

Little wonder Paul exclaimed, “Who is adequate for these things?” (2 Cor 2:16), and could only answer, “our adequacy is from God” (2 Cor 3:5). ♦



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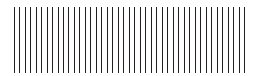






ENDURANCE IN GOSPEL MINISTRY

by Sean Michael Lucas



Over the past several years, Americans have enjoyed *Unbroken*, first as a novel written by Laura Hillenbrand, then as a movie directed by Angelina Jolie. Both the book and the film tell the story of Louie Zamperini, a track star who participated in the 1936 Olympics and who was later drafted into the United States Army in World War II. As he served on a bombardier on a B-24, his aircraft experience mechanical difficulties; after the plane crashed, Louie survived 47 days at sea and two-and-a-half years in Japanese prison camps.

It is a remarkable story of suffering and endurance. And there is one scene that is central both to the book and the later film. When Louie was transferred to a new prison camp in the northern part of Japan, his long-time tormenter, Corporal Watanabe, who seemed determined to take out his sadistic anger on Louie, confronted him again. He ordered Zamperini to hold a large wooden beam over his head; if he dropped

it, Louie would be hit. For thirty-seven minutes, Louie held the beam over his head, enduring overwhelming suffering in the face of unimaginable evil.

We stand amazed at such stories of endurance, especially when confronted by cruelty, suffering, struggle, and affliction. We wonder whether we could do the same if called upon to do so. And we thank God that we live in a country and in a time where such sacrifices apparently are not required of us.

Or are they? One of the things that is striking in reading the pastoral epistles, and especially 2 Timothy, is the overwhelming note of suffering and the requirement for endurance in the Christian life and pastoral ministry. The apostle Paul tells Timothy at one point, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12). Suffering and affliction, persecution and opposition, and the resultant need for endurance—that is the call of every Christian, regardless of time or place.

And especially for Gospel ministers. After all, Paul writes 2 Timothy to his “beloved child” in the faith (2 Tim 1:2), the one who had followed his teaching, conduct, aim in life, faith, patience, and love (3:10). Timothy had served side-by-side with Paul

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on one of his missionary journeys (see Acts 16:1-5) and was the trusted associate that Paul would deploy to fix various ministry problems such as those at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3) and Philippi (Phil 2:19).

And so, as Paul writes to his spiritual son in the ministry, what is the keynote? How does Paul characterize this ministry? “Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but *join with me in suffering for the gospel* according to the power of God,” (2 Tim 1:8). Gospel minis-

during suffering. They are being beheaded, cast out of families, run out of villages, struck down by authorities, and taxed beyond belief. Maintaining faithful ministry in the face of such evil can only happen through a Spirit-wrought commitment to this work as a ministry of endurance.

But even for those of us who serve in the West, we must recognize that our ministry is one of endurance in the face of suffering and evil. To be sure, we may not face exclusion from our families or our homes; we may not know what it is to face certain death. But as Augustine observed in his *City of God*, “Those who will live piously in Christ suffer persecution, even when no one molests or vexes their body; for they suffer this persecution, not in their bodies, but in their hearts.” Sometimes the verbal and emotional persecution and opposition can demand just as much, if not more, commitment to endure and persevere in this ministry.

A Model of Endurance

Thankfully, Paul presents Timothy and us with a model of what endurance looks like: himself. Over and over, Paul notes that he is suffering for the Gospel, “for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things,” (2 Tim 1:11-12). In the next chapter, he urges Timothy to remember Jesus Christ, the center of Paul’s Gospel, “for which I am suffering, bound in chains as a criminal” (2 Tim 2:9, ESV). That’s nothing new, of course, as Paul remembers in 2 Timothy 3: Timothy knows about my “persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured” (2 Tim 3:11-12).

Paul’s ministry, then, was one of patiently enduring evil and enduring suffering. That suffering and evil was physical, as in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, but also emotional: pain caused by those such as Phygelus and Hermogenes, who “turned away from me” (2 Tim 1:15); Demas, who “deserted me” because he was “in love with this present world” (2 Tim 4:10); and Alexander the coppersmith, who “did me great harm” through opposition to the message (2 Tim 4:14; cf. 1 Tim 1:20).

And so, Paul modeled for Timothy and for us what Augustine told us—sometimes the deepest cuts and hurts and suffering in this ministry is when persecution comes in our hearts. When people oppose our ministry, when they leave the church for another across town that offers better programming, when they forsake regular church attendance because Sunday morning at the country club or in the woods is more attractive—all of these things can take the wind out of our sails, break our hearts, and make us contemplate throw-

Perseverance and endurance is the hallmark of faithful ministry.

try is characterized by suffering and requires endurance. And that hasn’t changed—whether in the first century or the twenty-first century, Gospel ministry is characterized by suffering and requires endurance.

A Ministry of Endurance

Paul and Timothy’s ministry involved patiently enduring evil: “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, *patient when wronged*, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition (2 Tim 2:24-25a, emphasis added). The Greek word behind “patient when wronged” occurs only here in the New Testament; the stress is on the patience required to deal with adversity or pain. Ministry requires long and patient suffering even when others oppose us, do evil to us, or undermine us.

Likewise, in the next chapter, when Paul charges Timothy in Christ’s presence about the ministry, he urges him, “But you, be sober in all things, *endure hardship*, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Tim 4:5, *emphasis added*). As New Testament commentator William Mounce notes, Paul doesn’t call Timothy merely to endure suffering in general, but to endure evil and adversity that comes as a result of the Gospel. Perseverance and endurance is the hallmark of faithful ministry.

Our brothers-in-arms in the majority world, especially in the southern hemisphere, know that ministry in the twenty-first century still involves patiently enduring evil and en-



ing up our hands and quitting. Like Paul, though, we have to move forward, enduring in this ministry.

Motivations for Endurance

Why is it imperative that we endure, that we sustain this ministry? Paul points us to one motivation for endurance: we endure for the sake of the elect. “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.” (2 Tim 2:10). While God surely has His chosen ones in every place, He uses means to reach them with the good news of Jesus—enduring ministers willing to face suffering and difficulty so that they might make it to heaven safely. And so, it is worth being treated like a criminal if God’s chosen people might be saved in the end!

But the fact is that Christ has redeemed us and enlisted us in His army for just this purpose. That’s another motivation for endurance that Paul urges upon us: “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:3, ESV). We have become Christ’s soldiers by the grace that is in Him (2 Tim 2:1) and the Word that comes from Him through Paul, Timothy, and other trustworthy elders (2 Tim 2:2). When we believed, we enlisted under Christ’s rule as His soldier, and we serve to please Him (2 Tim 2:4). And that looks like a willingness to endure suffering in His cause and for His glory.

A third motivation for endurance that Paul offers is God’s power: “Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God” (2 Tim 1:8, NIV). The same power of God that is the Gospel and saved us (Rom 1:16) is that which enables us to endure suffering for that Gospel as we share it with others. In fact, apart from God’s power, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, endurance in gospel ministry is impossible. When Jesus told His disciples, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5), he surely included perseverance in ministry in that. Divine power is necessary for Gospel endurance.

There’s one more motivation, though, that Paul offers us for endurance in ministry: the promise of reward. In 2 Timothy 2:11-13, Paul quotes a trustworthy saying that reminds us, “If we endure, we will also reign with him.” In the coming age, the promise of Daniel 7 will be fulfilled: God’s people will reign with the Son of Man over an eternal kingdom. And Paul

applies this Old Testament expectation to Timothy and himself: as those who are united with Christ and who endure to the end, in the face of incredible suffering and difficulty, they will rule with Christ.

And they will receive the full reward. In some of the most famous words in the entire letter, Paul reflects: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim 4:7-9). Paul was coming to the end of his life; he was reflecting on the fact that he had endured to the end. And what was his expectation? The reward of righteousness given by the righteous judge, gained only through Christ’s righteousness. Surely with such a prize awaiting us, we have the necessary motivation to endure suffering in this ministry.

That reward of righteousness—final vindication through the merits of Christ—was gained because Jesus endured ultimate pain and suffering, opposition and rejection. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us to look to Jesus, “the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2). We endure because Jesus did, all the way to the cross and back.

It was the striking, albeit perhaps unintentional, lesson of the film version of *Unbroken*. Though evangelicals criticized the movie for missing the point of Louie Zamperini’s life, told at the end of the book in his conversion to Christ, the movie poster memorialized that central scene with Louie holding the beam over his head. And if you stand back and look at the poster, what might you see?

The form of the cross. It reminds us yet again that the only way any of us broken sinners will endure to the end in this Gospel ministry is through Jesus, who bore the cross, despising the shame, gaining righteousness, giving us power. We are able to endure suffering in this ministry because Jesus did—thanks be to God. ♦



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A CONVERSATION ON PREACHING

with Steven J. Lawson

How do you define expository preaching?

There are two words in the term “expository preaching”: one is “expository” and the other is “preaching.” Expository is the adjective and preaching is the noun. Expository preaching defines a certain kind of preaching. It is the kind of preaching that is prescribed in Scripture itself. The word “expository” carries the idea of explaining the meaning of a text. The word “preaching” describes the manner with which this instruction and explanation is brought. Expository preaching is the kind of preaching that begins with a passage of Scripture and explains the authorial intent of that passage, while making application with exhortation to the life of the listener.

I believe that the apostle Paul lays out the essentials of preaching in 1 Timothy 4:13 when he writes, “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.” In true expository preaching, there must be the reading of the text, the teaching of the text, and the exhorting with the text. Expository preaching informs the mind, ignites the heart, and impels the will. The so-called “preaching” that only instructs the mind is not a sermon, but a lecture. The so-called “preaching” that merely touches the heart is not a sermon, but a mere devotion. The so-called “preaching” that merely challenges the will is not a sermon, but a manipulation. True expository preaching must address all three aspects of the inner life of a person—mind, emotion, and will. Anything less is not expository preaching.

What are some essential marks of expository preaching?

First, expository preaching is text-driven. That is to say, the expositor must start with a text of Scripture and stay with that text throughout the sermon. He must say what the text says and promise what the text promises. He must warn where the text warns and offer what the text offers. In expository preaching, the preacher is the mouthpiece for a text of Scripture. The preacher has nothing to say apart from the Word of God.

Second, expository preaching is God-exalting. The primary thrust of the Word of God is the magnification of the God

of the Word. All true expository preaching is focused on the greatness and glory of God. After someone hears an expository sermon, he or she should be captivated with the grandeur of God. This is because the Bible is the self-revelation of God Himself.

Third, expository preaching is Christ-centered. Beginning in Genesis 1:1 and extending all the way through Revelation 22, the primary thrust of Scripture is the person and work of Jesus Christ. If you preach the Bible rightly, you will preach Christ regularly. Jesus bore witness that the entire Scripture speaks of Him. The apostle Paul said, “We proclaim Him” (Col 1:28). To preach the Bible is to preach the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourth, expository preaching is Spirit-empowered. Those who are expositors in the truest sense of the Word are those who recognize their utter need for the inward ministry of the Spirit in their preaching. Jesus Christ was anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit as He began His public ministry, which at its heart was the preaching of the gospel. In an argument from the greater to the lesser, how much more must every expositor be supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit!

Fifth, expository preaching is exegetically grounded. Expository preaching necessitates digging into a passage of Scripture and studying it with precision in its most basic parts. This requires working with the original language, grammar, and syntax, parsing verbs, investigating historical background, and considering geographical context. Further, the expositor must give attention to where his passage fits in the overall flow of the Bible. No one passage can be understood apart from the entire Bible.

Sixth, expository preaching is theologically precise. The entire Bible speaks with one voice. It never contradicts itself. There are doctrines that run through the entirety of Scripture, which provide theological substance that must be expounded in the text. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has said, “preaching is theology on fire.” When the church began, believers continually devoted themselves first and foremost to the apostles’ teaching.

The pastoral epistles make repeated emphasis on the preacher's teaching sound doctrine.

Seventh, expository preaching is practically relevant. Expository preaching must show the implications of a passage of Scripture for a person's life. It must also make application to the lives of those who listen. The Bible is the most relevant book that has ever been written. Thus, expository preaching must bring Scripture to bear upon the lives of those who listen. The preacher must be continually exhorting, encouraging, comforting, confronting, challenging, rebuking, and reproving.

What are the missing elements in much of today's preaching?

The answer to this question depends upon which part of the body of Christ is under consideration and on which kind of church you are in. In so many churches, what is missing is the opening up of a passage of Scripture in order to convey its true meaning. In these churches, there is very little Bible preaching. In its place, there is an endless litany of stories and homespun insights, and an endless flow of exhortations. The problem is, there is precious little, if any, explaining and teaching a text of Scripture.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are churches that give great attention to Scripture, but there is no preaching that takes place. In other words, there may be some kind of lecturing about the Bible, but it lacks the essential elements of pleading, urging, exhorting, and summoning the listener to respond to the Word of God.

In between these two extremes are various levels of differentiation. What is so desperately needed today is that there be the teaching of the text *and* the passionate delivery of its truths to the listener, making demands upon the life of those who sit under its message.

What are the main challenges facing evangelicals today?

I do not think there is a one-size-fits-all answer for this, because Christians live in many different parts of the world and are being confronted with all kinds of issues. So, there is not one critical issue that is facing the average Christian in the average church. Having said that, several things do come to

my mind that rise to a high level of importance.

First, the evangelical church today tends to be non-theological. In other words, many churches and ministries want to emphasize the practical aspects of Christian living, but they neglect the doctrinal foundations of the faith. This is like attempting to build a solid house on shifting sand. I believe that churches and ministries must put first things first and lay the foundation before they begin to build upon it. This necessitates the teaching of sound doctrine and the general



framework of systematic theology.

My second grave concern for evangelicals is that they have a high view of God, which is at the epicenter of systematic theology. I believe that the greatest issue facing the church in any century is a proper understanding of who God is. What is needed in the contemporary church today is a steady diet of the attributes and perfections of God. It is our high theology that produces high doxology. I believe that Theology Proper, which is the unique focus upon the person and being of God, is the lens through which we must see every other area of theology and life itself. Until there is the right knowledge of God, there will never be the right knowledge of self, nor the proper remedy applied to our own lives.

Third, I believe that evangelicalism today needs a stronger commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture. Today, the Bible is affirmed, but other secular sources are subsequently added to the message of the Bible as if they carry some measure of authority. While many affirm the inerrancy of Scripture, they neglect to assert its sufficiency. By the sufficiency of Scripture, we mean that the Bible is fully able, when accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, to carry out God's redemptive



INTERVIEW WITH LIGON DUNCAN

purposes upon the earth. This confidence in Scripture's sufficiency must be recovered.

Explain why the doctrine of inerrancy is attacked today.

The reason is very simple—it is unbelief. People do not accept the Word of God for what it claims to be, the inspired Word of the living God, because of their unbelief toward God. Ultimately, this is not a matter of scholarship, but lordship. At its root, a rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture is a desire to sit in judgment upon Scripture. It is an attempt at self-elevation above the authority of God Himself, which is nothing more than pride and vanity.

What place does the Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered preaching of God's Word play in the biblical church?

The preaching of the Word of God must be at the very center of the life of the church. It should never serve a supportive or secondary role, but must always be primary. It is the preaching of the Word of God that must define everything in the church. It is expository preaching that determines the worship in any church. The deeper we take people into the Word, the higher they will rise in worship. Expository preaching determines the spirituality of the lives of the members of a church. The Word of God is the chief instrument in sanctification. Therefore, preaching the Word should have the primary influence in conforming people into the image of Christ.

Expository preaching equips people for ministry to do the work of God. Expository preaching causes the congregation to be united because it brings about oneness of convictions and oneness of thinking about virtually everything of importance. Finally, expository preaching launches the church into its work of evangelism and world missions. Everything of value flows out of the preaching of the Word of God.

Tell us why the glory of God in Christ is paramount in expository preaching, and why this is the need of the hour.

This is so critically important because the primary purpose of the written Word is to exalt and magnify the living Word. These two are inseparably connected. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:23). To be sure, Paul preached the full counsel of God in every area of the disciplines of theology. Nevertheless, he could say that he preached Christ crucified. How could this be? The answer lies in this, that the highest pinnacle of the preaching of Scripture is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, to preach the glory of God in Christ is to ascend to the summit of expository preaching.

Such preaching gives the greatest vantage point on the greatness of our God, who has supremely revealed Himself in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To miss this is to miss everything. As Charles Haddon Spurgeon has said, in so

many works, a sermon without Christ is an awful thing. It is like the day without the sun, the night without the moon, the ocean without water. It is a dry well that mocks the traveler. It is the fall without a harvest.

Tell us more about the role of God the Spirit in the acts of preaching, hearing, and applying the Word of God.

As the Word is preached, the Spirit of God will be powerfully at work in the life of the preacher. The Holy Spirit will sharpen the focus of the preacher to more carefully understand the truth that he is preaching. The work of illumination and enlightenment will be accelerated as the preacher stands before an open Bible. In addition, the Holy Spirit deepens the convictions of the expositor. The expositor becomes persuaded of the veracity of his passage with greater intensity. This, too, is a work of the Spirit.

But there is more than this. The Spirit ignites the preacher's heart with passion for God and for Christ as he preaches. The Spirit enlarges his heart for the spiritual good of those to whom he ministers. The Spirit brings to the forefront of his mind truths that he had not anticipated saying. The Spirit draws from his years of study and adds to his preparation as he preaches.

The Spirit also restrains the preacher from saying certain things that are not immediately helpful or necessary. The Spirit guides his word choices and enables him to quote Scripture from memory as he preaches. The Spirit directs him as he chooses his phrases and the mood of the verbs that he speaks. The Spirit causes him to speak the truth in love. The Spirit gives the preacher a heightened sense of urgency as he brings the message. The Spirit causes him to feel the immediacy of the moment.

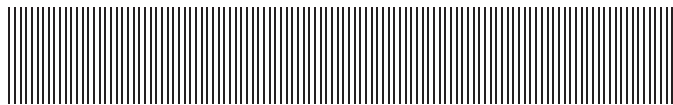
As the listener sits under the preaching of the Word, he, too, is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives illumination and understanding of the passage of Scripture that is being presented. The Spirit brings conviction of sin and an increased awareness of one's need for Christ and His grace. The Holy Spirit makes the sermon intensely personal as though this message is intended for each person who hears it. The Spirit both comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable as the Word is being preached. The Spirit regenerates unconverted hearts and draws sinners to Christ. The Spirit stirs up the affections for Christ as the Word is preached. And the Spirit urges the listener to respond with steps of obedience to the Word that is heard. ♦

This interview originally appeared on The Cripple Gate Blog (thecripplegate.com).



COLUMN

THE LECTERN, THE MASTER'S SEMINARY



THE PASTORALS ARE FOR PEOPLE

by Austin Duncan

The classification of 1–2 Timothy and Titus as “the Pastoral Epistles” is as unhelpful as the phrase “full-time ministry.” When “full-time ministry” is used to identify pastors who are paid by the church, it may undermine the equipping of all saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12), the doctrine of vocation, and the historic Protestant stand for “the priesthood of all believers.” Likewise, the classification of these epistles as “the Pastorals” contradicts the influence that *all* of Scripture should have on *every* believer (Deut 32:46–47; 1 Pet 2:1–3; 2 Pet 1:19–21).

It’s important that we don’t scare off our congregation before we even begin preaching the “Pastoral Epistles,” by referring to them in their somewhat arbitrary and debated classification (see Gordon Fee’s discussion of the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles in, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*). When we emphasize the “pastoral” label, we are in danger of creating the impression that three letters of the New Testament (1–2 Timothy and Titus) were penned for church leaders exclusively.

If you are a pastor, you may not see why this would be a problem. But while with our seminary-trained minds, we may automatically think of these letters in this way, we could be inadvertently robbing our people of the rich experience of seeing all that these letters contain for their original audience, the church as a whole.

George W. Knight III, commenting on 1 Timothy, writes, “The letter betrays evidences everywhere that it was intended for the church itself, not just Timothy. But because of deflections in the leadership, Paul does not, as before, write directly to the church, but *to the church through Timothy*.” In other words, the Pastoral Epistles are not just to be read by pastors in the solitude of their studies; they are to be proclaimed from the pulpit.

When pastors preach the Pastorals to their congregations, God’s people heed God’s instruction concerning the role

of Scripture in the believer’s life: Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). They also encounter some of the most extensive teaching on contentment and personal finances in the Bible (1 Tim 6:6–10). Furthermore, they behold one of the clearest portraits of how grace instructs believers to deny ungodliness and directs their gaze toward the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of their great Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11–15). These passages need to be proclaimed to every Christian.

Calvin went so far as to say, while commenting on 1 Timothy, “This Epistle appears to me to have been written more for the sake of others than for the sake of Timothy, and that opinion will receive the assent of those who shall carefully consider the whole matter.”

If that’s the case, what about the passages that seem to contain instruction that is only for pastors? Is every church member to preach the Word, kindle afresh the gift of God in themselves, and hand people over to Satan like Paul did with Hymenaeus and Alexander? Seeing no value for the congregation in texts like these, some pastors have shied away from preaching the Pastorals in their entirety. But even in texts that are first and foremost for the pastor, there is valuable instruction for the everyday church member. Here are a few examples:

1 Timothy 3:1–7

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be...”

This list of qualifications is something every pastor ought to be familiar with. But how can the churchman sitting in the pews benefit from it? Preaching on the qualifications of elders opens the pastor and his elders to healthy scrutiny from their people and at the same time sharpens the people’s bib-



THE LECTERN

lical discernment. The congregation must know how to hold their elders accountable. If they do, and the elder board asks an unqualified elder to step down, the church will be more equipped to handle such a decision, and it will be less likely that a schism will take place. In addition, this list is applicable to all men and women who desire to be godly, so the pastor should preach these as concrete characteristics for the people to pursue.

2 Timothy 4:1-4 & Titus 3:1-2

“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: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction...”

“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”

The congregation is often puzzled by why a pastor does what he does. Why does he preach that way? Why does he get so serious at times? Why the emphasis on developing leaders?

Pastors sympathize with other pastors, but how do we teach our people what a pastor goes through without sounding self-serving? Preaching the Pastorals is a pastor’s opportunity to give insight into the life of a pastor. And what better way to explain the role of a shepherd than by allowing the congregation to listen in on a conversation from one pastor to another? The Pastorals, then, act as a window through which the rest of the church can see the heart of their leader.

The Pastorals are not just for pastors. They contain practical instruction for every member in the congregation, and that includes the pastor himself. Remember, pastors are people too. Before pastors are pastors, they are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Before they are pastors, they are church members. So while pastors may go to the Pastoral Epistles for specialized instructions for how to perform their ministerial duties, they must first and foremost come before these letters for their own souls and their own everyday living. Then, when they have been impacted by these truths, they are ready to preach them to others. Preach the Pastorals to your people. You may be surprised what they—and you—will learn. ♦

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CHARLES H. SPURGEON: LIFE AND LEGACY, PT. 2

by Steven J. Lawson

With Spurgeon's instant popularity came stiff opposition. The London press lampooned him as a religious huckster with self-serving motives. He was repeatedly mocked as "the Exeter Hall demagogue," "the pulpit buffoon," and "a nine-days wonder." Moreover, the Arminians assailed him with the worst derision of all, that of being a dreaded Calvinist. Further, the Hyper-Calvinists accosted him for being too open in his free offer of the gospel. Spurgeon admitted: "My name is kicked about the street as a football." But these winds of adversity caused him to rise yet higher in the pulpit.

Providentially, this persecution attracted even more to his side, especially young preachers. Though Spurgeon himself had no university degree, nor had he attended seminary, he founded the Pastor's College, despite being only twenty-two years old. With his primary focus to train preachers, not scholars, he admitted only those already preaching. For the first fifteen years, Spurgeon personally underwrote the entire cost of the school through the sale of his weekly sermons. In addition, he lectured to these students every Friday afternoon on a particular aspect of gospel preaching. These messages would become the text for his beloved book, *Lectures to My Students*. During his lifetime, Spurgeon saw nearly one thousand men trained for the ministry in his college.

In 1857, England suffered a tragic defeat in India, and the Day of National Humiliation was called. On October 7, Spurgeon, a mere twenty-three years old, preached in the famous Crystal Palace to a massive gathering of 23,654, the largest indoor crowd in its day. Trains running throughout London brought people to hear Spurgeon's message from Micah 6:9, "Hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it?" This national address was a strong declaration of the sovereignty of God over England. The defeat, Spurgeon proclaimed, was from God, intended to humble this proud nation.

Through his printed sermons, Spurgeon's influence spread

across England and around the globe. The weekly publication of his messages, known as the "Penny Pulpit," sold on street corners for a penny each. Each week, a proof of Spurgeon's transcribed sermon was delivered on Monday morning for his editing and was published every Thursday for distribution. More than twenty-five thousand copies were sold weekly. Moreover, these sermons were cabled across the Atlantic to America, where they were printed in large newspapers. Eventually, they were translated into forty languages around the globe. These gospel-centered sermons were sold by tract distributors, read in hospitals, taken into prisons, preached by laymen, cherished by sailors, and carried by missionaries. Through the printed page, Spurgeon's actual congregation was estimated to be no fewer than a million people.

A Swelling Tide of Revival

The year 1859 proved to be the most extraordinary in Spurgeon's ministry. This was the last year in the large auditorium, Surrey Gardens Music Hall. A season of fervent revival was felt under some of the most Calvinistic, yet evangelistic, sermons of his entire ministry. These Spirit-empowered messages included "Predestination and Calling" (Rom 8:30), "The Necessity of the Spirit's Word" (Ezek 36:27), "The Story of God's Mighty Acts" (Ps 44:1), and "The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant" (Heb 13:20). On December 11, 1859, his last sermon in Surrey Gardens, he preached "The Minister's Farewell," a mighty exposition of Acts 20:26-27, in which he announced that in this place he had declared the full counsel of God.

One attendee wrote his impressions of Spurgeon's preaching in the Music Hall, "How he reveled in preaching that morning! It was very hot, and he kept on wiping the perspiration from his forehead; but his discomfort did not affect his discourse, his words flowed on like a torrent of sacred eloquence." Of the last service, this observer noted, "Mr. Spurgeon preached an earnest sermon on declaring the whole counsel of God. There is always something sad about last things, and, as I came away,

I felt that one of the happiest experiences of my youth belonged to the past. So also—in my opinion—passed away the most romantic stage even in Mr. Spurgeon’s wonderful life.”

This remarkable season in Surrey Gardens ended abruptly. When Spurgeon learned that he would be forced to share this immense facility with amusement programs on Sundays, he considered this breaking the Sabbath. Spurgeon asserted he would move the services if such entertainment was allowed. But the owners of the Music Hall refused to yield. The young preacher countered, “My name would cease to be Spurgeon if I yielded. I neither can nor will give way in anything in which I know I am right; and in the defense of God’s holy Sabbath, the cry of this day is, ‘Arise, let us go hence!’” Rather than compromise, Spurgeon moved his growing flock back into the smaller Exeter Hall, showing himself to be a man of principle, not pragmatism.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle

That same year, 1859, construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle began. On August 15, the cornerstone of the Tabernacle was laid, and, at the ceremony, Spurgeon declared his unwavering allegiance to the doctrines of sovereign grace: “We believe in the five great points commonly known as Calvinism. We look upon them as being five great lamps which help to irradiate the cross.” As this massive facility was being constructed, Spurgeon traveled abroad to Europe in June and July of 1860. When he came to Geneva, he was revered as a second Calvin. It was insisted that he preach in the pulpit of the great Reformer, wearing his gown, a rare honor he could not refuse.

On March 18, 1861, the Tabernacle was officially opened. At this grand occasion, Spurgeon had five sermons preached, one each for the five points of Calvinism. These God-exalting truths, he believed, form the very heart of the gospel. Far from hindering evangelism, Spurgeon looked upon the doctrines of sovereign grace as a great harvester of souls. For Spurgeon, the truths of God’s elective, redeeming love infused soul-saving power into his preaching and brought many to faith in Christ.

Unparalleled in size, the Tabernacle was the largest sanctuary in the history of the Protestant Church at the time. Seating 6,000 people, it accommodated one of the largest flocks in regular attendance since the days of the apostles. Until his

death, thirty-one years later, the Tabernacle was filled each Sunday morning and evening. Once a quarter, Spurgeon even requested that the members not attend services so that the unconverted might find a seat. His congregation was comprised mainly of common people from everyday walks of life. Spurgeon, nevertheless, drew the elite as well, including Prime Minister William Gladstone, members of the royal family, Parliament dignitaries, and such notables as John Ruskin, Florence Nightingale, and General James Garfield, who would later become president of the United States.

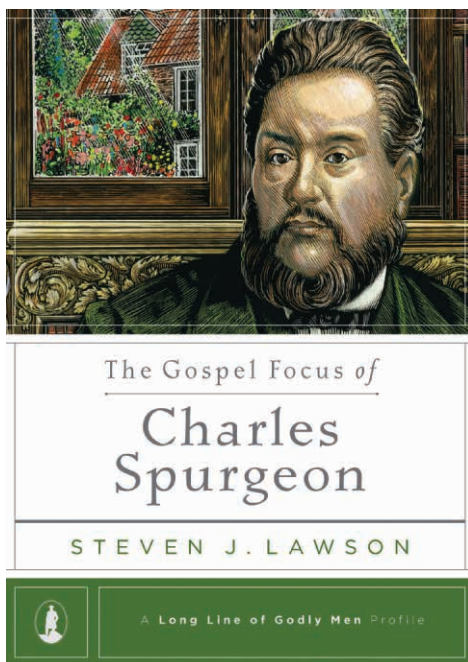
Throughout the week, Spurgeon preached as many as ten times around London and the surrounding countryside, including in Scotland and Ireland. Spurgeon’s presence in any pulpit emboldened local pastors and encouraged their flocks. With his growing fame, he was repeatedly invited to come to America to preach. Yet, Spurgeon declined these transatlantic invitations, choosing instead to keep the Tabernacle as the hub of his ministry, which had become the center of the evangelical world.

Several people warned Spurgeon that he would break down physically and emotionally under the constant stress of such expansive preaching. To this, Spurgeon replies, “If I have [broken down], I am glad of it. I would do the same again. If I had fifty constitutions, I would rejoice to break them down in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.” He further comments, “We find ourselves able to preach ten or twelve times a week, and we find we are the stronger for it.” “Oh,” said one of the members, “our minister will kill himself.” Spurgeon replied, “That is the kind of

work that will kill no man. It is preaching to sleepy congregations that kills good ministers.” Most certainly, Spurgeon found strength in preaching to congregations across England, especially to his own flock.

Adversities and Advances

Further controversy would soon embroil Spurgeon. In 1864, he entered into what became known as the Baptismal Regeneration Controversy, a confrontation with the Church of England over its claim that baptism is necessary for the remission of sins. Spurgeon saw this as a corruption of the very gospel itself and, therefore, spoke out against it. But when he did, he was condemned for intruding into the conscience of



Anglican members. In the ensuing aftermath, Spurgeon was forced to withdraw from the Evangelical Alliance, in which he was a prominent figure. Amid this exploding conflict, Spurgeon launched a monthly magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, aimed at refuting the theological errors of the day and defending the purity of the gospel.

But Spurgeon was also busy spreading the gospel. In 1866, he founded the Metropolitan Colportage Association for the distribution of gospel literature. From March 24 to April 21, 1867, the Tabernacle underwent renovation, and Sunday services were moved into the Agricultural Hall, Islington. Over twenty thousand people attended each of these five memorable meetings, the largest congregations that Spurgeon ever addressed with the exception of the Fast-day service in Crystal Palace. That same year, he broke ground for the Stockridge Orphanage for boys. The next year, 1868, he founded almshouses for the poor. Later, in 1879, Spurgeon would establish the Girl's Orphanage. In all, under Spurgeon's leadership, some one thousand energetic members were actively proclaiming the gospel throughout London in various ministries. In addition, 127 lay ministers were serving in twenty-three mission stations around London. At his fiftieth birthday, a list was read of sixty-six organizations that he had founded for the purpose of advancing the gospel message.

Some of these evangelistic efforts even reached faraway lands. For instance, when David Livingstone, the famous Scottish missionary died in Africa in 1873, a copy of a Spurgeon sermon entitled "Accidents, Not Punishments," from Luke 8:1–5, dated September 8, 1861, was found on him. At the top of the first page was a handwritten comment, "Very good, D. L." Livingstone had carried this Spurgeon gem throughout his many travels in the heart of dark Africa. When Livingstone's body was returned to London for burial in Westminster Abbey, the printed sermon was returned to Spurgeon, and became a treasured possession to him.

Several years later, in 1887, Spurgeon entered into yet another conflict, the greatest of his ministry, known as the Downgrade Controversy. Amid many growing compromises among Baptist churches, he spoke out in defense of the gospel, confronting the doctrinal decline prevalent in many pulpits. He compared the Baptist church to a train that had crested a high mountain and was barreling down the steep downgrade, gaining speed as it plummeted downward. The further it descended this slippery slope, he contended, the greater its destruction would be. He strongly warned against the undermining of the authority of Scripture, a growing trend that was resulting in the prevalence of worldly entertainment, vaudeville techniques, and a circus-like atmosphere in many churches in his day.

But Spurgeon's stern words fell on deaf ears. In a bold move, he resigned from the Baptist Union on October 26, 1887. Some called for him to start a new denomination, but

he declined. At the annual meeting of the Baptist Union in April 1888, the motion to censure Spurgeon was passed and, in a sad twist of history, it was seconded by his own brother, James, his co-pastor at the Tabernacle. This controversy so grieved him that it would contribute to his premature death just four years later.

The Final Days

In his final years, Spurgeon suffered several physical ailments, including a kidney disease and gout. With his health declining, Spurgeon preached what would be his last sermon at the Tabernacle on June 7, 1891. Though no one knew it at the time, this preaching titan would never return to his beloved pulpit. Under much distress, he withdrew to the French Riviera in southern France, to the city of Mentone. There, not far from the Italian border, he died on January 31, 1892. The Prince of Preachers was only fifty-seven years of age.

A funeral service was first conducted in France. Then, Spurgeon's body was taken back to London, where four funeral services were held on Wednesday, February 10, one for members of the Tabernacle, another for ministers and students, yet another for Christian workers, and still another for the general public. A sixth and final service was held the following day, February 11. In all, some sixty thousand mourners paid their respects to this colossal figure by attending one of these services. A funeral parade two miles long followed his hearse from the Tabernacle to the cemetery at Norwood, with one hundred thousand people standing along the way. Flags flew at half-mast. Shops and pubs were closed. It seemed as though a member of the royal family had died.

Atop Spurgeon's coffin was placed a Bible, opened to Isaiah 45:22, the very text that had brought him to saving faith in Christ as a teenager. By this, Spurgeon died as he lived, pointing people to Christ. With his passing, this gospel titan had fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith.

During his thirty-eight-year London ministry, Spurgeon witnessed his congregation grow from two hundred people to almost six thousand members. Throughout this time, he had taken 14,692 new members into the church, nearly 11,000 by baptism. In all, it has been estimated that Spurgeon personally addressed nearly ten million people—a staggering number. Eventually, one of his twin sons, Thomas, succeeded him as pastor of the Tabernacle in 1894. His other son, Charles, Jr., became the head of the orphanage that he had founded.

By 1863, Spurgeon's sermons had already sold more than eight million copies. At the time of his death in 1892, fifty million copies had been sold. By the end of the nineteenth century, over one hundred million sermons had been sold, in twenty-three languages, a figure unmatched by any preacher before or since. Today, this number has reached well over three hundred million copies. A century after his death, there



TRUTH REMAINS

were more works in print by Spurgeon than by any other English-speaking author. In all, Spurgeon is history's most widely read preacher.

To this very day, Spurgeon continues to exert an enormous influence across evangelical Christianity. He authored 135 books, edited twenty-eight others, and wrote numerous pamphlets, tracts, and articles. This body of work remains unprecedented to this day, the single largest publishing project by one author in the history of Christianity. With over 3,800 messages in print, his sermons comprise the largest bound collection of one man's writings in the English language. Their global distribution is unparalleled. Collectively, these ser-

mons are published in sixty-three volumes, containing some 25 million words.

Given the monumental impact Spurgeon made in England and across the world, certain questions beg to be asked: What made Spurgeon's preaching so compelling? What emphasis did he place upon the gospel? What gave his evangelistic ministry such converting power? ♦

Excerpt from *The Gospel Focus of Charles Spurgeon* by Dr. Steven J. Lawson, published by Reformation Trust in 2012 and available at ligonier.org.



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THE LIFE AND DIARY OF DAVID BRAINERD

by Dustin W. Bengé

On a spring day in 1747, mounted on his horse, twenty-nine-year-old David Brainerd rode into the yard of a Northampton parsonage. It was the home of eminent New England pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and his wife Sarah (1710–1758). That Thursday, May 28, was a day not unlike many others before. The Edwards family often received guests in the pastoral parsonage, which sometimes served as lodging for wanderers and visiting ministers. Edwards and Brainerd, prior to this day, were relative strangers to one another, having only met once before at the Yale Commencement of 1743. The summer of 1747 would prove to nurture a growing friendship between the two men. The culmination of this friendship would produce one of the greatest missionary biographies in the history of American evangelicalism.

The Life and Ministry of David Brainerd

Born on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1718, Brainerd was one of nine children born to Hezekiah (1681–1727) and Dorothy (1679–1733) Brainerd. As in most New England families with Puritan lineage, children would be reared with strict emphasis placed upon religious exercise and discipline.

Only two months after his conversion in the early part of September 1739, Brainerd entered Yale College in New Haven, Connecticut. He was soon labeled a “New Light” when he demonstrated particular interest in a “religious fervor” that began sweeping through New England during

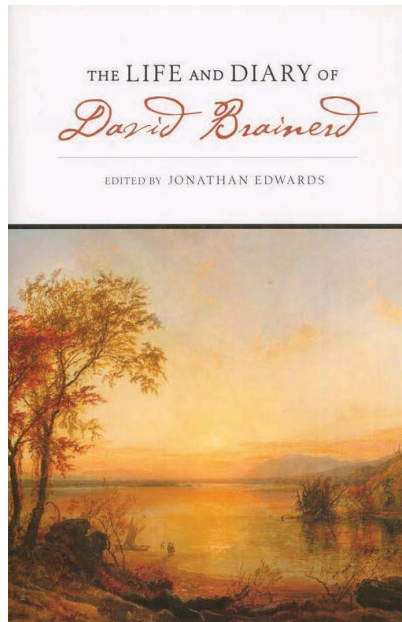
his sophomore year. Brainerd was among the first of many who would be disciplined by college leadership for having expressed interest in the spreading religious enthusiasm, and in 1742 he was expelled from Yale for remarking that tutor Chauncy Whittelsey had “no more grace than a chair” and for being in defiance of college rules. Brainerd’s expulsion from Yale fueled the fire of opposition ignited by the New Light leaders, who were adamant in their stand against the spiritually bankrupt institutions and religiously lackluster ministers of the region.

Unable to complete his education at Yale, Brainerd sought other opportunities to fulfill his ministerial calling. After receiving his license to preach, he was approved for missionary work on November 25, 1742, by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. From 1743 to 1747, he served as a Presbyterian missionary to the Mahican Tribe in Kaunameek, New York, and to Delaware Indians in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Among his brief stint as a missionary, Brainerd experienced the vigor and zeal of spiritual awakening among the Indians.

This portion of his life has sometimes been forgotten because most historians of the era only place Brainerd’s contribution

and significance within the context of the Great Awakening. As a result, he has faded in historical significance and relevance and become a relatively unknown figure in the pantheon of American religious history. Yet his significance is demonstrated, in part, due to the many ways in which his life (as recorded in his diary) exemplifies the passions and piety of a Puritan ideal.

While staying in the Northampton parsonage, Brainerd shared his journals and diary with Jonathan Edwards. Edwards





THE STUDY

seemed to immediately see this rich material, full of religious zeal, as something that must be shared with a wider audience. Reluctantly, Brainerd set forth to organize his writings into a volume that would later be published. However, in 1747, the young missionary died from tuberculosis, a disease from which he had suffered for many years. The task of publishing the Brainerd diary fell to Edwards.

In 1749, *An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd* was published; it was destined to become an evangelical classic. *The Life* became widely popular and its sales would eventually surpass all Edwards' other polemical and theological works. As William Warren Sweet observed in *The Story of Religion in America*, "David Brainerd dead was a more potent influence for Indian missions and the missionary cause in general than was David Brainerd alive."

Edwards employs the same theological themes in *The Life of David Brainerd* that he so carefully weaves together in his great work, *Religious Affections*. Writing to his brother John, Brainerd advises, "read Mr. Edwards on the *Affections*, where the essence and soul of religion is clearly distinguished from false affections." Edwards knew that he could write multiple theological treatises and discourses on the life of a Christian, but none would serve to demonstrate what he desired to explain like the example of a real life. Within the testimony, ministry, and example of David Brainerd, Edwards found such a life.

The final entry in Brainerd's diary was made on Friday, October 2, 1747:

My soul was this day, at turns, sweetly set on God: I longed to be "with him" that I might "behold his glory" (John 17:24); I felt sweetly disposed to commit all to him, even my dearest friends, my dearest flock, and my absent brother, and all my concerns for time

and eternity. Oh, that his kingdom might come in the world; that they might all love and glorify him for what he is in himself; and that the blessed Redeemer might "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" (Is 53:11). Oh, "come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen" (Rev 22:20).

Brainerd, even in the final days of his life, delighted in the comforting words of Scripture, the beauty that he perceived in God, and the joys he continually experienced in Christ. On Friday morning, October 9, 1747, he died. Jonathan Edwards, at his bedside, describes the moment:

when his soul, as we may well conclude, was received by his dear Lord and Master, as an eminently faithful servant, into that state of perfection of holiness and fruition of God which he had so often and so ardently longed for; and was welcomed by the glorious assembly in the upper world, as one peculiarly fitted to join them in their blessed employments and enjoyments.

It is possible that Edwards never imagined that the Christian experience he had written about for so many years would be embodied in a single person. In the days ahead, as Edwards read through the vast chronicle penned by this young man, he knew this material must be shared with the world at large. *The Life* would become the most popular and widely circulated of all his works, extending to new generations not only an Edwardsian piety, but a truly biblical one. 🔥

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