

Leaving a Legacy of Faith 2 Timothy 3:10-4:2 "The Charge"

Introduction

The qualifications of an Elder:

"Whoever aspires to be an overseer (elder) desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

1 Timothy 3:1-7

When we read these Biblical qualities that every elder in the church MUST possess, we cannot help but notice that the man that God has called to lead His people is the exact opposite of the men Paul describes in **2 Timothy Chapter Three!** The "lovers of themselves" types, that Paul warned Timothy to avoid, are most definitely unqualified for any position of leadership in The Body of Christ. Those who are called to shepherd God's people must care more for others than they do themselves. Paul wanted Timothy to be a lover of God and of His church above all else. Paul had set the example well. Now, at the end of his letter from prison, he charges Timothy to follow in his footsteps. The world has more than its share of those who look to their own interest, but God is looking for the men who are willing to **"Love The LORD their God with all their heart soul, strength and mind"**, and then demonstrate that love by **"loving their neighbors as themselves" (Mark 10:27)**. Paul uses the word "*episkopos*" in the Greek to describe the responsibility of these men of faith. The word actually comes from two words, the first "*skopos*" means *to look intently*, and the second "*epi*" means *on*. The *episkopos* is a person who looks intently upon and over the flock. He is an overseer and protector, much the same as a shepherd. This is the kind of man that Jesus entrusts to "watch over" His sheep.

In **John 10:12-15**, Christ explains the difference in those that are truly called to lead His people, juxtaposed with those who are not. He distinguishes between the two, calling one type a "shepherd" and the other a "hireling". Jesus Himself is a "shepherd", who will protect the "sheep" even at the cost of His very life; while a hireling will run away at the first sign of danger. Why? Because he loves his own life above that of the sheep. The church of Christ today has PLENTY of hirelings. What it truly needs is more shepherds; men who will run toward difficulties, rather than quit when times get tough. Paul was such a man. Once he met Jesus face to face on the Damascus road, he never wavered in his commitment for the gospel. When Paul penned this final letter to Timothy, he knew that his race was nearly run. Someone else had to take up the baton and finish the relay that Jesus had begun and had entrusted to Paul. He wanted Timothy to be strong and courageous; and to run the race with all he had, never looking back. In His final words to his young son in the faith, Paul gave him a charge (the passing of a responsibility to another), that he MUST keep to the faith and execute his duties as pastor of Ephesus with all due diligence. In order to be the overseer the God had called him to be, Timothy needed to PERSEVERE, PREPARE, and PREACH with every fiber of his being. This is the charge that every *episkopos* must be willing to accept as well. Church leadership is not something that a person desires for the edification (building up) of ones self, but rather it is a charge and a calling to make himself "less" so that others may be edified. It is a noble charge to identify with The LORD Jesus Christ Himself and to be a "shepherd" underneath the watchful eye of "The Good Shepherd" (**John 10:11**).

Persevere (vs.10-13)

“You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, ENDURANCE, persecutions, sufferings.....” (vs. 10)

Paul didn't simply just “believe” in Jesus, Paul BELONGED to Jesus. He understood full well from the moment that he encountered Christ upon the Damascus Road (**Acts 9**), that his life would never again be his own. He had become a “bond slave” (*doulos* in the Greek) of The LORD (**Ephesians 6:6**). Many Christians today have no idea what this truly means. It means that Jesus has the full rights to our lives. Everything that He has given, He has the right to take away. Every hardship that He determines that we should face, He has the right to lead us there. Paul had known his share of difficulties, but he faithfully endured them as a bond slave of Christ. Unlike the “lovers of self” that Paul warned Timothy to beware, Paul was the real thing, and Timothy had witnessed his faithful perseverance first hand. Paul felt it necessary in this moment to remind his young protege of some of the things that he had endured for the cause of Christ.

“— what kind of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.” (vs.11)

In Antioch, Paul had boldly proclaimed the gospel message of Jesus in the local synagog. Many Jews converted to the faith, but when the religious leaders in the city saw their own followers leaving them to follow after the teachings of Paul, they stirred up persecution against he and his companions. As a result, they were thrown out of that city (**Acts 13:14-52**). Paul and Barnabas, in accordance with The LORD'S teaching (**Matthew 10:4**), shook the dust off their feet as a warning and journeyed on to Iconium.

Once arriving in the twin cities of Lystra, and Iconium (**Acts 14:7-23**), the results were much the same. Only this time, Paul determined to stay a little longer, enduring the persecutions in order to preach to any who would hear. After Paul had miraculously healed a cripple there, the pagans of the city were so enamored with Paul and Barnabas that they thought they were gods, but the two quickly corrected them and pointed them to Christ, and Christ alone. The crowds that followed Paul grew larger and larger, until once again, the Jewish leaders of the city riled up their followers in a religious frenzy until they stoned Paul and left him for dead. But God was not finished with Paul. He miraculously recovered and went on ahead to preach in the town of Derbe. But he would soon return to the cities of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra to preach once more! Paul was not a man to be put off by a little hardship. No indeed! He was a man called to persevere, and Timothy knew all about it. The things that the aged apostle had endured for the sake of the gospel (**2 Corinthians 11:23-33**) would seem unimaginable for us today.

Paul's back must have resembled a road map because of the scars from all the beatings that he took. And what did he say about them? **“From now on, let no man cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus (Galatians 6:17).”** Paul was referring to the Old Testament Law that said if a man owed a debt he couldn't pay, he could be compelled to become a slave to his creditor for a period of six years in order to repay what he owed. In the seventh year, however, he must be released, for no Jew could by law be forced into a lifetime of servitude. However, if at the end of his seven year term, the slave decided that he didn't want to leave his master, then he could volunteer himself as a slave for life (bond slave). The servant would be taken to the doorpost of the house and an awl would pierce through his ear into the doorpost. This “mark” would signify that he had volunteered to become a bond slave to his master forever, signifying the great love that he held for the master (**Exodus 21:2-6**). Paul looked upon his scars as the markings of a bond slave of Jesus. Nothing could separate him from serving his beloved Master! He had set his course and would not be dissuaded from it. Paul had demonstrated this kind of perseverance over the entire period, from Jesus calling him, until his last days upon the earth. If you truly want to become the kind of person that God uses, you MUST be willing to persevere as well!

Prepare (vs. 14-17)

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 3:14-15

Paul knew what every leader in the church must know: Apart from The Word of God, we have nothing valuable to say. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every child of God to diligently study, search, and memorize scripture to enable them not only to live by it, but to correct, rebuke, and train other believers (**vs. 16-17**). If our “commission” is to make disciples, then we must realize that disciples are made from being taught, and believing in, the Word of God. To be able to lead others, one must be PREPARED to lead others! Timothy needed to make the Word of God a very part of himself, if he were to make any lasting difference in this old wretched world. The same is true for us as well. Is it any wonder that Paul once again brings the Word of God into his “charge” to Timothy? Paul wanted him to realize, that only by preparation (continuous Bible study) would he be ready to face the challenges that he would surely face in his ministry at Ephesus.

I personally believe, with all my being, that there is nothing more important to a believer than prayer and Bible study. This is why we are so diligently trying to teach the children here at Freedom to memorize scripture. For without the foundation of scripture, they will not be able to stand for Christ against the schemes of the devil. This world is EVIL, plain and simple, and it is so very easy to get swallowed up into all types of sin, if it were not for a strong grounding in The Word. Paul compared the Word of God to a “Sword of The Spirit” (**Ephesians 6:17**). If you think that you can do battle with the demons of hell without it my friend, you are sadly mistaken. Having a firm understanding of the scriptures will enable every believer to go on offense against the gates of hell. If you do not know your Bible, then you are most easily deceived by the false teachers that Paul so adamantly warned Timothy to beware. One qualification for every elder in the body of Christ is that they, **“Must be able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2)**. Teach what? The Holy Scriptures, that’s what! Want to be a leader in Christ’s church? Then **study to show yourself approved... (2 Timothy 2:15)**! This is your preparation. Only by becoming a student of The Word will you ever be able to leave a lasting legacy of faith.

Preach (vs. 4:1-2)

“in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word...”

2 Timothy 4:1

Most believers today believe that “preaching” is just for pastors. However, Jesus has called us ALL to make disciples. When we are fully committed to the cause of Christ, each one of us will be disciple makers. In the “Great Commission” Jesus commands us all to **“make disciples by baptizing them in the name of The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and to TEACH them all things that He has commanded”**. And just where do we find His commandments? In the Holy Scriptures of course. Therefore, every believer has been called to make disciples by teaching The Word! Although pastors are responsible for leading the congregation, EVERY believer is supposed to be teaching The Word to others. Do you know what a person who teaches the Bible is called? A PREACHER, that’s what. You see, EVERY believer is called to “Preach The Word”! I’ll bet that some of you didn’t know that you were called to preach this morning did you? The Bible says that every believer is a part of a royal priesthood (**1 Peter 2:9**). Believe it or not my friend, you have been called as a priest and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ if you are a believer. So the question remains at this point: Have you been preaching the gospel to this lost and dying world?

Jesus is looking for some faithful followers who will Persevere by being fully committed in everything. Prepare by diligently studying the Word of God, and then, PREACH to all who would hear the message of Christ Jesus. Paul admonished Timothy to be ready to preach at all times. The phrase that he used was “in season or out of season” which simply means; no matter the circumstances, no matter if the timing feels right or not... PREACH THE WORD. With Nero breathing out his murderous threats against the church, it must have seemed to young Timothy “the wrong season” to be preaching the gospel publicly, but Paul was insistent that it MUST be preached, no matter the circumstance. Far too much was at stake to forego the preaching of the Word. Preach, and trust God with all else, that had been Paul's way of life. It hadn't been easy, but it had certainly been effective. Churches had been planted everywhere that he went.

The world that we live in, this “post-modern age”, has far too many faint-hearted people out there claiming to be followers of Christ. What would happen if everyone here today decided that from this moment on, they could be counted upon to take a real stand for the cause of Christ? I mean a REAL stand; by Persevering, Preparing, and Preaching? The Apostle Paul wasn't one of those “do as I say, and not as I do” kind of Christians! He LIVED out his faith every single day. He was the kind of Christ follower that set the example. He never shied away from his calling, but rather lived it in all sincerity for all to see. He didn't make excuses, in fact, just the opposite. He actually ENCOURAGED people to follow his example as he followed Christ ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). What if we ALL lived like that? What if we were so fully devoted to The Savior that we could say with all sincerity; “Watch my every move, and do what I do, because you can count on me to do what Jesus tells me to”? And THEN, we would actually go out and put it all on the line for our Master just like we promised that we would do. What if we really stopped excusing our weakness with “do as I say, but not as I do” kind of living? What if we actually LIVED it? What a legacy a man/woman like that would leave behind! I want to be a man of faith like that. When I come to the end of my journey here on earth, I would like for those who knew me to be able to say with all sincerity; “He was a true follower of Christ. He PERSEVERED through every test and trial. He PREPARED daily by praying and reading his Bible, so that he would be ready at any moment to defend his faith, and he PREACHED to any who would hear, rightly dividing The Word of Truth. I may never be famous, and I most certainly will never have great wealth, but I am sure that I could be completely satisfied with THAT kind of legacy. How about you? Are there any leaders of the faith among us who will commit to that kind of Godly lifestyle? Who is willing to step to the mark and say, “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ?”

And ALL of God's people said... TRUTH!!!