



Message Transcript

Consistent Good Service

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Lord Jesus, we just thank you that every time your word is opened and faithfully proclaimed, that you have a word for us. So Lord, today, speak. Lord, give me the grace to preach your word in the way you want it presented. And Lord, give us the faith to hear what you have to say. Lord, we want to be fed this morning, we want to be nourished in your word so that we can be faithful in our service to you. And Lord, for all you're going to do, we give you glory, honor, and praise. And now, for all who are gathered, who desire to hear the word of the Lord, who will believe what the Lord says and will by faith put into practice exactly what he shows you, will you agree with me this morning by very loudly saying the word, Amen?

Amen.

Amen. Do you have a favorite restaurant or a store or a vacation spot that you frequent? If you think about those places, chances are there's consistently good service at the place that you go. The reason that you go visit those places whether you've thought about it or not is because people have taken care of you and met your needs. Some of your favorite restaurants, you may not even think that they have good service, but maybe now that you reflect on it, you're like, "Yeah, every time I go there, I get in pretty well. The food's good. The service is good. Yeah, that's why we go there."

Or you think about your vacation spots or different hotels or places you go where you're just taken care of. And when there's consistently good service, you tend to be attracted there and go back. Just recently, after this whole coronavirus pandemic, I

went back to a restaurant I hadn't been to in a while and was one of my favorite restaurants, and the service wasn't very good and food wasn't very good and people weren't very nice. And it went from being one of my top restaurants to one of my least favorite restaurants. Probably I won't go back there anytime soon. Why? Because once upon a time, they served well, but now they're not serving so well anymore.

And I think in our Christian lives, it can be a lot like that. Jesus tells us in his word that we are salt and light, that we are where his Holy Spirit is housed so that the world can see what a Christian looks like when they look at us. And at times, we have good service and we serve God and we serve others well. And yet at other times, we're not that consistent, at other times, maybe we don't serve the way we would. Or at other times, we think, "Man, I wish I had a rewind switch on that one, I could have done that a little better." And if you've ever wondered how it is that you as a believer in Christ can have consistently good service, that's what we're going to talk about today.

We're going to take a look at four ways that you can grow in having consistent, good service to the Lord and to other people in your life. And to do that, we're back in the book of 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy, we're going to begin in chapter four today and take a look at the first 10 verses. As we read through, we'll just highlight four areas that we can grow in our consistent good service to the Lord. Let me read this and then we'll unpack it together. Here's what he says. "But the spirit explicitly says that in later time, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons by means of hypocrisy of liars, seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron."

"Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth, for everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude for it is sanctified by means of the word of God in prayer. In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine, which you have been following, but have nothing to do with worldly fables fit for only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose godliness for bodily discipline as of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving, full acceptance, for it is for this we labor and strive because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers." And here, as Paul writes as protÃ©gÃ©, Timothy, inspired by the spirit, he's going to teach him, he's going to show him how in this church in Ephesus, he can have consistently good service. And we're going to learn how we can serve well. And what does it look like for us to be constant in our service? And there's four lessons that we need to learn from this text this morning.

The first one here may not be so obvious, but it's really important for believers to understand that you serve well when you realize some will abandon the faith. You serve well when you realize that some will abandon the faith. This is a painful teaching, this is a hard teaching, this is a difficult teaching. If you've walked with the Lord for a period of time, you've seen people that have been fired up about the faith that no

longer want anything to do with Jesus Christ or his church or anything else. And every time that happens, it's painful. If you spent time discipling lots of people, some of the people that you've disciplined have gone that way.

Here's what he's says, "But the spirit explicitly says that in later times, some will fall away from the faith." The Holy Spirit tells Paul, "Don't be alarmed, this is going to happen. As things continue, this is going to happen." You can read in 2 Thessalonians chapter two, "There's going to be a massive departure from the faith." We talked to about it when we taught the book of Revelation, not everyone who professes they're a Christian is actually a Christian. There will be those who will depart from the faith when the going gets tough, because what they're going to say is, "I might believe that, but not if it's going to cost me something. I might believe that, but not really believe it. I thought I did."

And here's what the spirit says. There will be some that will depart from the faith, not everyone will, but some will. And we don't know who they're going to be. And it's always surprising when we see who those people are, because we always wonder, "I thought they were solid. They were leading in the church. They led a small group. What happened?" They were never really saved to begin with. Some will fall away from the faith, and how will they do it? Now, I'm going to just read through this and then we'll unpack it together. Paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrine of demons. Deceitful spirits, doctrines of demons go all the way back to the garden of Eden. What do you have? You have a doctrine of demon. What's a doctrine? A doctrine is a

teaching, a teaching of demonic influence, a teaching that leads you away from Christ.

That's a doctrine of demons. That's deceitful spirit. Some of us think that the only way Satan works is to say, "Do evil, do bad, do evil, do bad." That's not always he does, sometimes he appears as an angel of light and masquerades as a servant of righteousness so that you will just take your focus off giving your life completely to the Lord, Jesus Christ. Anything he can do to keep you from giving God full allegiance, where you get to make up in your mind which parts of the Bible you're going to believe in which parts you're not going to believe in what you think this means and what you think that means, and you'll have conversations like this, "Well, I heard what pastor Jeff said. I just don't know whether I believe that." And this church says this and this church says that.

"You can't really know the truth, everybody's got their own version of the truth." That's how people talk that aren't saved. The Bible's true. Now, there may be nuances on little different things in there that we have different open handed convictions about, but when it comes to Jesus being Lord and his word being true, we don't mess with that. But we live in a day and age where people pay attention to doctrines of demons. We just don't call them demons in the secular world, but that's exactly what it is. People read their horoscopes and fortune cookies; I liked my last fortune cookie, and all these different things that are out there that they're listening to other than the word of God.

And the word of God's not foundational, it's not authoritative, it's not directing you, it's just a good book. And that's just not true. And doctrines of demons and lies of

the enemy will always take you away from where God wants you to be. People will say, "There's many ways to heaven. There's many ways to interpret God's word." Did God really say that? Is that really what God meant? Or those demons will say, "Hey, your focus should remain on yourself. Don't let other people, including the Bible, tell you what you need to do." Or maybe he'll go even further and say, "God, doesn't really love you. He's really disappointed in you. He doesn't care for you." Or perhaps he tells you there is no God.

All of these are deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, and there's myriads of ways in which they work. Now, notice how they work. Notice the means by which they work. Notice who they work through. Verse two, "By means of the hypocrisy of liars, seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron." Who the Satan and his legion of demons work through? People, liars, hypocrites, people who may profess their believers, but aren't believers. People who may think they're believers, but aren't believers, people whose conscience is seared, meaning they're not listening to the Holy Spirit in their life, they're listening to what feels good for them.

They'll talk about what feels good to them, what feels right to them. Truth doesn't care about your feelings. Did you know that? I have a hard time with that sometime, you have a hard time with that sometimes, because truth has an edge to it. If truth is being accurately proclaimed, there are times you're going to hear the truth and know that it's truth and it doesn't feel good. It doesn't feel good at all. When my wife and I first got married, premarital counseling for us, it was a breeze. We passed with flying colors. If you fail premarital, by the way, don't get married. Just so you know. If you

aren't getting along before you get married, don't get married. We flew through that.

It was post marital counseling we had a hard time with, and we went for about six weeks. And I remember, there were a couple times we went and I was getting in the car, going home. And I'm thinking to myself, "That's the last time I'm ever going there." But he was using the word. And what I was mad at was what the word says, not what he said. And there were other times we'd get in the car and I'd look at Kim, I'm like, "Wasn't that awesome today?" And she would say, "I'm never going back there again," because it was the word, it wasn't what he said. And when the word of God is being used, it has an edge to it that shapes and shows us areas that were not aligned with Jesus, this holiness, righteousness and truth.

And who does the enemy use? He selects people in his kingdom that he can elevate with their personality and wisdomness, whose conscience has been seared so that they can lie and not present the truth. I'll give you a proof text for that in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 11:12 says, "But what I am doing, I will continue to do. So I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting." Paul says, "I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing, because there are so many out there that are doing it wrong for such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ."

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it does not surprising if his servants also discuss themselves as servants of

righteousness whose end will be according to their deeds. That 2 Corinthians 11:12-15. What is he saying? Some of Satan's most choice servants serve in pulpits across the world. That's sobering, isn't it. I realized this week as I was preparing this message, that the things that gets under my skin, the righteous anger that comes out of me is not towards the world. Because when I look at the world and I look at some of the crazy decisions that the world makes, the world makes decisions that go antithetical of everything the word of God teaches.

It bothers me, but I think to myself, "Why wouldn't they make decisions like that? They don't know Christ. They're acting as if there were no God, even though there is a God. That's how they're supposed to act. What drives me crazy is people who call themselves by the name of Christ that act the same way. Jesus called us to be different. Jesus called us to look different, Jesus called church to be different, which means if you go to church, that's honoring the Lord, you're going to hear things from the pulpit you're not hearing anywhere else, because the word of God is true and it's truth. And it has an edge and it doesn't always feel good, but it's right if we'll submit to the truth of God's word.

There are men and women out there who think they're believers, who aren't believers, who are leading God's people astray. The Bible would call them hypocritical liars. And here's the problem, the problem is that people are often attracted to personality rather than to truth. I'll tell you, because I say it from this pulpit all the time, the day I stop preaching the word of God, or if I'm not the pastor, the day somebody else stops preaching the word of God, please go find a church where the word of God

is preached. You don't need to be here if the word of God's not being heralded.

And I'm not talking about referencing the word of God, I'm not talking about the opinions of a speaker that then throws a couple scriptures on it for their opinion. That's not preaching. Preaching is, "This is what God is trying to communicate and say to a group of people, unapologetically. Here's who God is." And there's a herald that loves God so much that the word is getting out so you can hear the Lord, that's what it looks like. And all across our country and around the world, unfortunately, there are people who stand in pulpits that don't do that. They're being used of the enemy as hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a branding iron.

And notice what they do, they also deny God's goodness. Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared by those who believe and know the truth, for everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is to be received with gratitude. So what you'll see in some circles that appear Christian are people who forbid certain behaviors because they say, "If you don't do that, then you're more spiritual. Don't get married because you'll be more spiritual." There's certain denominations that mandate celibacy for the leadership in the church. Talk about the all-time dumbest thing you can do.

If you're called to be celibate, be celibate, but if you're not called to be celibate, you're not called to be celibate. That doesn't make you more spiritual to be celibate. Those who are celibate and those who are married are both honoring the Lord if they're doing it in his way. And certain foods, what does that mean? In Denver, everybody's like gluten free, dairy free, meat free, everything free. There's nothing

wrong with choosing a healthy diet, that's good, nothing wrong with that. There's actually some wisdom in that. What is talking about is when you mandate and tell people, "You can't eat that and can't do that or you're really not that spiritual. You can't drink that, you can't eat that or you're really not that spiritual."

Now, everything that's created by God is for our enjoyment. Marriage is for our enjoyment. God created marriage, if he's called you to be married, it's to enjoy your marriage. You're not less spiritual if you get married, you're not less spiritual if you stay single. Enjoy what God's given you. You're not more spiritual if you abstain from certain foods or you have a certain diet than if you eat those foods. Everything created by God is good. In the garden, what did the enemy try to get Eve to see? That God's denying your goodness. Even after God created a perfect world and gave him everything that was beautiful to the eye and all of the fresh tasting fruits and vegetables and everything that he created in a perfect world and said, "You can have it all," except for this one tree.

And what did Satan say? "God's not very good because he's holding out the best on you." Was God holding out the best? No, God was protecting them from what would damage them forever. God's never holding out on you. God's good. Every good and perfect gift comes from God. Enjoy God. Enjoy the things that he's given. That's why when we eat, it's important to say grace, not just as a way of saying like we did when I grew up, "Come Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen." It's not just a rote prayer, but it's thanking God like, "This food that I have,

Lord, you're providing nourishment for my body. Thank you for this. You're the one that provided this. You're the one that gave us this. Lord, thanks for my marriage. Lord, thanks for my kids. Lord, thanks for what you've given me. Thanks for the relationship. They all come from you. Every good and perfect gift comes from you."

Certain people think you're more spiritual if you reject. If you live by yourself in a monastery, that you're more spiritual. No, you're not. You're spiritual if you enjoy everything God's given you and you realize it's all from God and it's a gift and you can hold it with an open hand. And you're like, "Thank you Lord for everything that I have." And notice what he goes on to say, "For it's sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer." That means everything that God shows us in his word that is good, we're to respond in prayer and thank him for it. That's what it means.

It doesn't mean that you eat like junk food, like I heard a comedian say one time. He was eating a bag of Cheetos and he prayed about it, hoped it turned into a carrot on the way to his belly. It doesn't mean you do bad things and then pray and God makes them good. It means when God reveals in his word what is good and everything that God's given that is good, it's good, and so enjoy it and take pleasure in it. God gives us these things so we can delight in them and we enjoy them and we can have them and we pray and are thankful for them. But there will be those that depart from the faith. I'm telling you, and it's sobering to tell you this, there will be some who will abandon the faith.

You will know people who will leave. Jesus gave a sermon called the Parable of the Soils. It's in several places in the New Testament. I'm just referencing Mark's

reference here this morning. And it's really interesting, after Jesus told about this Parable of the Soils, he talked about seed being sown and some was on hard soil, some on rocky soil, some on weedy soil, and some on good soil. And he basically said, "If it falls in good soil, it always produces a harvest, 30, 60, or even 100 fold." The problem is when it falls on bad soil, it doesn't produce the work, there's no fruit, there's nothing to it. So he says, "When it falls on hard soil, the enemy comes and snatches it away."

But it's really interesting what he says about the rocky soil. He says in verse 16 of Mark, chapter four, "In a similar way, the ones on the rocky soil, these are the ones whom seed with sown on the rocky places who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy." So there are some people who, when they hear the word of God, either delivered through an evangelist, through one-on-one relationship in a church are like, "That's awesome. I love that." They receive it with joy, but they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary. Then when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately, they fall away.

They're just like the hard soil. They appear that they're Christian, they appear that they have something deep, but when circumstances present themselves, they're not going to make it all the way. Why? Because they don't have good soil. They haven't received the gospel into their heart. Jesus Christ is not the Lord of their life. They believe some good facts about Jesus, they believe some good facts about the church. It was a comforting place for them, but they never received the Lord into their life. And you'll see that. You may have already seen that, but there will be a falling away. Jesus,

even tells in Matthew 24, "I'm telling you this beforehand, so that you'll know what's going to happen. I'm telling you this before it happens."

We looked at the midpoint in the tribulation when the antichrist arises, there'll be a massive departure from the faith, because when it's going to cost you your job, when it may cost you your life, there are those that are going to be, "I didn't sign up for that. I'll take the mark. I'll take the mark. I've watched it over the last year." By the way, the vaccine's not the mark, it's not, but it's been interesting to watch people in fear do things that go against what they say they were going to do. It's going to happen someday, where to be a Christian, you're going to have to refuse something. To be a Christian, you're going to have to say, "Nope, not doing that. Sorry."

"Well, there's consequences for that." "Will take them as of the Lord." There will be a departure from the faith. It's coming. It's happening. That's why we need to make certain that our calling an election is sure because a departure from the faith always occurs because of a departure from God's word. As somebody who's been called to preach the word, I can listen to somebody who's boring who loves Jesus and loves the word. I can stomach that. Not my favorite, but I can stomach it. But what I can't handle is somebody with a big personality, perhaps, super winsome, super good storyteller, who is not presenting truth to people. That bothers me at my core.

And we see apostasy all throughout the New Testament, don't we? It's really interesting, on the night that Jesus was betrayed and they're all having supper together, three years together, they've spent almost every day together, and Jesus

says these words, "One of you will betray me." And how do they respond? "Is it me? Please tell me it's not me, I don't want it to be. Is it me?" That's how some of you might be feeling today. "Pastor Jeff's talking about... Have I really received the Lord in my heart, do I really, really know him? Do I know him? Do I know him?" That's a good thing to ask. Judas though wasn't asking that question. That's why Jesus said the one who dips his bread in the dish with me, he's the one. And Judas is scared, put it in. And he's like, "Hey, what you're going to do, go do quickly."

The disciples are shocked, they've spent three years with Judas Iscariot. He's done everything they've done. He's been there for the feeding of the 5,000, he's been there watching Jesus, walk on water, he's been there watching Jesus deliver people from demons. He's been there watching Jesus raised people from the dead. He was sent out to proclaim the gospel. Seemingly, he was able to heal and cast demons out people or else everybody would've known it was Judas Iscariot. Because if Judas said, "One of you was going to betray me," the other 11 would be, "Judas, your miracles never worked, you never healed anybody. We knew you were... "

No, that's not what they say. Seemingly, he was looking just like them. Jesus says, "You can't tell, the Lord knows those who are his." We can see fruit in people's life from time to time, we can make an assessment, think, "Based on what I'm seeing, they're a believer," but we don't know, only God knows. That's why individuals must receive Jesus Christ as the Lord of their life. And you serve well when you realize that some will abandon the faith. It's important for you to know that because you are going to disciple people at some point in time, that you will have poured your life into and

they will leave. And every time that happens, it's painful.

In 1 John, John says this, in 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would've remained with us, but they went out so that it would be shown that they are not of us." There's coming a time where, and let me just be clear on this, I'm trying to talk about people that leave BRAVE Church and go to another church, that happens for a variety of reasons. That can be okay. I'm talking about people that leave and they're not just leaving church, they're leaving Jesus, "I'm done." It happens all the time. It's the rocky soil. There will be a massive departure from the Christian faith at some point in the future. And if you're going to serve well, you just need to be aware of that.

Not everybody's going to leave, and those who stay, we're going to be tighter than we've ever been. But some will depart. You need to know that. You also serve well with this, you serve well when you guide and protect with biblical instruction, when you guide and with biblical instruction. Notice what he says, "In pointing these things out to the brethren, in other words, letting people see this." When you tell people this is what's going to happen, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus. That's a theme of this section, being a good servant of Christ Jesus, serving Jesus well, serving his church well, constantly nourished on the words of faith and of the sound doctrine, which is good teaching, which you have been following, but have nothing to do with worldly fables, fit only for old women.

In other words, it doesn't matter what a good slogan is or a good saying is or what somebody wants to banter about. We looked at myths and genealogies at the

beginning of this thing and just getting all this talk about all this stuff that profits nothing. It means guide and protect people with biblical instruction, nourish yourself on biblical instruction, prepare yourself for biblical instruction. I'll just tell you, as a pastor, what's my responsibility? It's to lead and feed and protect God's people. My responsibility is, if we're all sheep together and I'm under the under shepherd, it's to move us to greener pastures through good teaching, it's to guide us into all truth, it's to feed us the word of God, it's to protect us from false doctrine.

That's what a good pastor does. That's what a good servant of Jesus does. Unfortunately, we've taken the truth and we've turned it into a feeling. And so people will say something like this, "Oh, he has a pastor's heart." What's a pastor's heart? Where's that in the New Testament. Where's the pastor's heart? Well, it's really nice. There's a lot of really nice people that are going to hell every single day. It's not about him being nice, it's about him being Godly, it's about him being truthful. It's about presenting the word, it's about caring enough to let people eat. I say this from time to time, but I'm going to say it again. I get this question, "Pastor Jeff, is it okay to go to a church where we get fed? I'm at a church right now, I'm not really getting fed."

Is it okay to go to a restaurant where they don't serve food? One of the primary reasons you're here is to get fed. And if you're properly fed the word of God, it will result in greater service. There's nobody that gets just, "Oh, I'm fed so well, I'm just sitting here all fat," that never happens, because if the word of God is truly being fed to you, there's always action applied to the word of God. There's always going to be an

exercise and a practice of putting into practice what the Lord shows you that you're being fed. That's good teaching. When you're with people, if you want them to grow and you're discipling people, what do you disciple them in? It's the Bible and good teaching.

You're helping them, you're guiding them, you're leading them into the truth, you're protecting them from false doctrine. You're willing to tell them in love the hard things that nobody else is willing to tell them, because you can get opinions from anybody to agree with really dumb things that you want to do really well many people can tell you that. A good servant will say, "I know you've been told this by a lot of people that love you, and I love you too, but here's what Jesus is telling you. And this is uncomfortable for you, I realize it's uncomfortable for you, but it's the truth. And this is what Jesus is holding you accountable to even if the other 57 people outside say you don't need to do that." It's truth, guide people into truth.

We tend to guide people by their feelings, when they're upset, we tell them, "Oh, don't worry about it, you're feeling bad, just keep doing what you want to do." When they're feeling good, "Oh, just keep doing that. That makes you feel happy." Versus, "I don't really think that's what the Lord would have you do. As a matter of fact, I know you feel really good about going that way, but you're actually going the exact opposite way of Jesus. And you claim that you love Jesus, and if you love Jesus, then why aren't you doing what he's saying?" Jesus, ask his disciples, "Why do you call me Lord and do not do what I say? Why? Don't call me Lord. If you're not going to what I want you to do. Lord means I'm ruler, I'm sovereign, I'm over you."

When we come to hear the word of God, we're putting yourself under the authority of the word of God. I want to put myself under the authority of the word of God. I'm not an authority on the word of God, God's an authority on God's word. Amen?

Amen.

But God's calling us, and if we're going to be good servants, we need to guide and protect people with biblical instruction. It's what God desires for those who he's called to lead in his church. That's why he instructs Timothy in his second letter in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word. Be prepared in season and out of season." Next week, you'll see, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture. Let the word of God dwell richly in you. You say, "Well, why is that such a big deal?" Here's why, because this word is Jesus Christ.

Some people separate it, "Well, this is the written word, we have to trust what Jesus said. Jesus said, you diligently study the scriptures because you think that in them, you have eternal life, yet these are the very scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. In 1 John 1:1 says that he is the word of life. Everything in this book is a testimony of Jesus. If you say, "Well, I don't believe this. I believe Jesus, I just don't believe the word," then you don't believe the Jesus of the word. There's nothing in here that's ever going to change.

This is Jesus, this is his living and active word, this is him speaking, this is his character, this is his nature, this is who he is. If you don't like this, you don't like Jesus,

period, end of story. And we have too many people that are saying, "Yeah, I believe most of that, I just don't know if I believe that. And that's cultural and that's this." This book was written 2,000 years ago, some longer than that, but if we understand the context to which it's written and you can read, you can understand what the word of God says. It's what he says, "Preach the word."

When God called prophets, he gave them a mighty calling and they had a responsibility before God, that's why I tell you all the time, I'm way more scared of God than I am of you. You can post something on Instagram or some social media saying I don't like Pastor Jeff. And it never feels good, but you can do it, but at the end of the day, God gives me five stars, I'm good with that. I care more about what he says. When Ezekiel was appointed, here's what God says in Ezekiel chapter three and verse 17, "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me."

Well, God's given us his word. He's telling Ezekiel, "When you hear me tell you something, you better tell Israel. When I say to the wicked, you will surely die and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood, I will require at your hand. In other words, Ezekiel, when I tell you to warn my people and you don't warn them, they're going to die, but when you don't warn them and they die, their blood's on your hands. Yet, if you have warned the wicked, so you've given him the warning and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you've delivered yourself."

In other words, if you're going to be a faithful proclaimer of God's word and you tell people the truth and they choose not to respond, that's on them. But woe to you, if I tell you to tell them the truth and you withhold it from them. Young men, they're are going to be future pastors, preach to a whole council of God and don't apologize for any of it because God does that need a PR agent, he needs heralds of who he is. Amen. The world needs to hear this whole book and what God has to say. He goes on to say, "Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and I place an obstacle before him, he will die."

"Since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin and his righteous deeds, which he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood, I will require at your hand. However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning and you have delivered yourself." What is God's saying to people who are proclaiming the word? I'm talking to women who are teaching women, I'm talking to men who are teaching men and a congregation, I'm saying, you better present the whole council of God so that people can make their choice based on what God says.

We have too many people that are shy away from all the truths of God's word for fear of that if I present the whole word of God, there's going to be some people that are upset. Friends who planted this church, they were 208 people, we grew it to 113 over the course of eight weeks, and I remember telling my wife, before I get up to preach certain messages, I'm like, "This is going to be a congregational trimmer and we don't even have a congregation yet." Because I know that the word of God has an

edge to it and it's sharp

I remember calling Kent Shaw after about week eight and I said, "What's happened? We're about half the size we were when we started and we're continuing to shrink. And here was his word to me, like, "Am I doing something wrong?" He said, "No." He goes, "You continue to preach the word of God and it's not the size of your congregation, it's the people you're going to attract that will come. Amen?"

Amen.

And here's what God's done, he's grown his church. I'm excited that God's growing his church, but if by preaching the word God trimmed his church, I'm excited that God trimmed his church. I'm just excited that God gets his word out to do whatever he wants to do in God's people. And God will attract who he wants to be here and here. And I can tell you as your pastor, and I've told you many times, as long as I'm alive, we're going to preach the word here. It's going to be in a regular part of our diet and what we do because that's how we grow in Christ.

And we need to realize if we're going to be good servants, that some will abandon the faith, but here's the truth, we need to guide and protect with biblical instruction. And here's the reality, if you are well fed, you will serve, good service is part of your food. It's interesting in John chapter four, when Jesus was talking to the woman at the well and was walking her through that he was the Messiah while he had sent his disciples so that they wouldn't screw up the conversation, they come back and say, "Rabbi, eat, you got to eat something. You got to be hungry."

Remember what Jesus said in John 4:32? He goes, "I have food to eat that you don't know anything about." In the original, it use double negatives. He was saying to his disciples, "I have food to eat of which you do not know nothing." He was watching the Samaritan village come to him and he realized, "I don't need to eat because I'm filled up right now because I'm about ready to lead a whole village to Christ." Friends, when you're being fed the word of God correctly, it will translate into the service that God has called you to serve in. There'll be a desire to give more of yourself to God. And it won't be because a pastor or a ministry leader back in June said, "You have to serve. We need more help."

Friends, we always need more help. It'll be a compelling that comes from within that God is overflowing so much into your life, how could I hold back and not give my best to the one who's given everything for me? Amen. That's what he's looking for. Good service requires that. And then we're guiding and we're protecting, and we're feeding, and we're doing it with biblical instruction. And here's the reality, you can't give away what you don't have. So we're always growing in the word, we're always growing in the word. I remember at seminary I'd meet some of my professors and I'd do Bible studies with them and I would think to myself, "How do they know so much? I'll never know any of this stuff. How do they know so much?"

And I would ask them, I'd say, "How do you know all this?" And some would say, "Well, I've spent an hour a day for the last 50 years studying God's word." And I'd be like, "Oh, that probably makes a difference." I know some pastors I talk to and I'm like, "What do you do?" They go, "I spend five hours a day in the word." That makes a

difference. How you spend your time and how you grow your appetite, and how you feed yourself, and how you get fed will translate into service for the Lord. Amen. And then he says this, here's what you need to know is a good servant, you'll also do this, you'll train for the purpose of godliness. You'll train for the purpose of godliness.

He said, "Don't have anything to do with worldly fables or what the world's saying you need to do, but discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness, for bodily discipline is of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things since it holds the promise for both the present life and also for the life to come." Well, what's godliness? Godliness is really a proper response to the things of God which results in obedience and righteous living. It's responding to God in obedience and righteous living. It's trusting God and obeying God, that's godliness. And we're a call to train ourselves in that.

Now, you think about what you train yourself in now. Some of you physically train yourself, you go to a gym and you work out. Some of you are training yourself academically, you're working your mind, you're learning new skills and new disciplines. Some of you are being trained at a job and there's new skills that you need to learn to move on. Here's what God says, bodily discipline, like if you're training your body, that has a little profit. In other words, there's nothing bad with that. Go to the gym and work out, that can be helpful, it can release endorphins, it can work on your muscles and sinus and all your ligaments and help stretch them out and you can be healthier for longer and all those, that's good.

There's a little advantage to that at, but godliness has profit in all things both now

and in the life to come. There's return on investment for godliness unlike anything else that you can invest in. And in the same way that you need to train physically, here's what he's saying, "As a Christian, you need to train yourself spiritually. This may be new for some of you. Christian growth is not automatic, it doesn't just happen. It's not, "Hey, I'm a Christian, if God wants to grow me, I guess he'll grow me. He wants to grow you, what are you willing to do to partner with him to let him grow you? You got to work this thing out.

You should be wrestling with the word, you should be trying to seek understanding on the word, you should be growing in your prayer life, you should be asking people, "How do you pray like you pray? I want to learn how to pray better." You should be the one that's pursuing things. Don't be passive, don't wait, don't sit like a lump on your couch and say, "Lord, if you want me to be godly, I'm sure I'll be godly today. That's great." No, I have to pursue those things, I have to pursue the Lord, I have to ask him to search and try my heart and know me and see if there's any offensive way in me and lead me.

And then we're practicing, we're growing. That's why I pray that every single week, because we're in practice. We forget at that as Christians. We understand when we watch a little kid, he's about a-year-old, learning how to walk, and they fall, we don't have a problem with that. We think it's good. We think somebody that's older in their 80s that has knee replacement surgery that's learning to walk, we're excited about that too. We have a problem with somebody that's 40 years old that's perfectly healthy that's falling down, "What's wrong with you?"

We do the same thing in the church. We think that if you're young, you're new to this whole Christian thing and we get it that you don't know, or if you've come to Christ late in life, we get it, you're new to Christ. But if you've been sitting around here for a while, there's this assumption, man, you should know your Bible backwards and forward, you should know every book, you should know every chapter, you should know every verse, you should be living it.

And so what we tend to do when we come to church is be very inauthentic, and rather than share, "I don't really get this thing yet. I don't really know how to share my faith. I'm not sure I know how to read my Bible. I'm not sure I know how to pray. I'm not sure I know how to evangelize. If somebody came and said, 'How do I get saved?' I'm not sure I would know how to tell them, but I can't tell anybody that because if I tell somebody that, they'll probably look down on me." Friends at Brave Church, nobody's looking down on you. The only one looking down on you is the Lord Jesus Christ, who loves you.

He's looking at you and he wants you to grow. And there's nothing wrong with not having it all together, because I don't have it all together. I wish I could tell you, ever since I become a pastor, you know what, I sin, but it's not that big like you guys. No, no, I sin just like you. I need a redeemer just like you. I need to grow in Christ just like you. We're all on a different journey and we may be in different places, but God's encouraging us to continue to grow and train ourselves for godliness. You say, "Well, how can I do that?" Well, on the weekends you can come prepared.

I'll tell you right now, Lord willing, next week will be in 1 Timothy starting in chapter four, verse 11. So it'd be great if you read through the end of the chapter, and it'd be great. If you read it and said, "God, what is your Holy Spirit saying to me? And God, what would Pastor Jeff be preaching about? And Lord, use pastor Jeff to preach in such a way that I actually hear you." And prepare yourself and come expecting God to do something. Pray, come to every first Tuesday and pray. First Tuesday are powerful.

We had about 42 testimonies at our last first Tuesday with everything from physical healing and deliverance to sexual identity, healing and deliverance, to physical harm delivery. It was unbelievable. As I was standing here on the platform bam, bam, bam, bam, watching all these people give one, two sentence testimonies of all God's doing in their life. Get around people that are praying. Get in a small group, share your faith, tell people what you do know. And when they ask you questions that you don't know, here's your answer. Ready? I don't know. I need to study that one a little more. Thanks for asking. That's a good question.

That's how I started growing, that's how you'll start growing. Godliness, God want you to grow in your obedience and in your righteous living. Why? Because when you grow in godliness, you'll hear these five words all throughout the Old Testament, it talks about God's presence. And here's how it was defined in the Old Testament. You hear these words, "The Lord was with him." It means they were living in such a way that God was able to move with him. God was able to walk with him. It was his divine favor and blessing.

The older I get, the more I realize if I had the choice of education, or money, or training, or whatever it was, or having God's favor on my life, I'll take God's favor on my life, because I know if I'm walking the way God wants me to walk, he'll open the doors he wants to open, he'll keep close the doors he needs to keep closed. He'll lead me in the way of his righteousness for his name's sake. That's what he does, because he's a good shepherd. That's who our God is. And so as we continue to journey with him and walk with him, you want the Lord's presence in your life, because when you have it, it's not you walking by yourself in this world, it's the Lord walking with you.

I love the scripture in Deuteronomy 31 and verse eight. This is where Moses is commissioning Joshua, before God commissions Joshua in chapter one after Moses dies and Moses told him to be strong and courageous and not be afraid in all those different things, but when we get down to Deuteronomy 31:8, it says he says, "The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you. He will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." The Lord goes with you. When you're walking in righteousness and holiness and truth, when you're living godly, it's the Lord who goes with you.

He goes before you, he walks with you, he won't fail you, he won't forsake you. You don't need to live in fear because you have God's favor on your life everywhere you go. And if there's one gift that you would want to take, it's, I'm walking with Jesus and he is really happy with me, and everywhere I go, he's going with me and he's for me. And if God is for me, then what? Who can be against me? That's a good way to

live your life. You say, "Well, I'm not there yet." Then here's what the Bible would say, then just confess your sins and our God who is faithful and just will forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

You don't earn God's favor, God's favor is a gift, it's his blessing for those who have been washed by his blood, who desire to live for him. That's why when Joshua is being commissioned by God, about three chapters later, four chapters later, he says in Joshua 1:8 after he tells him to be strong and courageous a couple times, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then, you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success."

What does God tell him? He says, "You want to be successful? Keep my word really close to your heart. Keep all my statutes, obey me, live righteously, and I promise you, I'll make you successful." Success comes from God's favor in our life doing what he's called us to do in the way in which he's called us to do it. That's what being a good servant is, that means, "Lord, I want to serve you in your way and be obedient to you and the way in which you want me to go."

And friends, that can take time too, because if you haven't worked out in about 20 years and you decide today to physically go to the gym and start working out, you're going to realize your body's not what it used to be. There's this thing called atrophy, when muscles get a little bit older and it takes a little more work. I remember being out of shape in my 20s like 24, and it took like six days to be in good shape again. You just don't eat a couple of pizzas and you go run a little bit and next thing you

know, I'm down, lost 10 pounds, I feel great.

I can tell you, at my age, it doesn't work quite that anymore. Things atrophy, you got to stay at it a little bit better. Same is true in your Christian walk with Christ, sometimes when you're young in your faith, God gives you little gifts here and there. And he rewards you with little things to let you know he's with you, but I find that as I continue to walk with the Lord, it takes a greater discipline and it takes a greater courage and there's nuances to how he leads our life, where really have to get after it in such a way that we do it. And it's what you give your time to. It's daily giving time to the Lord.

I don't want to burden you down and say, "Go home, study your Bible an hour a day and pray an hour a day and do all that." Because if you're not doing that now, you won't be able to do that this week. But what I am saying is why not read one verse a day. What I am saying is, why not spend two minutes a day praying and see if the Lord will grow with that. What I am saying is, why don't you just ask if the Lord would give you an opportunity to share with somebody else your love for Jesus Christ and the difference he's made for you. Just little baby step, because what you'll find is as you take little baby steps, God will grow your heart for him.

And as you grow your heart for him, it won't be out of time, it will be that you get to do that and get to spend time with him. And if you don't get to spend the time with him, you normally get, it will bother you, you'll feel off, you'll feel like, "I need to get back in my office or my closet, or wherever I go. I just got to spend time with the Lord

to get refreshed." God wants you to grow in him. He wants you to respond in worship. He wants you to respond to the preaching. He wants you to respond in prayer. He wants you to respond by serving. Where's the Lord called you to serve?

And here's the deal, if you'll serve where God's called you to serve, you will grow in your faith. You can't grow by sitting, but you can grow by serving. I don't know where to serve. Find some place, start serving. If it's not your best fit, find another place. Just start taking steps, God will lead you where he wants you to go. And then finally do this one, exhaust yourself in ministry, exhaust yourself in ministry. It says in verse nine, "It's a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance." What's a trustworthy statement? What he just said, that working out for spiritual development and growth, it's worthy, it's worth it. Go for it.

He says, "For it's this we labor and strive because we have fixed our hope on the living God who is the savior of all men, especially of believers." It means don't hold back. It means exhaust yourself in ministry. It means of all the other things that you have, there's no greater reward than serving the Lord Jesus Christ and all those he brings to you. Because for many of us, we compartmentalize our relationship with the Lord and we think of it as church or a place that we go, and if we have extra time, I'll make it on a Sunday.

And if we have extra time, maybe I'll come to a first Tuesday once. And if we have extra time, then maybe I could serve on occasion, or if we have extra time, no. Here's what he would say, Jesus would tell you if you were here today, "I came to the earth, I humbled myself as I've always been God, but I put on flesh for you, and I

humbled myself for you, and I fulfilled the law for you, and I died on a cross for you, and I appeased my father's wrath for you, and I paid for all your sins for you, and I rose from the dead for you, and I'm coming back for you."

"What are you holding back on? I'm asking you to go into all the world and make disciples." And we say, "Yeah, I'll think about it." No, no. no. Give your best to him, let everything else be secondary. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. Let Jesus Christ be first place in your life. Why? Because your hope is fixed on him. It's a certainty he's coming back. It's a certainty that those of us who believe he's taking home with him. It's a certainty for those of us who believe will live with him forever.

It's a certainty that his coming kingdom is better than anything that we could ever describe or imagine. Jesus is our hope. And he's the savior of the world, especially those who believe. What does that mean? It's not universalism, he's not saving everybody, but he's died for everybody. We've already read in this book in 2 Timothy two versus three, four, and five, "It's good and acceptable in the sight of God our savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge and the truth, for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Jesus Christ, the God, man, Jesus.

He wants all people to be saved. He died for the world. God's provide a saving plan for the whole world, but he's the savior, especially for those of us who believe, because he's saved us. And the gospel is this, that Jesus Christ is Lord. I'll tell you

what the Apostle Paul preach, this has been in my heart for about, I don't know, seven or eight years, because when I first came to Denver, I was having a hard time. It seemed like everywhere I went, people were into Christ in draws except when I moved to Denver, really only a couple people were coming to Christ. I'm like, "God, what am I doing wrong? The gospel hasn't changed. What am I doing wrong?"

And then I realized, everybody thinks they're saved in Denver or else in Denver, nobody really cares that they're not saved. And so when you preach a message that says, God wants to be your savior, they're like, "Cool. I guess I'm saved." That's not what Paul preached. He say, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as bond servant for Jesus' sake." Jesus Christ is Lord, we put it on the side of the building here in Englewood. That's all you need to know. Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. He's the Lord.

I think it's a false gospel to tell people, "As long as you believe Jesus Christ died on the cross, you're going to heaven." There's a lot of people that believe Jesus Christ died on the cross that aren't going to heaven. The devil believes Jesus Christ died on the cross, all of his demon hoards believe Jesus Christ died on the cross. There were several people there watching Jesus die on the cross. Believing that Jesus died on the cross, that's a historical fact, that's great, but do you believe he's the Lord who took on your sin, who died for you that you want to submit to? He's the Lord.

That's why when we talked about the rich young ruler last weekend, what do he believe? I believe you're good, you're God. I've tried to keep all your commandments. He just said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, but one thing you lack, you don't think I'm Lord. So go

sell everything you have and then come back and follow me and you'll have treasure in heaven." And the man went away sad. If Jesus doesn't have to be Lord of your life for you to be saved, then he owes a rich young ruler a massive apology. I think he owes Judas Iscariot an apology as well.

Friends, is he your Lord? Have you submitted your life to the Lordship of Christ? It's a free gift, you don't have to do anything, you just receive it. You admit that you're a sinner, you desire to turn from your sins and let Jesus Christ rule your life. If you say, "I don't want Jesus Christ to rule my life, I don't want that, I just want to go to heaven," that's not salvation, there's no offer of salvation that way. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father. To be a good servant, your heart needs to be set on Jesus as Lord. Is he your Lord? Because if not, why not make him your Lord right now? Why not make him your Lord right now?

That wherever you are, you'll bow your head and you'll close your eyes, you say, "Jesus, I want you to be the Lord of my life. I want you to come into my life. I've been playing games with you. I've been attending church, I've been doing different things, but you're not my Lord, I want you right now to become the Lord of my life." So if you just bow your heads right now, I just want to pray for us. As our worship team comes forward, I just want to pray that God would do a work in our hearts. Lord, we praise you that you've called us to be your servants. We praise you that you're doing a work in and through our lives. And Lord, we ask right now that you would do a work in us.

If you're here today and you would say, "I don't think Jesus is the Lord of my life.

Matter of fact, I know he is not, but I want him to be," then this is how you can pray. Lord Jesus, I believe that you are the Lord of the universe, that you died on the cross for my sins, that you were raised from the dead. Lord right now I desire to turn from my sin and I confess you as my Lord and savior. Come into my life. Lord, we pray for all those who are praying that they would trust you in great measure, knowing that Lord, even as your Lord of our lives, there's still things that you're correcting and growing, but we desire you to be our Lord and our all in all. And so Lord, we praise you for that.

And Lord, help us be good stewards, help us be good servants of you. Lord, help us to understand how to continue in faithful service for you all the days of our lives. And for that, we give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise, in the mighty and matchless name of Jesus. Amen and amen. Can we give God some praise this morning for his word.