

Blaze a Trail

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We're talking about beautifying the bride as we look at Paul's writings to his understudy Timothy. You might split hairs and say technically Timothy was not the pastor of the church here at Ephesus, but, ah, at least he's acting in the role of pastor until pastors are permanently established and when Paul comes to visit, he immediately becomes the associate pastor because Paul would be functioning, though he's an apostle, as the senior pastor when he shows up and we get such great wisdom for how God has ordained the local church to be his bride in the world. Not just you, you do represent the Lord and you do beautify the Lord in the earth by your persona life for the Lord, by your marriage life, by your home, but nothing compares with the church corporate. The local churches are God's primary means – now listen now – to achieve his purposes and bring himself glory both for time and for eternity. So when we honor the Lord both in doctrine and in practice as a local church, then we show forth his wisdom, his power, his creativity, his beauty to the world, and so we're learning more about how to do that from 1 Timothy as Paul's writing this as Paul is journeying other places, helping other church plants, he writes to Timothy and says, "Now Timothy, here's what you do as you're overseeing the local church."

So we begin today, 1 Timothy 4, beginning in verse 11 and going through verse 16. He says,

11 Prescribe and teach these things. 12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. 13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. 15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

What's a young pastor to do? That's exactly what Paul is saying to Timothy here. He's not telling him everything a young pastor does, but he's giving something of an overview in

outline form of, "These are things, Timothy, I want you to continue to be about as a pastor."

Now if you're not a young pastor, folks listen to us, various places, ah, this isn't just for young pastors, this is for all pastors. One of the worst things I know is old pastors who haven't learned anything. They're still functioning like they're just starting out and waiting for the next new thing to come around. Or if you're not a pastor at all, there's great wisdom here for you. You need to understand what God would say to a pastor and first, and also there are applications for your own life as we look at this together.

So, I. under what's a young pastor to do, first Paul says: continually call the church to spiritual values. There's a continuity in this. That's what he means in verse 11 when he says, "Prescribe these things." It means "to keep on commanding these things; keep on, Timothy, teaching these things."

Well, what things is he talking about? Actually this verse, verse 11, applies to the preceding verses. So what's Paul been talking about? Well, among other things he's talked about make sure you're teaching the church the difference between sound doctrine and false doctrine, the difference between true teaching and false teaching. As you will remember, Paul has already been exhorting Timothy about find and uproot the false teaching that's crept into the church there at Ephesus, as a pastor, prescribe this, that is, keep on doing this. There'll never be a time when a faithful preaching pastor can say, "Okay, we're done. I don't have to ever worry about false teaching creeping in my congregation." No, you've gotta keep on doing it.

Now in addition to that in verse 8 above, he talked about bodily discipline is of little profit but godliness is profitable for all things. So he's saying continually call to the church to these spiritual values of godly disciplines. Now other disciplines that the disciplines you have to have in the world in your workaday life or whatever it may be, those are not evil but make sure you put first things first. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. He said, "Timothy, you're gonna have to just keep doing that. Keep teaching them that spiritual disciplines are of highest value." Bodily disciplines, exercise programs, those are good. I try to do those myself, but they're of lesser value than godly disciplines, studying your Bible, having your quiet time, being faithful in your small group, listening to the word preached with attentiveness and a humble repentant spirit. Those are all spiritual disciplines, and many others. They're of the highest value. Bodily discipline has some profit for now, spiritual disciplines have more profit now and last forever. This is what he's saying, "Timothy, here's what's wrong with folks, while they're still down here on this earth they do belong to God but they're still packaged in this unredeemed humanity." There's a new man in you at the new birth but the old man is still there, and every week as you live your life in your home, in your neighborhood, in the office at work, young people at school, the problem is you leak. You leak. It kind of like somebody punches a hole in a balloon and the air starts coming out.

You remember the silly illustration, ah, maybe not be that silly, but, ah, they had a revival meeting and they called people to come down to the front and seek the Lord, and a man came down in the front and he did it every time they had a meeting, "Lord, fill me. Lord, fill me. Lord." He's crying out at the, the steps there, "Lord, fill me." And finally after this went on for years and he just kept doing it, ah, so one little lady jumped up in the church and said, "Lord, don't do it. He leaks."

Well, you do too and I do too, so the pastor, part of what happens on Sunday is there's a spiritual voltage jolt to your system and to mine, and we need that reminder, we need that revitalization, we need that thing that says, "Wow, that was a little uncomfortable but thank you, Lord, I needed that. I need to get myself back to valuing spiritual things over just secular things." Can I get an amen right there? Isn't that true of you and isn't that true of me? My goodness, why would you ever attend a church where there wasn't some rattling of your cage occasionally on Sunday morning? Where there wasn't some stirring of conviction where you could say, "Lord, I've been thinking wrong there. That may not be an evil thing but I've had it way up here on a scale of 1-10 as a 9 and that's only a 3. Help me to get what you call a 9 back up at 9, and my little setty, pearl, worldly, earthly concerns, they can just kind of fade away."

"Well, Timothy, continually call the church to spiritual values." He elaborates a little further on this point in verse 11 and says, "teach these things." Again, it's a present tense verse. It means "keep on teaching this." Because, look, a spiritual man does not mind the continual reminder, matter of fact, he's looking for it. The spiritual man wants to be challenged by the word of God. He wants somebody to help him with this old lazy, rebellious, flesh nature he still has. He wants somebody to urge him on and coax him on and if he gets backslidden and wants to get away from it, he can't stay out there long, he's gotta get back and says, "Pastor, preach again. I need the spiritual medicine. I know it's for my good and I'm never happier than when you help me get realigned back to spiritual values."

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things. You know the context of Matthew 6:33 I'm quoting? It's earthly things. Sure you're to work hard. Sure you're to work for your employer like working unto the Lord. Sure you're to try to get help. Of course, do that. I hope all of our young men become millionaires but not at the cost of forgetting what comes first. Only in balance with what comes first.

Well, what's a pastor to do? "Timothy, it's gonna always be the case: continually call your people to spiritual values." We all leak. Need to get refueled, refilled on Sunday morning. It helps some of you come back on Sunday night. Some of you leak out by about 3 in the afternoon. I know who you are and I love you but some of you need more preaching than you're getting. Amen? You need more preaching than you're getting. Your flesh needs more preaching than you're getting. That's what happens when I'm away for two weeks. I need more preaching than I'm getting sometimes.

II. "Timothy, secondly, you gonna have to learn how to deal with contempt. You're gonna be a pastor, you're gonna preach the word of God, Timothy, you're gonna have to learn

how to deal with contempt." He said, says it this way to Timothy, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness." So Timothy we know from the other texts in the New Testament pertaining to him, Timothy was likely a naturally meek person. He had some natural tendencies that would maybe, ah, be a detriment to his strong leadership that he needed to have as a pastor. We brought these out at the beginning but if you remember Timothy's personality really kind of fit an associate pastor role maybe than a senior pastor role. We know from other texts of Scripture he was probably quite sickly from time to time. We know the Apostle Paul was too. So he had some physical things that knocked him back some. You might say Timothy on average had a weaker constitution. By the way, God glories in calling weak men to do great things, so the next time you see a man and think, "I don't know that he's got what it takes to be a pastor," be careful. Moses said, "Lord, I've got a speech impediment. How can I lead these people?" And God said, "Good, I like guys who are weak that way the power and the glory is Mine and not you."

And on top of these other things, Timothy was young. I mean, you do understand Paul did not have the luxury of having a surplus of decades long proven pastors to help him oversee all these churches. He had to take what he could get and Timothy's one of the few he had that was faithful. So he had to use a young man and put him in charge of this church at Ephesus.

But Timothy did have this, Timothy did have that he was disciplined by the esteemed Apostle Paul. Paul was older and wiser and so the church should have recognized that he might be young but we don't need to look at him with contempt because he was trained right. Philemon 1:9, "yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you--since I am such a person as Paul, the aged." We might say this ain't my first rodeo. Paul said, "I've, I've been down some tracks. I, I've dealt with difficult people. I've dealt with difficult issues. I've endured suffering and trials in ministry." Timothy'd been trained by somebody who knew what he was talking about.

And secondly, not only had he been trained by Paul, he's still accountable to Paul. He's still under the oversight. That's what 1 Timothy is, Paul checking on him and guiding him and giving him oversight. That's exactly what we do in Anchored in Truth missions. We have church plants all over. We continue to mentor, to guide, to oversee, not in a dictatorial fashion, I'm not an apostle, but in a loving, caring, helpful fashion and that's what Timothy had with Paul and the church should have recognized that. Hey, he might be young but, man, he's accountable to an older and godly man. He's worth following.

And then thirdly, he says here in verse 12, "Timothy, let your personal conduct speak up for you." He says, "But rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity show yourselves an example of those who believe." In other words, by watching your life over time, yes, you'll blunder, you're young, you're imperfect, but they'll at least say, "You know what? He's genuine. He's real. He's trying to do the right things and we want to follow him." So he says, "Timothy, just hang in there."

Now let's go back to the first phrase of verse 12, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness. Though, Timothy, you were trained by Paul, can't get any better than that,

though you're still under the mentoring and oversight of Paul, really can't get any better than that, and though you have a good pattern of behavior for, before the people, yet Satan will still have the Korahs and the Sanballats who will rise up to challenge God's pastor." Always been that way. You remember Korah in the Old Testament? Korah rose up against Moses and Korah said, "Who made you leader? Why are you calling all the shots? Why do you have the authority? The rest of us are holy too, the rest of us can hear from God too." Now, I'm, I'm doing a Jeff Noblit amplification now. And it's as if Moses said, "You boys better be careful. I didn't sign up for this job. I was just keeping sheep and God told me to do this. So your problem's not me, it's God." And a few series of events happened and God split the earth open and swallowed up Korah and all those who supported them and purged the church, took them right down into the fires of hell. Sanballat and Tobiah rising up against Nehemiah rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. They didn't want Jerusalem to rebuild the wall and so on one occasion they sent a messenger to San, to Nehemiah and said, "Look, we just need to talk about some things. Pastor, ah, we just need, I'm concerned about some things." You know what Nehemiah said? He knew what they were up to. He said, "I'm doing a great work and I cannot come down." Here, Jeff Noblit amplified translation, "I don't have time to fool with you guys."

Can I just say to you with joy in my heart, it's been a long time since I've seen a Korah spirit or a Sanballat and Tobiah at Grace Life Church. You know why? They never make it to me. Our men and I don't just mean our elders, our men lovingly look at them and say, "We don't do that here. If there's a scriptural failure or a moral issue, tell us. We'll get it fixed, but we don't start movements to divide the church."

Here's what I'm saying: no matter all that Timothy had for him, there's gonna always be some of the Korah spirit, some of the Sanballats and Tobiahs around to try to undermine things, and, and in my admonition based on these truths, here's what I tell a young pastor: be kind, be respectful to the older men but if they're still ornery and difficult and there's no real biblical violation, be sweet but look them in the eye and say, "It's biblical, this is what we're doing, you can either get on board or go on somewhere else."

That's how you don't let them look down on your youthfulness and all of a sudden I think, "Well, he's young but he's got some backbone." That's basically what Paul's saying. He's saying what Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16 when he said, "I want you men to act like men. Quit acting like a bunch of junior high drama schoolgirls. Find out what the word of God says, build your ministry on the word God and have some backbone and stand on it." Paul says, "Timothy, don't let them look down on your youthfulness. There's some old mossbacks out there and what they're about is power and control. They're not about the good of the church and the glory of God. You're gonna have to stand up to them from time to time."

III. What's a pastor to do? He must hold the priority of preaching the word. You say, "Pastor, we bring this up all the time." The Bible brings it up all the time. The Bible keeps bringing it up. Verses 13 through 15, and in verses 13 through 15 here's what Paul says, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching." That's a descriptive of public preaching. "Do not neglect the spiritual gift

within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all."

Now four parts to this preaching of the word that I want to talk about, alright? Well, no, no, three main parts, four parts to the first point. First the first main point, first he emphasizes to Timothy the pattern for preaching. Here's the pattern for preaching. He says, "First of all, give attention to reading the Scriptures." By the way, the word "public reading," the word "public" is not in the original Greek. It's, it's, it's added by the translators for understanding. While I don't think that's wrong, I think there's a reason why God didn't put "public" before "reading," it's because it includes public reading of the Scripture but it also includes Timothy's personal study in the word of God. Both of those can be involved if you leave the word "public" out.

So it was the common practice of the Jewish synagogue of the day for a man to stand up and read the Scripture and then give an exhortation, so that practice came over into the New Testament church. By the way, a lot of things God brought out of the old economy into the new but, of course, under the doctrines of grace, but the first thing is, "Timothy, keep giving attention." It's a present tense emphasis again. It's a continual discipline in your life.

"Keep studying and then on Sunday stand up and read the Bible." Now it was really important to read the Scriptures because the people didn't have a copy. The only time they heard the Bible was when you stood up to read it from the scroll that you would have in your church or in your, ah, ah, synagogue.

Read the word of God and then the third part, exhortation he says here. Read it. Given them exhortation. The word "exhortation" here is the idea of appealing to the emotions. Charge them to change their thinking and change their behavior based on the word of God. That's what a pastor's to do, exhortation. Charge them, change your thinking, change your behavior based on the word of God.

And then lastly he says here to teaching. Teaching has more the idea of a systematic explanation of the word of God. As 2 Timothy 2:15 tells us, to rightly divide or in the New American Standard, accurately handling the word of God. Make sure your doctrine and your teaching is contextually, grammatically, culturally, historically, and systematically accurate. Don't bring your eisegesis, your personal interpretation into it. Let the text speak for itself.

Now that's the pattern of preaching. "Timothy, this is a priority. Follow this pattern. Study it, read it before the people, exhort them and teach them the sound doctrines." Now by the way, it's really impossible to fully separate exhortation and teaching. When you teach sound doctrine you exhort people to change their lives to match it. When you exhort people to change their lives, it must be according to sound teaching or biblical doctrine. So those always go hand in hand.

Alright, B, not only does he give them the pattern of preaching, he talks about the gift of preaching. He says in verse 14, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you." Now a couple of thoughts here. First of all, all people receive a spiritual gift mix at conversion. God deposited into every one of you at your conversion a unique mixture of gifts. You may have 32% exhortation, 45% service, 25% leadership, and whatever it may be. I sometimes think of it as a spiritual gift cocktail. He mixes it up and he puts it in you and he's saying to Timothy, "Timothy, you were give the spiritual gift mix that will make you a good pastor," which should remind us that we still hold to the fact that God gifts and God calls men to the ministry of preaching. It's not just because they have a human capacity for it.

He said, "Don't neglect the spiritual gift within you." Now subjectively there was likely a special anointing given to Timothy. When I think of the word "anointing of the Spirit," I think what's best to think about is a special touch for a special task. God just sometimes gives a man a special enabling for a particular responsibility and he says, "Timothy, I think you were given this special anointing, if you will." Maybe like Paul received in Acts 13:2, the Bible says in the Antioch church, 'they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" The Spirit just made it evident, "I've got a unique role for Paul and Barnabas."

Now he goes on here and he says, um, in verse 14, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance." Now I think A. T. Robertson, the esteemed Greek scholar among Baptists anyway, was right when he said, "It's best understand the phrase to mean as accompanied by prophetic utterance, not bestowed by prophetic utterance." Two, there's a big difference there. I, I, I haven't ever witnessed anybody receiving a unique anointing because somebody prophesied it, but I think the idea is they prophesied it because the Spirit made it clear, "God is gifting you and calling you to this role." So it's to be accompanied, not bestowed by prophetic ordinance.

So these men of God have affirmed Timothy that God has gifted him, God has set him aside, and then they themselves, the Bible says, laid their hands on him and prayed for him. So Paul's trying to tell Timothy, "I know it's hard. I know you're discouraged. I know it doesn't look like it's working for now, but keep on keeping on making a priority of the preaching of the word of God because God's given you the gift, people have recognized it, your church laid their hands on you and prayed for God to bless you in this. Don't throw that away. Stay with the task." 1 Timothy 1:18, Paul told Timothy, "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you," other people have prophesied that you'd be faithful in this task, "that by them you fight the good fight."

So we saw the pattern for preaching, study, read, exhort, teach. He talked about the gift, in Timothy's case the unique gifting he had for his role. Now thirdly, let's talk about the preeminence of preaching. The preeminence of preaching. We see this in verse 15. Let's remind ourselves that good preaching has inestimable value. False preaching does

inestimable damage. Of all the spiritual disciplines in the church, as important as small group ministry is and you can't work harder than we work at that, or whatever else we may do, nothing rivals the spiritual discipline of preaching the word – now listen – and the people receiving the preaching of the word. That does more, everything else that's important depends on that ministry. If you're gonna be a witness for Christ in the school, in the neighborhood, in your business, in the office, that must come out of all that God's doing in you under the preaching of the word. Everything depends on that.

There's a preeminence and that's why Paul says in verse 15, "Take pains with these things." Take pains with this practice, Timothy. It means to keep on putting this into practice. And then he continues in verse 15 and he says, "be absorbed in them." The word "absorbed" again is another word added by the translator, it's just not there. It literally means "be in them" and has the idea of just immerse yourself in this, this thing of preaching. Ah, today we might say, "Timothy, be up to your ears in it. Stay with it. Don't quit."

Then he continues in verse 15 and says, "If you'll do that no matter what they're saying," they may have some contempt toward you, you're too young, you're just emotional, you don't have enough wisdom yet, may be some truth to all that. Here's what you've gotta understand, you've got a young pastor, he may be all of those things but God may have called him to preach to you. Are you listening? And if God can use Balaam's donkey, he can use a young preacher. Be careful, you may be accurate in saying he lacks some things but you may miss the will of God in not listening to him and honoring his office of pastoring and preaching.

"Take pains with this, Timothy. Immerse yourself in it." Then he says in verse 15, "and your progress will be evident to all." I think what Paul is saying here is, "Timothy, over time slowly you'll win the support of the elect. They will see you progressing and they will follow you." Literally this, this word "progress, your progress will be made evident to all," the word "progress" means literally "to blaze a trail." Blaze a trail, I don't know but I got it in my mind the picture of a group of tourists and they're out in the Amazon jungle and they're literally away from everything and their guide got lost and so they're all lost, and every direction they look, there's just thick undergrowth. You can't see 10 feet. But their guide's a young and vigorous man and he just begins taking out a machete and just chopping and slashing and chopping and throwing vegetation out of the way, and chopping and slashing. I mean, it takes him a long time but he starts to get a little trail started, but all the people in the tour group when he first started slashing and chopping said, "It ain't gonna do no good. What's he gonna accomplish doing that? I mean, it's gonna take all day to get anywhere. We're gonna all die here. This is not gonna work." But you know what? He just keeps chopping and slashing and chopping and slashing and cutting, and before long they look up and say, "Do you know what? He's got a pretty good trail there now. At least it's going somewhere." And so slowly one by one they think, "Let's get behind him and let's go with him."

That's what a young pastor's got to do. There will be times when a young pastor is under such a microscope and an attitude of [unintelligible] and questioning it'll drain his

emotions and God will leave him – listen to me – with just enough strength to get in the pulpit and preach the word and that's what he's gotta do. I've had young pastors say, "Pastor, what do I do?" And they'll tell me all the stuff that's going on, all the stuff that gets them all the difficulties and I'll say, "What did God call you to do?" I said, "Look, 1,001 things are good but they can go but the pulpit must stay strong and the elect of God will follow that." The preeminence of preaching.

Now back to that first phrase of verse 14, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you," and there's a broader implication, don't neglect this calling to preach. Don't neglect this, this discipline of preaching the word to the people. God's gifted you for it, God's specially anointed you for it, your church has laid hands on you for it, it doesn't matter if you're young and some people hold you in contempt, in time it will work. Do it.

And I never come to a section like this in Scripture when I don't think Grace Life Church of the Shoals for following me as a young pastor when many times you probably had some contempt for me and you were probably right. There were blunders. There were failures. There were things to be repented of. There were things to learn. But I might add some of you were pretty immature too. But we just took out our machetes and kept cutting and cutting and cutting and finally we've got a trail long enough that not just we are following it but folks around the world are kinda wanting to get in on the trail.

Keep on keeping on. You don't know what God's gonna do. What happens is a pastor gets in year 3, year 7, year 9, and says, "I don't think it's working." Well, you just getting started. And all of our church plants, I tell our young pastors or any pastor I'm talking to or mentoring, "Have a 20 year vision. Don't, you can quit after 20 years but don't quit before that. You don't know what God's gonna do."

Lastly, IV, what's a pastor to do, a young preacher to do? He's to be balanced and take care of his body. Be balanced but take care of his body. He says here in verse 16, "Pay close attention to yourself." Now the scholars would say this may, this includes live right, live morally, live purity, purely. I, I understand that but he's already exhaustively said that, ah, what, up in verse 12. He's already dealt with that at some length with specification. So I don't think that's exactly what he's saying here. I think he's saying here, "Timothy, as you give this great care to your spiritual ministry and you take pains and are absorbed in preaching the word and not letting them look down on your youthfulness, Timothy, you're also gonna have to be in balance and take care of yourself or you're not gonna be any good for them."

That's the, it's not about Timothy, it's about God being faithfully and effectively served in the pastoral ministry and that means you've got to look to yourself. We know that Timothy had some issues physically and even emotionally, some weaknesses. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul tells Timothy, "Drink some wine for your stomach," and I believe the phrase says, "and your many ailments." Charles Haddon Spurgeon spent the last 15 or so years of his ministry pretty much on the French Riviera in a posh condo because he was some elite guy that wanted to be pampered? No, he was sick. Today they would probably diagnosed him as being bipolar and with chronic depression, and much of that was the

weight of the ministry. I don't, to be honest, I don't think Spurgeon learned to take care of himself. We would have been much better off if Spurgeon had lived 20 more years and he had taken better care of himself in the journey because there hasn't been but one Spurgeon. You read some of his sermons and get back with me on that. He's still a great edifier to all of us guys who try to be faithful in biblical ministry today.

So a young pastor has got to learn that lesson. I remember sitting in a graduate school class and the class was on stress. S-t-r-e-s-s, stress. I'm telling you the truth, I took the whole class, I made an A in the class, when I started the class I didn't know what stress was, when I ended the class I didn't know what stress was. I was just young, full of zeal and energy and I thought, "This ain't for me." Then I got a little older and I had church members that got a little meaner and God said, "I'm gonna let you learn what stress is, son." And I had to begin to humble myself. 60, 70, maybe even 80 hour work weeks, "Well, I'm gonna keep going on," without damaging your physical or emotional constitution.

You just would not believe how hard I fight in our churches we help to teach the men, "Look, I, I understand you men go out and grind it every week on the work job, and I know you guys have stress, and I know it's difficult for you but there's an enormous difference, if you come in the church on Sunday and you're empty and you're burnt out and you're discouraged, the souls of the church and the people in the church don't depend on your preaching. You don't want the man in the church discouraged, burnt out and weak. You want him full of fire and vigor and passion and energy." And I, you know, I, you know, I'll say about anything but I say, "Look, I don't care if he flies to Disney World every week. If that helps him get ready to preach, fly him. Whatever it takes because when decade after decade after decade come around, I want your pulpit to be aflame with the word of God in the power of the Spirit. And you'd better take care of the physical vessel." I'll embarrass her, but then they weren't telling Brother Jackie that. Dear man completely wiped himself out in the ministry, giving himself wholly. I'll be honest, I'm a little ticked off about that. I could use Jackie Shelton today. I need men like that in my life.

"Timothy, be balanced. You know you've got these elements, take some time to look after yourself." Now I'm gonna pick up on this next week. I'll just mention it and we're done. "Pay close attention to yourself and your teaching." I believe the reason why he's got "and your teaching" is, "I've already told you how much energy your teaching's gonna take. I've already told you to pour yourself out in that ministry. But in balance, take care of yourself too or your teaching's gonna suffer."

Then he says, "persevere in these things," now look at this, church, last phrase of verse 16, "for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourselves and those who hear you." Now I want you to listen to me, I want you to sit up on the edge of your seat, I want you to listen to me: you making it to heaven in the ordinance and providence of God significantly depends on the faithfulness of your preaching pastor. God's ordained this. No wonder the Apostle Paul said, "Who is sufficient for such things?" Your eternal soul making it home is significantly dependent upon the faithfulness of your preaching pastor

so the most righteously selfish thing you can do is take care of your pastor. Did you hear that? And can I say to you: I think you guys get an A there. The stress and the difficulties I face are just almost always self-induced. I'm my own worst enemy. You don't dump stuff on me. Now some of you tried 25 years ago but you don't dump stuff on me. You try to leave me free to be the preaching pastor God called me to be, but by doing so, he's not writing to the church, he says to Timothy, "Timothy, if you stay in balance, stay effective for me, persevere strongly in your preaching and teaching but also think about yourself as you need to, then you will assure salvation for yourself and those in your church." Now I'm gonna break that down and describe what I think all that means, Lord willing, next time we're together.

What's a young pastor to do? Well, here are some things he better do according to the word of God.