

Ordained by the Captain

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The Scripture this morning you will find in Joshua chapter one, the first nine verses.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.¹

So far we read God's holy and inspired and infallible Word.

Dear congregation, children, I once read a story of a little boy. Every evening he had to walk on his way home past this dark, scary house. And several of his adult friends tried to encourage this young boy. One of them handed him a good luck charm this would help him along his journey and his way. Another who tried to give him courage wanted a light installed on the corner where this house was located. Another one of his adult

¹ Joshua 1:1-9.

friends wanting to be a little more positive thinking simply said to him, “Well, don’t you realize God is everywhere and that he... you need to trust him? Be brave. Think positively. Be strong.”

And then there was another adult, came along side and knelt beside the young boy and he said, “I know what it is like to be afraid. Take my hand and we will walk on.”

So the fears of the little boy abated and he was no longer afraid.

I am sure that many of us in our lives and perhaps even coming here today have certain fears, certain questions about, perhaps, the days to come, what they hold for us and the uncertainty of them. And the question is: We come together to God’s house and we hear his Word, but sometimes it is very difficult when we leave the hearing of the Word of God and all of its promises and all that it sets before us and then to hit Monday morning and our daily tasks.

How does it apply? How can I be strong and courageous? As one put it, “How can I change this gold of which is likened to our faith, it is the gift of God, how can I change that into small coins that I can work with practically every day for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday?”

Questions arise such as: How can I raise the children God has given to us in this wicked and perverse generation in which we live? How can I give that our children would fear and worship the Lord our God? And how can I deal with those at my work who do not fear the Lord’s name? And how can I lift up the name of the Lord among them? And how can I deal with them in a biblically, godly way?

And what about our relationships? Maybe there is questions or concerns there, marriage or family or even in the church, trials, pressing needs. How can we go on? What does it mean that the Lord is in absolute sovereign control of all that happens? How are his promises trustworthy?

When I face my day and all the circumstances seem against me, how does it hold true?

“I am with you even unto the end of the age.”

When God seems so far away, also even in my spiritual life and it seems dried up and I have no strength against the enemies without and within.

Dear brother Kuivenhoven, there can be thoughts, perhaps, that fill your heart today, too. What will the years to come hold? How will you go before this so great a people? How will it be working side by side with other brothers in the ministry who have labored longer than you? How will the people of the congregation react to your ministry?

And as we turn to your ordination text this morning I trust that whatever shall come upon your path and befall you in this life, I pray and trust the text chosen for you will guide, lead and govern you every day.

Joshua one verse nine. I want to consider the context also, but I want to read this verse alone.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”²

Our theme is: Ordained by the captain with four thoughts. First, his promises; second, his precepts; third, his presence and fourth, his people. Ordained by the captain: his promises, his precepts, his presence, his people.

Dear brother Kuivenhoven, Jennifer and family who are with you today and friend and those also who listen by internet and other means, congregation, brothers in the ministry, what a privilege it is today to be among you and witness this ordination of another man into the ministry today, a privilege so different than what we find happening here at the time in Israel. They had a leader who had gone before them for many years and now he was gone. Their leader and guide Moses had died. And now they were only given Joshua.

But today in God’s marvelous providence, congregation, the Lord himself has given to you a third pastor and teacher to go before you. A far, we could say, perhaps greater privilege than what even here is experienced by Israel. It is evident, congregation, the Lord is not finished with his work he has among you. He has given you these three men in particular to go before you in the Word and in prayer. He gives you these men to equip you to go forth from day to day into this world. He goes before you to equip you for the tasks that are set before the church of God to serve in this world his kingdom and to lead you further and further into the mystery of faith, to teach you and to instruct you in your spiritual walk. And he will use these men, also, to gather in from among you those who are yet unbelievers, to use also these men to gather in those whom you do not yet even know from your community and in this world.

This must have been a wonderful time for the children of Israel to know that God was still present with them and going before them. They had experienced great difficulties in the past several years wandering in the wilderness. And yet they had come again to this promise of God. He was the same. He hadn’t changed. He would lead them into what he had promised, the land of plenty, flowing with milk and honey. The promise he had given: “Wherever you set the sole of your feet, it is yours. I have given it to you.”

And now Joshua, standing before this people Israel, ready to go forth into the Promised Land, was to do so in the strength of the Lord their God. And this was the promise that had been given to them. And it wasn’t that Joshua would rely on his own strength and muster up his own courage. No, Joshua was one appointed by God himself to this

² Joshua 1:9.

position. God had selected Joshua out for this task. God, the captain, the captain of the Lord's host. That is who selected Joshua. That is who, Maarten, selected you.

How do we know? Well, in Joshua's case we know this, children, also from what we find in the following chapters. It is Joshua who meets this man as he has crossed the river and he is now standing before this great city. He doesn't know how he is going to overcome this city. But he goes forth likely, I think, into the field and he is meditating upon the Word and praying and tossing about in his mind how he is accomplishing this feat of overcoming Jericho. And there meets a man with him with a drawn sword.

Joshua isn't afraid. He goes to meet this man. And who is this man we read of in Joshua five? It is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ appearing in the Old Testament to Joshua himself.

He asks this man if he is for them or against them. And we read the man replies, "[I am] captain of the host of the Lord."³

And Joshua fell and worshipped.

If it was an angel the angel would have said, "Get up. Don't worship me. Worship God."

But this was God. This was the Son of God. And what we are set about to do this morning, dear congregation, among you is no small thing. This is holy ground. Joshua is told by this captain of the Lord's host, "Take off the shoes of your feet. You stand on holy ground."

In a certain sense this morning the same could be said for us to witness, for our dear brother to be ordained into the ministry, setting our feet on holy ground.

It is not simply, congregation, some work of men this morning. It is not simply the work of human means and flesh. It is the work of the captain of the Lord's host. He brings forth this fruit which is the reward of the work the captain has earned, his labor, his battle, his victory, his witness again this morning.

The one who is the Lord's captain of the Lord's host, we could say, is looking on this morning with delight and joy. He sees here this morning the fruit of his own labor, his own work. And so who is speaking in our text this morning? It is none other than the captain of the Lord's host.

And even though I am speaking in a sense the words this morning to you, too, my dear brother. Consider it to be the captain of the Lord's host who speaks to us.

Because I say in regard to relation to Moses, Deuteronomy 31, the Lord came to Moses and he spake to him and said to him, "The Lord thy God shall pass over before Israel and he will destroy those nations before thee and thou shalt possess them."

³ Joshua 5:14.

“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”⁴

Moses was given that message of God. Moses communicated that very message to Joshua and the people. And this is the message that comes to us this morning also. It is as if God himself is speaking through his Word also to us this morning. And he is saying to Joshua, “You will never meet a man whom you will not be able to destroy. Every place whereon you put your feet, it is yours. I will not fail you. I will not forsake you. The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Imagine being in Joshua’s shoes a moment. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps, they say, millions of people. Few swords and weapons, all things seem to be against him and yet he receives this Word of God, the promise from the captain of the Lord’s host. How encouraging it must have been for Joshua. Joshua is commanded, “Don’t be afraid.” Commanded, “Be strong, be courageous.”

Why? Because my promise, God is saying, shall not fail, cannot fail.

And so Joshua, having this sense of God’s calling upon him, Israel, having this sense of God’s calling upon them, went forth to go cross the Jordan and to defeat the enemies of the land.

Now let’s put this in perspective in the New Testament today. We have exceeding precious promises. We have these promises given to us of the captain of the Lord’s host, the captain of salvation. We, too, are successors just as Joshua and the people behind him were successors to Moses. We are successors to the apostles and the prophets and through the generations this Word which we read is committed to us.

Consider the word of our captain to his disciples in the formation of the New Testament Church.

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the [age].”⁵

Just as Moses received this Word and communicates it to Joshua and to the people throughout the successive generations, Christ, speaking to his disciples communicates to their followers and the disciples they, by God’s grace, were gathered in and as continues through the generations until this very day. And this word, then, of promise comes to us through these apostle and we would even say through Paul as he writes to the Church. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

And so the Word this morning doesn’t only come to you, brother Kuivenhoven, it comes to us as the Church of the living God. This word of promise is yours.

⁴ Deuteronomy 31:6.

⁵ Matthew 28:20.

“I will never leave [you] nor forsake [you].”⁶

“Lo, I am with you always.”⁷

“I have bought you with a price.”

“You are more than conquerors through him.”

“You are complete in him.”

“You are seated in heavenly places in Christ.”

“All things are yours. You are Christ’s.”

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.”

“The victory is ours. The battle has been won.”

And yet even though this promise belongs to you, brother, and belongs to us, congregation, and we are certain of the final victory, yet like Israel it must be lived out. Israel must cross Jordan, must face Jericho and the Canaanites and the Hittites and all the enemies that still lived in the land. They must engage in hand to hand combat. And so it is today in the believer’s life. As they have been led out of the captain of the Lord’s host by his Spirit, from bondage to sin and death and brought into newness of life, they face Jordans and Jerichos and the Lord’s presence going before them. It seems like a wonderful thing. They are going to go from strength to strength. And yet as they enter the land and into the daily task of day by day engaging in battle and warfare, it is difficult. It is strife. It is warfare.

But the promise of God doesn’t change. And, dear brother, as you enter today into the battlefield of the kingdom of God, you enter in it assured of victory. You need not be afraid. Be strong. Be of a good courage. Be not afraid. Be not dismayed. Times may seem dark and clouded over. Lift up your eyes and look upon this promise and even more look on the promisor who gives it, the yea and amen of all God’s promise, the captain and hear his voice.

Dear child of God, you, too, coming to Christ have entered into the battle field. You, too, are assured of victory. You, too, need not be afraid. Be strong. Be of good courage. Don’t be dismayed. The victory that overcometh the world is even our faith.

It was by faith the children of Israel were led out of Egypt. It was by faith and faith alone in Christ they gained the victory. They crossed the Jordan. The walls of Jericho fell to the ground.

⁶ Hebrews 13:5.

⁷ Matthew 28:20.

So you encounter trouble. You encounter conflict. You encounter battle. Don't look with your eyes upon the circumstances, but look to the promise and the promisor, the one who has gone before and said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."⁸

Pink, he says, "Don't you see that you are not being conscious of strength even though you desire to be is entirely your own fault. Your weaknesses and fear is due to your failure to mix faith with God's promise."

This is the Word of God to us this morning. God spake, we read, verse two, to Joshua and all this people.

And so in the New Testament the promises of the Word come to brother Kuivenhoven and to all this people. You are to be engaged in the work of the Lord wherever he has placed you.

But this promise and this courage and strength which was laid upon Joshua will come through no other means than by the precepts, the Word of God which is our second thought.

Joshua is commanded by the captain of the Lord's hosts to be strong and courageous in order that he may, we read, observe to do according to all the law, departing neither to the right or the left. And then he adds to that as well, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night,"⁹ in order that you might observe to do according to all that is written in it.

And here is the reality, congregation. Even though we be a Christian, even though we be a member of the consistory, even though we be a minister of the gospel, we will not, ought not expect good success except it is tied to the Word of God.

If we turn away from this Word, if our delight is not in this Word, the precepts of God, we will not meet with blessing but failure, defeat.

Dear brother, you will not be a blessing, an instrument of blessing in the kingdom of God. Human wisdom? Human might? Human strategies? Human agendas? By the Word.

When you have drunk deeply of the Word, the words come forth from the very heart and core of your being, from God himself. It will be thus saith the Lord and people will hear.

Then you need never be ashamed. Then you need never fear. But you must take up this Word and in meditation and study take up the sword. You will not use it in vain. Every enemy that comes upon your path. Its promise will not be able to stand.

⁸ Hebrews 13:5.

⁹ Joshua 1:8.

Then you can defend the truth of the Word of God.

It is with meditation upon this Word, congregation that the men who are called to you will be effective in their ministry. But you also as a congregation are called to pray, brethren, sisters, for us that the Word of God may have free course, may be abundantly blessed among you and beyond you.

Joshua is not told by God to study in a manual how to wield the sword or how to fight. He is not told to go pick up the manual of history and learn how all the other nations of Canaan would have fought. But he is directed and turned to the Word.

And so what is true for your brothers who are among you in the ministry is also true for you. As fathers and mothers in our home, it is our calling to diligently study the Word, to meditate in the Word. And we fall short. We do. And let this Word then stir us up to renewed meditation and study of the Scriptures. And even when you stumble again next week turn again to the Word. God will grant you good success.

Why do we turn to the Word? That is where the captain speaks. That is where the captain gives his marching orders. That is where the Spirit speaks to us and how critical, then, it is that we be men and women of the Word.

You know, before this time, children, God was speaking personally to people. He met face to face with Moses. Yes, he did meet face to face with Joshua, too, but there is a change that is taking place here. The first books of the Bible, now, having been written, God is beginning to establish the principle, "Go back to my Word."

Joshua meditates in the Word.

Not what Moses had already been told, "Write this in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua."

The book was prepared for Joshua. Joshua was to be the means and instrument in the Lord's hands to fulfill this Word and what was written.

Oh, our eyes go, then, to the greater Joshua. It was written that he, too, would come and pick up this Word. He would read and meditate in the Word and he would fulfill the Word as the greater Joshua.

And this book wasn't only for Joshua. It was for all the people. It was to be read and rehearsed in the ears of the congregation. All the people were to be taught, meditate in the book.

And once in seven years, even, the children of Israel were to meet together to hear the reading of the whole book in its entirety. It meant, as well, that Joshua must be subject to this book. His life is to be governed by the book.

When our leaders did not follow the book the people will not follow the book. When our leaders, by God's grace, walk in principle and practice the Word, the precepts of God, you must follow also.

Matthew Henry pointed out, he said, "We may invent excuses for neglecting this art of meditation when we are so busy and we may think Joshua would not have had time to meditate. Hundreds of thousands of people, all the battle and warfare that lies before him. How would he have time to meditate in the Word?"

And he says, "Yet he must find the time and thought for meditation."

And notice what the captain says to Joshua. "Be careful to do all the law. It is not for you to pick and choose which you will obey. And turn neither to the left hand nor to the right. Don't be relativistic in your view of the law. My law is simple. It is plain. It makes one wise."

Joshua would have more understanding than all of his teachers. He would be wiser than his enemies. He would understand more than the ancients. Why? And only when, we read in Psalm 119, because he loved the law. He meditated in it all the day. He keeps its precepts.

Brother, drink the Word. Meditate in the Word. The words of our captain will break forth from your mouth and your life.

And, dear Church of God, do you desire success? Don't rest in the promises, only in saying, "Well, we have now three men to go before us."

Wonderful. We go on our daily tasks. You are called to meditate in the Word. You are called to receive your marching orders from the Word. You are called to obey the Word.

The meditation we read for Joshua was to lead to one thing, that you would do all that is contained in the book of the law.

Then we come to greater understanding. When we meditate in the Word we come to greater consciousness of what God is saying to us and we are impressed in our hearts and our wills are moved. It is in meditation on this Word that you will see more and more Christ and be made like him.

Now in all of this we hear the words of the captain, "Have not I commanded thee?"¹⁰

It is he who says, "Meditate. Be found in the Word. That give rise to the third thought, his presence.

¹⁰ Joshua 1:9.

Dear brother Kuivenhoven, and brothers Beeke and VanderZwaag, brothers and sisters in Christ, we come to the point why we may have hope, why we may be encouraged, why we will be strong. It is this great and wonderful promise that God says, "I will be with you. God's promises, indeed, are wonderful and great, but his presence is life. When we sense, indeed, his presence and by his Spirit who may be within us if we are his, it is his presence that goes before us.

Was Joshua in hearing these words, "Be strong and of a good courage," to simply muster up within himself this strength and this courage? Not at all. It was this that signals the capstone of this promise. "I am with you. Emmanuel."

Martin Luther had said:

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

Let me say. He has won the battle. Therefore, be strong. Be of a good courage. Don't be dismayed. The Lord thy God is with thee wherever thou goest. That is part of the gospel promise.

Hebrews 13:5, "I will never[, never, never, never, never, never] leave you nor forsake you."¹¹

And that passage is taken from various places, one of which, no doubt, is here in Joshua one. And if these promises found in the Old Testament are highlighted and set forth as jewels for the New Testament Church, how much more we need this truth also today.

The Hebrews facing severe persecution and suffering and trial for their faith, much seemingly they did not have in this world. And so in that passage the writer to the Hebrews says, "Do not covet the things of this world. But know that the Lord thy God shall never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Perhaps as you go out into this real world from day to day and the conflicts you meet with are great. Recall to mind and plead upon this word of his promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."¹²

¹¹ Hebrews 13:5.

¹² Ibid.

Fix your eye upon the great captain of the Lord's host to give you strength, to give you courage.

The disciples, after our Lord's resurrection and ascension they sensed the Lord's presence was with them and by his Spirit he empowered them so when they stand on the day of Pentecost they proclaimed the Word of God with boldness, with authority, with power.

And so when the world around us seems to be collapsing in its economic times that we live, when it seems the sky is falling and the bottom is coming out of our lives, do not fear. Be strong. Be of a good courage. God is with you.

Again, it does not mean we will not face battle, disappointments, that there is no Canaanites in the land or Achans in our hearts, but the captain of the Lord's host goes before us. He has gone the way. He knows what it is to be tempted in all ways like as we are, yet without sin. He knows how to strengthen and succor those who are without strength. He knows if he sends us into battle against Satan, the world and our own flesh that we have no strength in ourselves. But he says, "I am with you. And he does not send us into this battle as mercenaries, those simply who he has hired to accomplish some task of battle in his kingdom. When things go haywire he leaves.

No, he sends us forth as sons and daughters. He will not leave us nor forsake us anymore than a father would leave his son in battle.

You are a son. You are the apple of his eye. You are a member of his body. He doesn't send you into the battle alone. I go with you. Be strong. Be of a good courage. Don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed.

And what we have been speaking about, congregation, applies to you.

Briefly in our last thought, his people. Joshua immediately responds to this Word of the captain of the Lord's host and he calls the people of Israel together. The people of Israel are symbolic, too, of the people of the New Testament, the people of God, the congregation of the Lord. And so we are gathered together as his people, we could say in this morning. And he sets before you his Word. And your response to his Word ought to be that of Israel, at least at this point in their history. Their response was not always this way. Their response had been different in the wilderness when they heard the report of the spies, unbelief. But here we see a different response. Joshua calls the people together, sets before them again and reminds them of the promise of God.

Verse 16.

"And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go."¹³

¹³ Joshua 1:16.

And to affirm their sincerity, that they meant what they said, read verse 18.

“Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death.”¹⁴

And then, reminding us again and the whole body of the children of God, “Only be strong and of a good courage.”¹⁵

I pray and trust this, dear congregation, as God has given to you another man to go before you, that you desire blessing, that you desire success, not as this world defines it, but as the captain defines it. Salvation, gathering in of the Church, growth in grace and knowledge of Christ, conforming our lives to Christ, sanctification, living holy in this world, following behind those whom he has given to us to go before us. And let your eyes, then, be focused on Christ as people, as leaders of the people focused upon his promise. Trust in the Lord and go forth into the battle. And deal with those who rebel against the commandment of our captain.

Notice what Joshua says to the people. He doesn’t tell them, “Take up your weapons. We are going to war tomorrow.”

What does he tell them?

“Take a little food for you.”

Verse 11. “We are going for a three day journey into the Promised Land.” That is all he tells them. The victory was there.

And what will it be for the Church of God looking back from glory? Our lives will be but a battle of a few days. And we will leave this world to inherit the kingdom prepared for us and the final victory will be obtained in Christ. Hear the words, “Welcome, well done, good, faithful servant. Enter in to the joy of the Lord.”

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”¹⁶

Amen.

Now, I ask for your attention to the reading of the form for ordination of ministers of the Word of God, page 140 in the back of the Psalter.

Beloved brethren, it is known unto you, that we have, at three different times, published the name of our brother, Maarten Kuivenhoven, here present, to learn whether any person had aught to offer concerning his doctrine or life, why he might not be ordained to the

¹⁴ Joshua 1:18.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Joshua 1:9.

ministry of the Word. And whereas no one has appeared before us, who has alleged anything lawful against his person, we shall therefore at present, in the name of the Lord, proceed to his ordination; for which purpose, you, Maarten Kuivenhoven, and all those who are here present, shall first attend to a short declaration taken from the Word of God, touching the institution and the office of pastors and ministers of God's Word; where, in the first place, you are to observe, that God our heavenly Father, willing to call and gather a Church from amongst the corrupt race of men unto life eternal, does by a particular mark of his favor use the ministry of men therein.

Therefore, Paul saith, that the Lord Jesus Christ has given some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and ministers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Here we see that the holy apostle among other things says that the pastoral office is an institution of Christ.

What this holy office enjoins, may easily be gathered from the very name itself; for as it is the duty of a common shepherd, to feed, guide, protect and rule the flock committed to his charge; so it is with regard to these spiritual shepherds, who are set over the Church, which God calleth unto salvation, and counts as sheep of his pasture. The pasture, with which these sheep are fed, is nothing else but the preaching of the gospel, accompanied with prayer, and the administration of the holy sacraments; the same Word of God is likewise the staff with which the flock is guided and ruled, consequently it is evident, that the office of pastors and ministers of God's word is,

First. That they faithfully explain to their flock, the Word of the Lord, revealed by the writings of the prophets and the apostles; and apply the same as well in general as in particular, to the edification of the hearers; instructing, admonishing, comforting and reproofing, according to every one's need; preaching repentance towards God, and reconciliation with him through faith in Christ; and refuting with the Holy Scriptures, all schisms and heresies which are repugnant to the pure doctrine. All this is clearly signified to us in Holy Writ, for the Apostle Paul says, "that these labour in the Word"; and elsewhere he teaches, that this must be done "according to the measure or rule of faith;" he writes also, that a pastor "must hold fast and right divide the faithful and sincere word which is according to the doctrine:" likewise, he that prophesieth [that is, preacheth God's Word], speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort. In another place he proposes himself as a pattern to pastors, declaring that he has publicly, and from house to house, taught and testified repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But particularly we have a clear description of the office, and ministers of Gods Word, where the apostle thus speaks, "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and has given to us (namely, to the apostles and pastors) the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Concerning the refutation of false doctrine, the same apostle saith: "That a minister must hold fast the faithful Word

of God, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers."

Secondly. It is the office of the Ministers, publicly to call upon the name of the Lord in behalf of the whole congregation; for that which the apostles say, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, is common to these pastors with the apostles; to which St. Paul alluding, thus speaks to Timothy: "I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority."

Thirdly. Their office is to administer the sacraments, which the Lord has instituted as seals of his grace: as is evident from the command given by Christ to the apostles, and in them to all pastors: "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Likewise: "for I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed," and so on.

Finally, it is the duty of the Ministers of the Word, to keep the Church of God in good discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord has ordained; for Christ having spoken of the Christian discipline, says to his apostles, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And Paul will have the ministers to know how to rule their own house, since they otherwise neither can provide for, nor rule the Church of God. This is the reason why the pastors are in Scripture called stewards of God, and bishops, that is, overseers and watchmen, for they have the oversight of the house of God, wherein they are conversant, to the end that everything may be transacted with good order and decency; and also to open and shut, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, committed to them, according to the charge given them by God.

From these things may be learned what a glorious work the ministerial office is, since so great things are effected by it; yea, how highly necessary it is for man's salvation, which is also the reason why the Lord will have such an office always to remain. For Christ said when he sent forth his apostles to officiate in his holy function, Lo, I am always with you, even unto the end of the world; where we see his pleasure is, that this holy office (for the persons to whom he here speaketh, could not live to the end of the world) should always be maintained on earth. And therefore Paul exhorts Timothy, to commit that which he had heard of him, to faithful men, who are able to teach others, and he also, having ordained Titus minister, further commanded him to ordain elders in every city (Titus 1:5).

Forasmuch, therefore as we, for the maintaining of this office in the Church of God, are now to ordain a new minister of the Word, and having sufficiently spoken of the office of such persons, therefore you, Maarten Kuivenhoven, shall answer to the following questions, which shall be proposed to you, to the end that it may appear to all here present, that you are inclined to accept of this office as above described.

Brother, I ask you to rise.

I ask thee, whether thou feelest in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church, and therefore of God himself, to this holy ministry?

Secondly. Whether thou dost believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God and the perfect doctrine unto salvation, and dost reject all doctrine repugnant thereto?

Thirdly. Whether thou dost promise faithfully to discharge thy office, according to the same doctrine as above described, and to adorn it with a godly life: also, to submit thyself, in case thou shouldest become delinquent either in life or doctrine, to ecclesiastical admonition, according to the public ordinance of the churches?

What is your answer, brother Kuivenhoven?

Now I will ask for those who will also participate in the laying on of hands to come forward at this time.

God our heavenly Father, who has called thee to his holy ministry, enlighten thee with his Holy Spirit, strengthen thee with his hand, and so govern thee in thy ministry, that thou mayest decently and fruitfully walk therein, to the glory of his name, and the propagation of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dr. Joel Beeke:

“Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee,”¹⁷ 1 Timothy 4:16.

Rev. Foppe VanderZwaag:

“I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁸

Voice:

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”¹⁹ Psalm 27 verse 14.

Voice:

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 4:16.

¹⁸ 1 Timothy 6:13-14.

¹⁹ Psalm 27:14.

Maarten, my selection is taken from Isaiah 41 verse 10. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."²⁰

Voice:

"Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me,"²¹ 2 Kings two verse 9b.

Voice:

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,"²² 1 Corinthians 15:58b.

Voice:

"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them,"²³ Numbers 6:23-27.

Rev. Mark Kelderman:

Take heed, therefore, dear brother and fellow servant in Christ unto thyself and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made thee overseer, to feed the Church of God which he has purchased with his own blood: love Christ and feed his sheep, taking the oversight of them not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lord over God's heritage, but an example to the flock. Be an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, meditate upon those things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed to thy doctrine, and continue steadfast therein. Bear patiently all sufferings, and oppressions, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

And you likewise, beloved Christians, receive this your minister in the Lord with all gladness, and hold, such in reputation. Remember that God himself through him speaketh unto and beseecheth you. Receive the Word which he, according to the Scripture, shall preach unto you, not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God. Let the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things, be

²⁰ Isaiah 41:10.

²¹ 2 Kings 2:9.

²² 1 Corinthians 15:58.

²³ Numbers 6:24-27.

beautiful and pleasant unto you. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. If you do these things, it shall come to pass, that the peace of God shall enter into your houses, and that you who receive this man in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward, and through his preaching, believing in Christ, shall through Christ, inherit life eternal.

And since no man is of himself fit for any of these things, let us call upon God with thanksgiving.

Merciful Father, we thank thee that it pleaseth thee by the ministry of men, to gather a Church to thyself unto life eternal, from amongst the lost children of men; we bless thee for so graciously providing the Church in this place with another faithful minister; we beseech thee to qualify him daily more and more by the Holy Spirit, for the ministry to which thou hast ordained and called him; enlighten his understanding to comprehend thy holy Word, and give him utterance, that he may boldly open his mouth, to make known and dispense the mysteries of the gospel. Endue him with wisdom and valor, to rule the people aright over which he is set, and to preserve them in Christian peace, to the end that thy Church under his administration and by his good example, may increase in number and in virtue. Grant him courage to bear the difficult ties and troubles which he may meet with in his ministry, that being strengthened by the comfort of thy Spirit, he may remain steadfast to the end, and be received with all faithful servants into the joy of his master. Give thy grace also to this people and Church, that they may becomingly deport themselves towards this their minister; that they may acknowledge him to be sent of thee; that they may receive his doctrine with all reverence, and submit themselves to his exhortations. To the end that they may, by his word, believing in Christ, be made partakers of eternal life. Hear us, O Father, through thy beloved Son, who has taught us to pray saying:

Our Father which is in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

My dear brother, Maarten, it is both humbling and a joyous occasion that I may have been able with God's strength to ordain you into sacred ministry.

As I think back to the times that we have spent together and when our paths have crossed in God's providence, how you came under the Word of the gospel also in Burgessville and how you also family visitation when we discussed the matter of the call. I trust that as events have unfolded until this very hour, that you see God's hand leading, guiding and going before you. You have been not only trained now in his Word, but you have been installed and ordained into this office among this people.

And we trust that God also will use you mightily not for your name, your name will die, but is. Then you will have good success. Then you will, indeed, in time to come when

you face the last hour be able to look forward as Paul to the crown of righteousness laid aside, a righteousness earned solely and alone in the blood of Jesus Christ.

But I also pray that you may be used of God for other young men also among this church. And so to that end I give you a personal charge, a text chosen for you from 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.²⁴

Be strong in his grace. Grace, he has earned, grace he is willing to give, a grace that will carry you through to the end.

And so you may be used also to that end, for the Lord, whatever he calls you to do from this day forward, you don't stand alone in these tasks. The captain of the Lord's host goes before you. He is to be your strength. You are an ambassador of our Lord Jesus Christ. Use that opportunity and calling for the extension of his glory and his kingdom and consider that your calling is also a calling of a life of holiness.

You have heard that several times, I am sure, at school in the seminary Robert Murray McCheyne who said, "A holy minister is a mighty weapon in the hand of God." Seek to be holy. Holy totally united to the vine.

Today God has granted to his Church another gift in fulfillment of his promise.

"I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."²⁵

Therefore, feed the Church of God which has been purchased with his blood.

You have a post, honor, privilege, but a post, danger.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."²⁶

But be strong. Be of a good courage. The Lord thy God is with you.

Our Lord and Savior is a faithful minister to his servants. He will keep. He will supply. He will strengthen.

It wasn't you who chose him. He chose you.

²⁴ 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

²⁵ Jeremiah 3:15.

²⁶ Ephesians 6:12.

Jennifer, your life from this point forward as you, I think, realize already, will never be the same. You sit next to a man who is marked, who is consecrated in a special way to the Lord's service. And it is a joy and a privilege, I trust, and you will find that more and more to be able to witness the things God does through his servant as well and to be a part of this standing by his side as a help meet in this ministry that God has entrusted to your husband.

And we trust that as you have labored together in these past years, as you have joyed together, as you have sorrowed together, as you have faced the future together, you may be more and more drawn together in bond of marital love, but also at family love. As you and by the side of your husband, the same grace that is promised to him, "I will be with you," is yours also and for your children, Gwennyth and Justus. They, too, perhaps listening years from now if the Lord tarry, may know the presence of the captain of the Lord's host has gone and is going before you.

And I would truly be remiss if I would not also mention the congregation and consistory of Burgessville who truly wish you this day and in your future ministry in the time to come the Lord's richest blessing. Indeed, we could say as one of our own sons—though you were only with us a few years—you now having been ordained into the ministry, our prayers go with you. We wish you Godspeed.