

## Church Members' Duties to Their Pastor, p.3

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**Bible Text:** 1 Timothy 5:17-18  
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Amen. Let's grab our Bibles and let's go back to our study in 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy 1. We're still in verses 15 or rather 17 and 18 of 1 Timothy 5. This is a series I'm calling of this exposition of 1 Timothy I'm calling "Beautifying the Bride" because that's what Paul's doing. He is in essence pastoring the church at Ephesus through Timothy. He's writing to Timothy. He's aged. Young Timothy's been left in charge and he says, "Alright, Timothy, let's get this church functioning according to God's wisdom and according to God's design so that the church does what it's on earth to do. It magnifies, it shows forth God's power, God's wisdom and God's beauty." So all these components and all of these parts are essential for the church to show God's wisdom, beauty and power.

Look, folks, it's not enough for the church to be successful, that's not the goal. There's a whole lot of what's called success in church life today that dishonors God. It's success in man's eyes. We want the church to be successful in God's wisdom, by God's power, for God's glory. We want it to make a statement that his way is better than our way, his, his design is wiser than our design. So that's why we dive in here and while 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, the pastoral epistles are not exhaustive, they are quite comprehensive of the main things we need to grab hold of.

Now we've come to this section in 1 Timothy 5:17-18 and now we are on part 3 of "Church Members' Duties to Their Pastors." Church members' duties to their pastors. You may not want to take notes today, it's gonna be a little bit more involved maybe. I, I, fine if you do but you may not want to and, um, I might give as a disclaimer that I would not have spent this much time and would not have put together this message that is application if it were not for the number of church leaders and pastors who follow our ministry and they need to hear this, and the fact that this will be part of what I'll be teaching in the Pastoral Training Institute. So if you're out there somewhere and thinking, "Do I need this refresher or do I, could I, do I need to sit under these lectures Brother Jeff's gonna be doing at the Anchored In Truth Pastoral Training Institute?" Well, if you like what I'm sharing, you're gonna get 40 hours of this kind of stuff, thoroughly biblical but radically practical holy local church-centered stuff and when you get through with the Pastoral Training Institute, you'll have a notebook of all of these areas of church life you can turn to and it'll be built on what we've experienced here at Grace Life Church. It's not just theory and it's not just doctrine and theology as vital as that is, it's doctrine and theology in shoe leather. How can we live it out?

Alright, let's look at it together. 1 Timothy 5:17-18. Paul writes to Timothy to make sure in the church at Ephesus, he says this,

17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Now while this is an exhortation about church leaders and about pastors and while it is true, ah, it would just be untrue if I didn't say it, you at Grace Life exemplify the truth of this verse. You have through the years learned and made faithful practice of honoring and double-honoring your pastors. Um, I'm not saying you've arrived. We all need to keep repenting and keep growing but nevertheless you are a good model of this, but nevertheless there's still some things you can learn as we go through this again. So I want you to listen and think on the things you need to understand better and the ways you need to grow.

Um, 2 Timothy 1:16 is a good, good verse, "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he has often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains." Here was a man and his household who made it their aim to be a blessing to God's preacher, the household of Onesiphorus. They, they, it was just their goal to be an encourager and a help to God's preacher. Um, Grace Life Church, I think you guys have the spiritual gift of encouraging pastors. You say, "Brother Jeff, I've read the Bible and I don't see the spiritual gift of encouraging pastors in there." Well, it's a figure of speech. I know that's not "a spiritual gift" but I do know hundreds, that's not exaggerated, hundreds of pastors who come to our conference or come through here and say, "Brother Jeff, your people are such an encouragement because I read the things in the Bible the local church ought to be doing and how they ought to be doing it, and I get around your folks and they embrace it. They don't resist it. They're not against it, they embrace it and they encourage me to keep on going." So thank you for being that kind of people.

So we're gonna look at this again. Now we come to a major area of application from these truths. Let's remind ourselves of what the text has told us so far. He says, "Okay, Timothy, as you begin to install elders in the church there, the local church there, first of all when an elder holds that office, that position, he's to be honored." Now that's not said exactly in the text but it's thoroughly implied. The office of pastor/teacher ought to be honored. Then he says if a guy in the office of pastor/teacher has presided well, he uses the phrase "ruled well," then he's worthy of double honor. And then he goes on to say and especially so if he's worked hard at preaching and teaching. So you could imply triple honor, okay? I'm not literally saying that's what it says because that's not what it says but that's the implication of the text. Honor. If he's had a track record, you've watched him for a while and he's done well, double honor. If he's done well for a while and has been working hard at particularly preaching and teaching, then especially take good care of him. Now the word "honor" there in the context can only mean, ah, material or financial

compensation. Now it doesn't mean you don't honor him with your heart and with in other ways, but it has to include that. The context gives us no other option.

So thinking about now why would Paul say honor, double honor and even more so if he's worked hard at preaching and teaching? Why such an emphasis on taking care of the pastor? Ah, that, that again and I said this in an earlier message, for myself after I was converted at age 19 and just came into ministry all at once, that kind of thinking was rather shocking to me. I wasn't ready for that. I was, I was more of Roman Catholic, ah, vow of poverty theology which is unbiblical, but I would've been closer to that than I would've been to anything else and, ah, I found out I was more conservative than God and so we have to just repent wherever we are and get in line with what the Lord is saying. But why would Paul make such a strong statement, especially involving the financial compensation to men in the office of elder? Well, two main points and several subpoints under them and, again, all this is basically application of the text.

I. Because of the unique challenges you face when you work hard at preaching and teaching. The unique challenges you face when you work hard at preaching and teaching. It is quite a journey to go into a, the typical, now you're not typical, matter of fact, let me say this: there are few churches, very few where a young pastor could be called in to take over and he'll not have to fight many many battles to get to the place where he can work hard at preaching and teaching. In the overwhelming majority of congregations, he faces so many difficulties in getting the people to the place where they will allow him the freedom to do what the Bible tells him to do, to pour his energies into preaching. It's just tough and I face it everywhere I go, I teach it over and over again, I exhort and rebuke and reprove church leadership, "Free your pastors up to do this task." Unique challenges.

Number 1 or A, most everyone is working against his pursuit. Most everyone, typically speaking not absolutely but typically speaking when a pastor begins his work and he wants to dive in and say, "The great majority of my energies is going to be in study and prayer and preaching and teaching," the majority of the folks around him whether they're up to something sinister or not, yet nevertheless they work against his pursuit. I wrote down a couple of things here. 75% of professing Christians will discourage him in this pursuit and 100% of non-believers will. For example, if, if you go out in the community and find the average lost person who has no real biblical training and you ask them, "What, what really should a minister be doing?" They'll tell you everything but studying and preaching and teaching. Helping the sick. Helping the indigent. Social justice. All kinds of community needs. They're not bad, those aren't bad things, they're just secondary to what God says he must put first. And then when you don't do enough of those public things and pour yourselves into what God tells you to do, then they'll tell you, "Well, you're part of the problem. You, you, you're not doing what you ought to be doing," as if we're supposed to go out to the unregenerate world and get their approval on our ministries. Listen to me: God calls a man to preach and his approval is all that ultimately matters. But nevertheless, I think generally speaking a man will find 75% of professing Christians in one way or another will be against or will be a factor against him giving himself to study, preaching and teaching and 100% of the world will be.

Couple of quick verses. In Acts 4:18 when the religious leaders, the God-fearers, the ones who claim to be God's people of the day, they had summoned them and they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Now these were the religious leaders of the day. That's not important. That's not what you should be doing. That's what we stand against is you preaching and teaching the things of Jesus.

And then in 2 Timothy 4:14 and 15 we have a man named Alexander the coppersmith. Alexander the coppersmith has a very successful and financially profitable business of making idols and selling them to the people. Well, Paul comes through preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and telling them to throw their idols away, that God is no statue, and find God through faith in his Son Jesus Christ and he was hurting the business. There'd been more than a few businessmen through the years who hated the preacher because his preaching undermined the sin in their business that was helping them make a lot of money.

So whether it's the religious "God-fearers" of the day or whether it's the secularists who just don't like his message, he faces a unique challenge when most everyone is working against his pursuit to be a faithful preacher and teacher of the word of God. Well, that's probably one unique challenge that would lead Paul to say something like make sure you give them double honor.

2. He has to daily fight his own flesh. This is, this is one of the tough ones. It's, it's so tough for me and has been and especially our fleshly temptation to fear man. The fear of man. What will people think of me if I don't do this? Will people complain or start a, a, a movement in the church to, to be against me if I don't meet that need or if I don't do what this person wants me to do, and it just multiplies and multiplies. It's a difficult thing. I think this is one reason why the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die daily." Daily I have to remember that I answer to one person. Brothers and sisters, when you call a pastor, you do not hire someone, you affirm God's leadership to give you God's man. He's not hired. God hires him and he answers to God and he has to fight daily, daily the temptation. "What if I offend this brother and he gives large offerings to the church?" On and on it goes. Daily he has to fight that.

Proverbs 29:25 reminds us the fear of man brings a snare. It does bring a snare when you're fearing what they're gonna say and you begin to capitulate and not do what God's called you to do.

Acts 6 is such a foundational verse I think for the church because it outlays with such resounding clarity the importance of letting men have their time to study and pray and preach and teach. Acts 6:1, "Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food." Now here we have some racism in the church. Those of the Greek background were being kinda overlooked and those of the Hebrew background were being taken care of. A prejudice in the church. By the way, we're all sinners still repenting, amen? But I'm telling you, when

stuff like this is found, it must be repented of and done away with, especially in the church.

Verse 2, "So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.'" Wow. Do you know at most Baptist churches that would get you fired. If you came to most Baptist pastors and said, "Our dear, sweet, widow ladies are not getting enough food," and you say, "Well, it's not right for me to take care of that. I've gotta go study and preach. Let's get some godly men to take care of that and I'll do, I'll do my studying and preaching." That's exactly what the text is saying.

So they have a plan. I believe these are the first deacons. "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task." We'll oversee them. They'll answer to us but they're in charge of this task. Verse 4, "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And then later on the ministry kept spreading.

Saying all that to say that, um, I guarantee you there was some grumblers among the early Christians about, "Well, why didn't the pastors take more? Are we not important to the pastors? Is my momma not important to the pastors? Is my grandmother not important?" Just on, you can just see how the dominoes would have fallen. Do, can you imagine how these early apostles had to die to the natural human tendency to please men at this point and stand on what was right? It's not easy to do.

I remember the days long long time ago, 30 years ago, when there was a prominent woman Sunday school teacher in this church and this will shock some of you, but she told her Sunday school class that I was Jim Jones and I've never worn sunglasses in the pulpit or anything like that. Said, "He's just a Jim Jones. He's just got his way he's gonna do things and that's the way he's gonna do them." Here's my point. Look, you show me in the book where I'm wrong and I'll agree with you. I want to be biblical. I want to be pleasing to God. Well, she left our church 30 something years ago and she's in heaven today, I trust by God's grace, but anyway, that's the kind of stuff you... It's not easy to hear that stuff so it's hard to keep remaining faithful.

Let me say this. Things like what I would call personal care or personal ministry, mercy rather ministries, those are important things and those are good things but once a church is over 30 in size, a pastor cannot any longer do what God has told him to do in studying and preaching and teaching and also do all the personal mercy care ministries church members would like for him to do. So he has to start saying no, hopefully kindly and sweetly but he has to start saying no and here's the catch on this thing, it's very rewarding to minister to someone and care for them and them be blessed by it. It really is a blessing to do that. I'm telling you it's a blessing to me and especially when you give, been with folks as long as I have. It's really hard not to want to do that but I believe in many ways it's a satanic trap because you take 800 members or so like what we've got and then add folks outside of our church that are your friends and relatives that are very near and dear and close to you, if you were personally ministered to by a single pastor every time there

was a real critical need among all those people, that's, it's, it's virtually impossible. Not that a pastor wouldn't want to but here's what I'm saying, he's battling his own flesh and the fear of man to know that, "I've gotta draw the line sometime." And one of, this whole message I'm giving to you came from my time of meditating on the truth of this text. Very very few pastors have a congregation like you that will give their pastor time to incubate and meditate on the truth of the word of God. You might be saying, "Well, we're giving you too much if you've got three messages on two verses." Well, again, my disclaimer was this, this, this is for pastors primarily and that's why I put the extra work in here.

I was, um, just started in my pastorate here and I, we, I went to a, a little pastor's conference, there were four or five of us pastors in a car and there was a pastor in the back seat and he, and that was back when we had beepers. Y'all remember beepers? Well, that was a long, you young people don't know what I'm talking about. Boy, I remember them because I used to preach and somebody's beeper would go off and they'd, some of them would jump up like they were shot out of a rocket. Just, "Oh!" because, you know, they were, they were on call as a nurse or something. It was important. They needed to get that. They'd buzz you and you'd have to go call that number on the beeper. Well, I kept hearing this buzzing and I look in the back seat and it was the pastor behind me and he had a beeper on and I said, "What is that?" He said, "That's a beeper." He said, "Every one of my church members has this number because I want them to get me anywhere, anytime 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." Well, I believe his heart was genuine but my first thought was, "Then how you gonna preach like God's called you to preach if you train your people to call on you continuously?" I mean, a pastor has a battle to fight his flesh because – listen – personally caring for people is a very powerful thing to the fallen flesh. It makes you feel good and it's a fight, [cough], excuse me, it's a fight he has to face.

At the end of the Apostle Paul's life he said, quote, "I have fought the good fight." Whatever else, I have fought the good fight means, Paul included there, "I fought myself." Matter of fact, Paul said, "I buffet my body. I fight myself and not allow myself to do what feels good or what seems natural or what's gonna make the people happy. I have to fight it and die to it and stay on track with what I'm called to." You're so wonderful to support me in this but we didn't start out that way. We've grown to get there together through the years.

3. Another unique challenge that maybe is one of the reasons the apostle says especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor, Satan hates this work and tirelessly works to thwart him. Satan hates it. In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 the apostle wrote, "For we wanted to come to you--I, Paul, more than once--and yet Satan hindered us." I don't know exactly what that means but you can, you can, you can be sure and I know that I know that I have a, an army of prayer warriors who are praying for your pastor to stay in the word. I know you are because that's what you want more than anything, but you wouldn't believe the stuff mentally, emotionally, and physically you have to get through to get into the word of God sometimes. It's just, it's just tough. There are weeks when it's just dry. There's weeks when it's just not rewarding. And then there

are weeks when it's just glorious beyond all compare. I believe Satan's behind a lot of those discouragements. Satan certainly works through lost church members and carnal church members. Sometimes Satan works through well-meaning church members who don't understand what the pastor's primary role or job is. Satan is the most masterful strategist. He attacks in countless ways and the preaching pastor faces satanic and demonic opposition that others simply do not face.

Think about it for a moment. Who did Satan attack more than anybody in the days of Jesus? Jesus. Why? Satan hates the word. He's the living Word. He's the literal living Word of God. So where is Jesus manifested today? Through the preaching of the written word of God and that's why he attacks it. He, Satan loves, have you ever heard this phrase and this, this is one of those phrases that makes me want to go run through a wall, just, just frustrates me when I hear it, here's the phrase – are you listening? Here's when a church member says, "Well, he's not a very good preacher but he's a good pastor." Where in heaven's name did you get that nonsense? Preaching is pastoring. All of us can have the gift of service, all of us could have the gift of mercy, all of us could love one another in agape, but not all of us are called to preach. Preaching well and preaching faithfully and preaching in the power of the Spirit is the best shepherding of the flock. Not that there not other things. I still enjoy, I've done several funerals in the last few months. I still enjoy weddings. I still have counseling appointments or we, we mark off hours every week for counseling appointments in the office and I still enjoy that but you've got to be careful because that can be a satanic trap because Satan does not want Jesus to be manifested through the preaching of the word of God.

D or number 4. Another reason perhaps why the Apostle Paul said this office is worthy of double honor is he occupies a lonely place. He occupies a lonely place. The Apostle Paul is an example of having experienced this. In 2 Timothy 4:10 he says, "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia." Paul's basically saying, "I'm pretty much by myself. I pretty much find myself alone." And here's one that really tugs at your heart, 2 Timothy 4:16, "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them." What he means is, "The first time I was called before the Roman government through the agency of the Jews [unintelligible] and threatened, all those that I saw come to faith in Christ, all of those who were my associates at that point, shrank back and didn't stand with me."

Decades ago when you called me to be your senior pastor, we had a, a good man in the church and he came and he said, "Brother Jeff, you need to be our pastor. We need the preaching of the word and we believe you're God's man to do this." And I said, "You know, a lot of things will have to change in the church if become your pastor. There are some things that are just aren't sound and just not biblical." And I said, "I wanna know one thing, here's the way I see it: when I begin to change these things, are you gonna stand with me or are you gonna go run for the tall grass?" It's one thing for you to say we need you as our pastor, another thing to say we're with you if you become our pastor, and to his defense, to this day he stood and I thank God for men like that.

Even our Lord Jesus found that in his greatest hour of need in the garden of Gethsemane, he asked the disciples to pray and twice he went to check on them and they were asleep. He occupies a lonely place. For a faithful preacher pastor, even his close friends will not completely understand it. Even his family doesn't completely give it, get it. And even his wife as wonderful as a blessing a pastor's wife can be, nevertheless even the most faithful of wives does not quite grasp it. I'll never forget talking with a pastor just south of here and I used to know him quite well. I think he's in heaven now but he told me one day, he said, "Brother Jeff, from the moment I surrendered to the ministry, my wife has hated every day of it." So in his case not only did he face the other difficulties but he came home every day to a wife who hated what he did.

He occupies a lonely place. No one can fully grasp the calling and the load that he carries but you know what? God gives you some that genuinely do. A lot of you I think genuinely strive to grasp and support your pastor. You certainly do. I, I'll never forget Wayne and Nancy Kraft. Most of you remember Wayne and Nancy, they, they came here from Detroit. He grew up in Hamilton, I believe it was, and he became a cop in Detroit. I usually don't say cop but that's the word he would use. And, um, when he came to Grace Life Church, he and Nancy came to me and said, "Brother Jeff, we wanna join your church and we want to take the senior adult ministry. We want to take it off of you. We're gonna visit them. We're gonna love them. We're gonna go to the homes. We're gonna go to the hospitals. We're gonna go to the nursing homes. We'll take care of it because we want that off of you." And I said, "That is amazing. I've never heard anybody say anything like that." I said, it was some years later, I said, "Wayne, where did you get..." And he lived it, by the way. He lived it out. He and Nancy, they lived it completely. I said, "Where did you get that kind of insight and that kind of compassion?" He said, "When I was in Detroit there weren't a lot of Baptist churches up there but, um, I joined a little Baptist church and we had a visitation program and on the night we'd go out to try to witness and reach out to prospect for the church, usually it was just me and the pastor. And one night we were out visiting together, we knocked on a couple of doors and didn't find anybody so we thought we'd go to the donut shop." He said, "You know, the cops know where all the donut shops are, and have a cup of coffee and fellowship for just a minute before we went back home. And so we were having that donut and," he said, "I looked my pastor and I could see how weary he looked, how tired he looked. I could sense he was discouraged and I said, 'Pastor, what's wrong?'" And Wayne said the pastor told me, "Brother Wayne, I just can't keep up. I need to do this. I need to do that. I have the administration. I have another need. This person's threatened to commit suicide. This lady's in intensive care. I've gotta study to preach and I just don't know if I can go any further." And Wayne said, "Right there I determined me and Nancy are gonna spend the rest of our lives helping God's pastor."

So there are many and many of you have that kind of heart who try to come alongside, and it's not because the pastor's suffering and you're not. I know a lot of you struggle in a lot of ways and you have heavy burdens and loads but here's the thing to think about: your eternal soul depends on the preaching of the word. There's a vital centrality to your eternity based on the preaching of the word. I didn't set it up this way, by the way, God did.



So him staying revived and refreshed. That was Paul used, that's the word Paul used of the household of Onesiphorus. Him being refreshed benefits your eternal soul. I would say over my years of pastoral ministry, I have more pastors discourage me to be faithful in what God's called me to do than I've had pastors who encouraged me. Why do you think that today we have pastors from all over the country and literally all over the world asking to connect with us, to be encouraged, to be mentored by our ministry? It's because they see what you're living out. They see the way I'm functioning in ministry and they want to know, "How can we get there?" It's because they look around in their towns and in their counties and sometimes in their state and they say, "We can't find anybody who will encourage us in these ways, but you guys are on this track. Would you help us?" And of course, to this day we've always tried to be there and to help them.

Well, number 5, another reason why this, there's, this is a unique challenging task and maybe why Paul said or one of the reasons Paul said consider them worthy of double honor, it's a draining task. This would be obvious after D, would it not? It's a draining task. Spurgeon used to say that preaching is heart work. Preaching drains all of your emotions. I, I don't know how guys preach and don't feel it. I don't get that. I feel it to my bone marrow when I preach but when I get through preaching on Sunday, I, I feel like I just came out of a washing machine. I'm just, it's just, I'm just gone. Sometimes people wanna ask me important questions on Monday and I say, "Don't ask me anything on Monday. I can't think on Monday. Sunday night I can't think at all." It's a draining, it just has a unique draining thing. I'm glad that when I was in my young adult years I worked heavy construction non-union. When I got through tying reinforcement bar and building concrete frames, I shoveled gravel. I know what a hard day's work is and I'm glad I got to do that because it's allowed me to now transfer that over and begin to learn what, how draining mind, emotion and heart work is.

Spurgeon also said preaching is heart work so when a pastor's heart is broken he has to labor with a broken tool. Again, that's to the detriment of those under his ministry. Thank you again for being the kind of church that encourages pastors. I believe, I believe this with all my heart. You think if one pastor stays faithful, the multiplied effect on the countless number of souls, you can't even count it all. It's the greatest way you can multiply God's ministry is take care of faithful pastors and you do such a good job of it.

You know, and I used to think this again, I, I'm guilty of most of these things when I first started out in ministry. So many people view the pastor as superhuman. "Well, he's God's man. He's called of God so he has this extra special ability to, to do all this stuff." No, he doesn't. Matter of fact, just right the opposite. You know God has a pattern of calling weak men? God has a pattern of calling men with, with, with lots of physical maladies? Do you know the number of mentors that I study through the generations, the old great preachers of the past who struggled with deep depression? Spurgeon. Spurgeon, the most published author that's ever existed, more men have read Spurgeon's sermons than any other preacher who's ever preached or wrote sermons. Spurgeon used to say, "Beneath the castle of despair is a dungeon and that's where I live much of the time." God just seems to call weak vessels. You know why? That the glory and surpassing greatness may be of

God and not of men. It's draining. Spurgeon spent the last, what, 15 or so years of his life, you know where he lived the last 15 or so years of his life? He lived on the French Riviera in a posh condo because he was too sick to preach. He'd come back and preach some and get sick and go back.

Now Spurgeon might have been part of his own problem because the Bible does tell pastors to get away and rest and he probably didn't do much of that but nevertheless it is a draining thing. A pastor can find himself in vicious cycles. 1. Every member tends to have a subjective list of the things they think the pastor was hired to do. Every church member tends to have a subjective list of the 10 things they think the pastor is hired to do and you add them all up, there's a bunch of different things he's supposed to do. Not at Grace Life Shoals but in the typical situation.

I remember, um, one of our men who's been faithful for years when he was in another church, they'd put out a questionnaire, they were without a pastor and they put out a questionnaire and asked the church what do you want in a pastor. Here I go, I'm gonna run through a wall again. Who cares what you want in a pastor? God gives pastors their, their job description. Where did that come from? Well, this man said, "You know what?" He said, "I had to write in evangelistic." He said they didn't even have that listed as one of the options. If I was interviewing for a church and they said we've polled out people and here's what they want in a pastor, I'd say, "You're talking to the wrong man. I'm not interested in going anywhere that wants to give me the whims of the people. Now if you can open to the text and say here's what we want, then I'm interested."

So the church can sometimes have all these different expectations and he feels like he's never met those fully and then his wife and children often feel neglected because he can't get around and give them the attention that they need, he has so little left in the tank for them. I think that's one of the reasons why we, well, it is one of the reasons why we have for many many years now invited pastors in our network, church plant pastors, come here for a week. I'll let you stay on my farm. You can stay in a hotel. Just chill out for a week and get some rest. Get the things off of you for a little while. Jesus said this. The first time he sent his disciples out to preach, I think it was a two day preaching tour, two days, Mark 6:31 and 32, "And He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.' (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)" He said, "The people are gonna kill you if you don't get away from them. You, to be effective for them, you gonna have to pull away from them."

It, it really was a gift from God when a man called me from Idaho and said, "I want to sell you my dad's farm. I've been hunting on it for years." And I thought, "Buy a farm?" I had zero in the bank. Zero. But I went to the bank and it kept working out and kept working out and I bought a farm. Well, me and the bank own a farm. And, um, it's my secluded place. I can get away there and I know my friends in Africa and Europe are gonna say, "What's a bush hog?" They think I'm talking about an animal but I get on the bush hog and I put those stoppers in my ears and I get fired back up again to come do what I do. Now if you told me, "Now, pastor, you've gotta have these office hours and you've gotta do this and this," I don't think I'd make it because I've got to have what Jesus

gave these men coming off two days of ministry, come to a secluded place and rest a while until you can be good again later.

So he says come away by yourselves and, brothers and sisters, if you don't come away, you'll come apart. Now so that's a word for some of you. Some of you need to come away from some of your labors and difficulties. You remember my sermon "Work and Rest"? It's one of my most popular sermons because the whole time I tell you to quit working so much and rest more and y'all just love it. Well, that's true for all of us and some of you need to hear that word this morning. Some of you business guys who've started on your home, own business, you'll grasp this and some of the others will grasp it to a degree too but for the pastor of a church, the harness of responsibility never completely comes off. I don't care where he is or how far he travels, my wife preaches at me all the time, "Jeff, we don't need to go somewhere and you meet with a pastor. We don't need to take a break and you read theology books and think about church. Why, just take it off." It's just hard for me to do and that's my own sin. But even if you do your best, you're still the...

I'll never forget before I became the senior pastor here, I was, I had off on Tuesday when I was associate pastor and, I mean, I went hunting, I went fishing and I didn't care about anything. It just, I was just free. But I remember Bob Pittman telling me, "Brother Jeff, when you get behind this desk it's different." I thought, "What's he talking about? I work as hard as he does. I work maybe longer hours than he does. I get tired too." And then all of a sudden he left and now guess who's sitting behind that very desk? And I found out it's different because you never really take the harness off.

The only, well, I'll say the most purebred redneck I know is David Young but he's a good brother and a godly man too, amen? And David used to work in the logging woods with work horses and mules and I, I've been around work horses a little bit but not like David. I mean, he, he comes from way back in the sticks. I said, "David, when they, when that horse is well-trained, I mean, years and years all that horse has known get up at daylight, put the harness on and, boy, when you put that harness on, he, he knows. The command is coming and I gotta tighten up and get with it." And he's hauling and he's pulling and he's dragging logs all day long. If in the evening you bring him back because I've seen this happen, when they take that harness off in the evening, that old horse will jump, wiggle and snort and buckle a bit and then he'll settle down and then he can rest. I asked David, I said, "What do you think would happen if they never took that harness off?" He said, "It'd probably kill it because it psychologically knows if the harness is on, I've got to be tensed up and ready to go."

Pastors never really get to take the harness. You know why? Because eternity is on the line. You're called to a task where you, your children, your grandchildren's eternal destiny depends on the faithful preaching of the word of God. No wonder the Apostle Paul said, "Who's able for such tasks? Who, who can contemplate that?" I'll tell you what helps you is the sovereignty of God. If God wasn't sovereign, I'd quit tomorrow.

6. Maybe one of the reasons why Paul said the challenges are unique and the man is worthy of double honor is because so few are teaching you what I've taught you today. So

few are saying these things. So few are saying it. Pastors are scared to death to say these things.

I'll never forget, I remember Alvin Lynch was with us, he was a, an elder and Alvin will remember this, but the elders went to hear John MacArthur at one of John MacArthur's Shepherd conferences in Chattanooga, TN. There probably wasn't 80 people there many years ago, and a guy, a young pastor got up and said, "Dr. MacArthur, you've talked so much about preparing and studying and preaching," he said, "but in my church, there's no way to have time to really do that. They're asking me to do this and that. They expect this and that." And I remember Dr. MacArthur stopped him and very bluntly said, "Tell them that's not your job." I was shocked. I was shocked. I said, "You kidding me? You gonna tell those deacons and tell those little ladies when they call on you that's not your job?" That's what John MacArthur told them to do. Now think about that, though. Countless millions, tens of millions around the world have been blessed by John MacArthur's preaching and teaching and if he hadn't had that kind of conviction, he'd never been able to do that kind of work. You don't hear that. That's just not being said often so many are not doing that. Seth Channel is here and other pastors will be listening to this. Brothers, we've got to teach our people these truths. They need to hear it. It's in the word of God. Double honor means what double honor means.

So many pastors have quit today, I don't mean quit the pastorate though that's tragically happening at record rate, but they've quit trying to "work hard at preaching and teaching" as Paul teaches here, and they quit because they say they can't do it any longer. There's no way they can continue on preaching and teaching and studying and do everything else that's expected. Alright, let's move on.

I have three thoughts under the II which is incomplete notions. Here's some thinking or some notions that are true but if you don't get the balance truth, they begin, they're actually completely false. A notion that's true but it's incomplete and they're pretty prominent in the church. Let me just give you a little illustration of how the whole balance of a truth's important. In verse 18 of our text Paul says don't muzzle the ox while he's threshing. Oh, that's in the Bible so let's go out there and make sure none of our church members muzzle their ox while he's threshing. That's not what he's saying. He's saying is that's an illustration of don't let the pastor preach and be faithful in serving you without taking care of him materially. You need the whole thought to understand what he's saying. The Old Testament is true but if you miss the balance completion of the New Testament, you've missed everything. Jesus fulfills the law. He frees us from the condemnation of the law. We need the whole thought.

First incomplete notion, number 1, that my honor and my offering goes to God. I mean you. That's an incomplete notion. My honor and my offering is unto God. Of course it is. Of course it is, but it's incomplete. 2 Corinthians 8:5, Paul commends the Macedonians and he said first they gave themselves to the Lord. Of course they did. They honored him first and then they gave us themselves to us, God's called preachers by the will of God. They, he's talking about them giving offerings to help the church at Jerusalem. They said he gave, they gave themselves to the Lord and gave themselves to help the men of God

who were raising this offering for the church in Jerusalem. Our love, our respect and our honor to support God – listen to me – is not separated from loving, honoring and supporting the man of God. I'll say that again. In Scripture our love, respect and honor and support to God is never separated from loving, honoring and supporting the man of God.

I'm not gonna take the time to overview 1 Corinthians 9 again but let me go to 1 Corinthians 9:13 and 14. We're in 1 Corinthians 9:13 and 14. He said, "Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." So when you bring your offerings, I'm bringing that to God. No, you're bringing it to God to the end of supporting the men of God. That's the complete notion.

Malachi 3. It'll be on your screen. Here we have the Jews in rebellion and of all things God brings up the priesthood and he brings up them bringing their tithes and offerings to support the priesthood but notice how it's worded. "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?'" God responds, "In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse." Why? To honor God? To worship God? Of course but that's not what he says here, "so that there may be food." Food for who? The priest. Your material support of the priest. "That there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,' says the LORD of hosts." We have a devourer in our land, it's called Covid-19. I wouldn't dare ask my God to save my household from the devourer if I was robbing God. If I was robbing God, I'd get it right and then continue to ask God to help me. But notice the context: you bring your offering to the Lord's temple and it's used for the priests' support and that is a type that's carried over unto the New Testament.

Some people say, "Well, pastor, that's Old Testament." It sure is. It's more serious than the New Testament. You have more light, you have more truth. They only had a shadow of Jesus, we look back and know Jesus came. How much more serious, Hebrews 10 says, how much more serious than just violating the law of Moses to trampled under feet the blood of Christ? Is somebody else paying my salary? Brother Matt's salary? Brother Steve's salary? Brother Tom's salary? Brother David's and all of us? Is somebody else paying that because they're taking up your slack because you're a God-robber? And I wouldn't ask you to do anything that I have not done myself and lived myself. It's not about the amount of money. It's not about the balance in the bank. It's about you bringing the offering to do your duty for a service that's been performed for you by God's man and it's a spiritual discipline. Every week when you bring the tithe and offering, it reminds you, "God, I'm trusting You, not me. I'm trusting You, not my business. I'm trusting You, not my employer."

Alright, number 2 under incomplete notions. Something that's not complete. The church has many ministries and all are profitable. Of course. Of course we do, so many, but that's incomplete. Preaching is the primary thing. Preaching is the hub of the wheel. You remember our wheel illustration? Preaching the word in the power of the Spirit is the centerpiece because the hub drives everything else. Listen to me, everything else depends on faithful preaching of the word from the pulpit. If the pulpit is weak, every other ministry will be weak. And if the pulpit is sound, the other ministries eventually, it takes time sometimes, will be sound. Everything depends on that so maybe that's one reason why Paul picks out working hard at preaching and teaching as the office where we need to be especially faithful in showing double honor.

What happens in churches, we begin to emphasize gifting and service. "Oh, she is so gifted. We gotta get her involved in this, this and this ministry. Oh, he is so gifted. We've gotta get him in this and this ministry. Oh, she works so hard. We've gotta get them doing this. Oh, he's such a hard faithful worker. We've gotta him." That's good things, by the way, but that's secondary to one other thing, there's one other thing that's absolutely foundational and primary or all the gifting and all the service is worthless. Are you ready for it? I wonder if any of you could guess it? Gospel humility. God wants you humbled more than he wants you serving. He wants you doing your service with every moment of your sweat, every moment of your diligence, every moment of your exhaustion, every moment of your giving to help the church go forward. He wants in every moment you to say, "I'm unworthy even to do this." And do you know what builds Gospel humility in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ? Preaching the word in the power of the Spirit. That's the way God ordained it to work. That gives us a sweet, new, humble heart and tenor and spirit and then with that spirit of humility we can go forth exercising our gifts and doing our service in the body and we're not doing it for us, we're doing it and we're just grateful that we get to do it, that we're not in hell and that builds unity and oneness.

Some of you sitting here this morning, you've got one problem and one problem only, your stinking pride. Get over yourself and line up with the book. You say, "Brother Jeff, sometimes when you get through preaching, I just feel like woe is me." Well, good, blessed are the poor in spirit Jesus said. That's not funny. That's true. It's meant to do that along with woe is me, but thank God for Jesus. Woe is me but I've got a Savior. Don't you love the word of God? I'm trying to get through. You know some guy in the ministry out there, going into the ministry, this is the kind of stuff he needs to be taught. You don't get this but in your 40<sup>th</sup> year. You don't get this in your 8 or 12 or 16. These things are like beating iron on an anvil, they come out slowly. Preaching is the primary means to the saving of the soul.

Romans 10:6-7 says, "But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down), or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.'" Here's what he's saying, "If you want to be saved, you're not to muster up your energy and say, 'Let's all get all the strength we can and let's see if we can get to heaven and find Christ and be saved.'" He said, "No, no, no, you don't do that, neither do you say, 'Let's get all of our strength and energy, let's go into hell or down into the lower realm and see if we can find

Christ and find salvation." He said, "You don't do that. That's not the way Christ is found." How is Christ found? Romans 10:14-15, "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" You don't have to struggle to find Christ somewhere, you sit under the preaching of the word and Christ is revealed through the faithful preaching of the word of God. And preachers out there, that's when your people will die for you, when they've fallen in love with the Christ who's been unfolded to them and manifested to them through your preaching because they'll say, "That's priceless. That's priceless."

Faith requires believing. Believing requires hearing. Hearing primarily requires preaching. And preaching requires being sent or supported. So the church has many ministries but they're not all the same. Preaching the word is foundational.

Number 3 under incomplete notions. The pastor must not preach for money. Ah, see, that'll keep you alert for a few more minutes. The pastor must not. Of course. Absolutely. If there's a man who will quit preaching because the church fires him or he's not making anything, he's not called to preach. Go back and get my tapes back when you paid me \$50 a week. That was my first salary. And you know what you'll say? He thought Nicodemus was Nikodamus. He thought a leper was a leaper. But he preached. I believe I preached with the same passion at \$50 a week as I preach today and I make a little more than that now. Of course he don't preach for the money but that's incomplete. That's incomplete. 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is rebuking the Corinthian church for refusing to pay him financially and Paul says, "What soldier out there would serve in the army without being compensated for it? What soldier," he says, "works, fights at his own expense?" Then Paul says, "What vinekeeper would keep the vineyard for a man and not get some of the proceeds?" Then he says, "What livestock keeper would keep the livestock and not get some of the produce from the livestock? What plowman could you hire to plow your crops and him not have hope of getting something back out of it?" Then he says, "What threshing ox," he uses it in 1 Corinthians 9 just like he does in 1 Timothy 5, "What threshing ox should not have the muzzle moved so that while he's treading at the grain it's not, he's not being treated cruelly, he's allowed to feed on some of the grain while he's working for you?" Then he says, "In the Old Testament, priests, all the priests lived off the offerings brought to the temple." Then he ends with 1 Corinthians 9:11-12, "So we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others shared in the right over you, you've paid other preachers," Paul is saying. "If others shared the right," now notice the word he uses here, right. Paul says, "I have a right to expect you to compensate me." Wow. Wow. Paul didn't preach for the money but he did preach expecting it. Big difference in those two. One's unbiblical, one's biblical. "We did not use this right but we endured all things that we would cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ." Temporarily, Paul said, you're fussing about paying me, keep it. I don't want it. But then on another occasion he said, "I've robbed other churches because you didn't do your part. I've taken from them what you should have paid me because I ministered to you faithfully."

So a pastor must not ever preach for the money but he should preach expecting the money. Charles Haddon Spurgeon had some orphanages, there was so much pain in the streets of London during the middle part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so Spurgeon tried to feed these orphans and he would often say he preached for souls, that was a phrase he used. Well, he was out preaching outside of his church and it was his pattern to use the offerings of the honorarium from outside the church to give to the orphanages and one day he was preaching and at the end of his sermon outside of his church, he takes up an offering. Afterwards, deacon somebody in the church said, "I thought you preached for souls?" He said, "I do but this money feeds my orphans and orphans can't eat souls, and if they did eat souls, there's not enough of your soul to feed one for one day." Boy, you didn't take Spurgeon on. So there was a balance. Of course he preached for souls, you just have to hear the whole thing.

So brothers and sisters at Grace Life Church and brothers and sisters wherever you are hearing this, understand there's a two-sided coin here. 1. The pastor must never preach for money. The other side of the coin, but a godly church would never fail to compensate him generously. Both are true and always true. I preach, the pastor should preach for God's glory and honor. You give your tithes and offerings for God's glory and honor but when I preach it helps you personally and spiritually and when you give your offerings, it helps me personally and materially and that's what Paul said. I sowed spiritually in you, I reap materially from you. That's some insights and some application on church members' duties to their pastor.

I'm done with this text. In my final admonition to you, Grace Life, if you as an individual, the only thing I know to really reprove you on and I don't know who you are because I don't check your giving, I may start this week. No, I'm not. I love you. If you're not faithful in doing your part, it's not about the amount of money needed, it's about you doing, you are robbing God. He's given you a service and I mean this honestly, you may have had a better pastor than me, a better preacher, but I've given you all I've got. You might find a better senior associate pastor than Vance Pittman. Matt Fowler. Vance was mine years ago. Than Matt Fowler, but I'm telling you, Matt gives it all he's got. And we could go on down the line, Brother Steve, the rest of us. These are good men who give it all. The point is: is somebody else carrying your part of the duty? That's the point. You'll give an account at the judgment bar of God. If not, give an account to the devourer between now and then. I'm not trying to scare you. I'm not trying to be hard. I'm trying to help you fulfill the church members' duty to God's preacher.