

Pastoral Ministry to Pastors

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Bible Text: 1 Timothy 5:19-25
Preached on: Sunday, June 21, 2020

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1 Timothy 5. Let's go there together this morning as we continue the series of unpacking this pastoral epistle, the Apostle Paul writing to his understudy, Timothy, who's functioning as the pastor of this church in Ephesus, though he's technically an extension of Paul's apostleship. So he's functioning in a way where he's even overseeing the pastors he'll be installing and that season will soon pass away and then there'll only be elders or pastors overseeing the churches, but in this transition period a lot is being set in place as to how God intends for his local churches to be structured and to function. And my, would we not do good in our day to push away all the worldly culturally relevant stuff, I might even go far to say fads and gimmicks that come through the church and get back to what the Scripture says about God's church.

Okay, we come to 1 Timothy 5:19-25 this morning. Let's read that together. Paul telling Timothy as he oversees the church says,

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest will also be fearful of sinning. 21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. 22 Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. 23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. 24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after them. 25 ...and those which are likewise, otherwise rather cannot be concealed.

So again we have Timothy getting instruction from Paul. Timothy's overseeing the churches and this is how Timothy is to pastor, if you will, the pastors of the church.

Now again the apostolic office fell away after the first century. That's, there's no longer a man called of God into the office of apostle. So now we only have pastors, so pastors now are to take these truths and minister to pastors, one to another, or you could say like we have in our church, elders would take these truths as a guideline to how to minister

one to another. So I call this, um, being pastoral ministry rather to pastors. Pastoral ministry to pastors. So as we function as elders at Grace Life Church, here's the way we're to oversee one another, hold one another accountable and, in effect, pastor one another.

I., will be we're to be protective of his reputation. That is, pastors must be protective of the other pastor's reputation. Now this would go for all the church members, absolutely and certainly but Paul's gonna go into actually calling someone into account for sin so in that context he's saying, "Don't even get started on an accusation unless there are certain qualifications that are met because we need to be protected of a pastor's reputation."

Look at it there in verse 19, "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses." That phrase "do not receive" literally means "entertain not." It's the idea of don't even consider it unless you have two or three witnesses. Now this two or three witnesses is, has been the standard of God throughout all time. For example, in the Old Testament era, Deuteronomy 19:15 says, "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed." So under the Old Testament law you could not convict a man on the basis of one witness, there had to be two or three.

And then over in the New Testament. Here's something else. We've seen this a few times lately, have we not? Here's another pattern of the Old Testament that's brought over into the New Testament church. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:1, Paul instructs in Corinth, "This is the third time I am writing to you. Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses." And then in Matthew 18, our Lord himself gives that guideline of what we call church discipline where one person is to confront someone if they will not repent of some willful, open, obvious sin. We don't go around searching for people's sins. We're not running an FBI agency to find sin in the body of Christ. But if there's something obvious, uh, first of all, I'd pray about it and ask God to convict them of it but if it doesn't change, then you confront them. If they don't repent, the Bible says then you take two or three with you, again, reaffirming that standard. And then he says if they do not listen to two or three, bring it before the church. Then if they still will not repent, then they're to be excommunicated from the church. So this is the pattern that's been established.

Now in the case of elders, there's a little bit different twist on this because the standard in the case of elders is even higher. The point is normally two or three witnesses is the standard to declare a verdict of guilty or not guilty and, of course, that following that would be church reprimand and punishment. But with elders, the accusation's not even to be considered or received until there are two or three witnesses. Did you get the difference? On two or three witnesses a person can be declared as condemned and guilty, but if it's an elder you're not even to hear the complaint unless two or three credible people come to you with it.

Now this corresponds with the qualification of elder. We've been through all of that already in 1 Timothy where we had all of these character traits that must be evident and, uh, uh, lack of character issues that must not be evident in a, in a person's life if they're gonna be considered an elder in the church. For example, there are many of us who could be, uh, church members in good standing but not maybe yet qualified for the office of elder because there's a higher standard. Well, likewise when it comes to an accusation or finding fault, that you're not even to receive the, the accusation as credible until there are at least two or three witnesses, a higher standard.

Now let me talk about this for a few moments, and again I've spent a little more time here because of the pastors and others that we mentor and I want them to hear this and I want leaders of these churches in our church plants and others to hear this well. Why would God say, okay, for pastors or elders the standard is higher before you would even hear a complaint? Well, it's because the pastor/teacher, the elder in general, particularly the pastor/teacher has the responsibility before God to regularly preach the word which always includes correction, reproof, rebuking and this will almost always stir retaliation in the heart and mind of those of fleshly character. For example, here's what the pastor/teacher is supposed to do, Titus 1:9, "holding fast the faithful word," there it is, preach the faithful word, "which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine," and here's the things that gets folks upset, "and to refute those who contradict." Uh, Titus was given a tough job. He was to straighten out the very wayward church on the island of Crete and so Paul says, "When you get there and you begin to teach the truth, you're gonna have people just stand up and boldly challenge you and, Titus, you're gonna have to be able to correct them publicly, to refute them." So you know what comes after that, that stirs up a hornet's nest of opposition to the man who has to do that.

And then in 2 Timothy 4:2-5 we have the same kind of exhortation to the preacher, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Brothers and sisters, that's our world today. Though that's true in many churches, it's not true at Grace Life Church, praise God for his grace there, but it's true in many churches where they will not endure sound doctrine, "but wanting to have their ears tickled," they want, "Tickle me," they'll say. "I want to be tickled when I come to church. I wanna be blessed. Furnish me with the latest fad," is what one scholar said you could translate this. Wanting to be furnished with the latest fad, "they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires." Now so you're in that context, verse 4, they "will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things," here's the phrase, "endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." Part of the enduring hardship is the fact that you're gonna get retaliated back against for doing this kind of faithful preaching and teaching ministry. Uh, matter of fact, we, we found out through the years that sometimes folks will let you yell just about anything at, at them until you begin to actually hold church members accountable for the truths that you teach and preach from the word of God.

Unhumbled men will rise up against such correction and rebuke and often will retaliate with vexing and unsound accusations against God's elders or God's preacher. That shouldn't surprise us because the Bible says in Revelation 12:10 that Satan is the accuser of the brethren. That's what marks Satan. That's a, that's a, a, a, a high qualification or a characterization, I should say, of who Satan is. He's the accuser of the brethren. Even though we in Christ Jesus are guiltless and stand in Christ's righteousness, Satan wants to keep accusing so it should not be a surprise to us that if Satan hates God and hates God's work, he's going to make sure somebody is there to be an accuser of God's man preaching the word of God.

So again, what's our point? The point is therefore God says, "I want you to have a higher standard before you'll even give entertainment to a complaint because there are gonna be a lot of those if he's a faithful preacher." Satan's primary target will always be the faithful preacher of the word of God and Satan's favorite ploy is to slander him. Satan will use every opportunity to twist the preacher's words and actions, take them out of context and put the preacher in the worst possible light. Jesus taught this so thoroughly and precisely. For example, in Matthew 5:11 Jesus says to his followers, now this includes all of us, by the way, even though it's more so true of the preacher, it's true of all Christians. "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you," and here it is, "and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."

Let's just take that apart. "Blessed are you when people insult you." The insult is to rail against you. Have you seen anything in our culture lately when somebody brings up maybe a biblical truth, there are just those who just rail and scream and revile? They just, they don't have a point, they don't have an argument, it's just scream and revile. Well, that's the kind of insulting that you sometimes may get.

To persecute you. It means to pursue you, to follow after you. They're coming after you to get you, is the idea.

Then he says they'll "say all kinds of evil." That's the idea of every sort, everything they can possibly come up with to bring against you, they're gonna bring against you. Now folks, this is our Lord and Savior talking here. Is that not interesting? You might say, "Well, I know some churches and I know some Christians and I never see anything happen like that against them." It's probably because they're not giving you the truth like they ought to be giving you. They're not standing on the counter-cultural, counter-world truth of God's word and so they're not stirring much up. They're going along with the world. What was it they told Billy Sunday? Remember the old evangelist Billy Sunday? I don't think any of you were alive. I don't mean that, but you've heard about Billy Sunday. He was a baseball player and he was a, he was some kind of extravagant passionate evangelist. He was known to break chairs on the pulpit. Now that was back before they had amplification and they said Billy did a lot of that to keep your attention. And he had a lot of people that didn't like his preaching and sometimes, uh, they would say, "Billy, you, you stroke the fur on the cat the wrong way." Billy Sunday said, "The old cat's headed to hell. If he'll turn around and go the right way, I'll be stroking it the right way."

Well, there's some truth to that and our Lord says they're gonna insult you, persecute you, say all kinds of evil against you and here's the last word I want to bring out from Matthew 5:11, falsely. He said it's gonna be false but they're gonna say it. It's gonna be false but they're gonna use it and they'll get other people to agree with them, to go in there with them and do that. Telling lies, attempting to deceive others and put them against you.

Um, I don't want to go, I've said these things so many times but we've had so much of that here at Grace Life Church. The old, uh, rumor that to join our church you have to bring in your tax forms, your W2, so we can see how much money you make to make sure you tithe. Okay, here's the test, we're gonna settle this forever. Every one of you that was required to bring in your tax forms to join Grace Life Church, would you please stand up? Alright, put that to rest, okay?

Then the time that Pam and I had a, a deranged, bless her heart, the woman had severe severe emotional problems. She showed up in my yard at 3 o'clock in the morning. She had a baby in her arms. She was screaming she'd been bitten by a rattlesnake. It's a long long story. We called the police. She ends up at the hospital and I was worried about her. The next morning I go down to the hospital just to check on the lady to see if I might witness to her or be some help to her. I probably didn't get within 20 foot of her, she was just pacing the floor. She was in such a, a terrible condition and I, I stayed there maybe three minutes and just left and somebody at the hospital started the rumor that I brought my wife in and had beaten her up, and if you'd saw this dear lady, she looked like she'd been beat up. She, she'd been literally sleeping in the woods. It was just a terrible and heartbreaking situation but that went on forever. I heard over and over, "We know for a fact, we saw him in the emergency room and he had to bring his wife in." Now if you ever hear the story that Pam beat Jeff up, there may be something to that but I promise you on a stack of Bibles, I have never touched that lady in that way. She's nice to touch but I don't touch her in that way, alright?

Well, and on and on and on we could go. So thus the standard is higher. Um, so for those pastors out there and you haven't, you're not in your 40th year of ministry like I am and there's pastors out there right now who are hearing my voice or will hear my voice on, on the internet sometime who are hearing me say this and here's what they're thinking, "Will it ever end?" Well, Tim Seal, that's what they're thinking. You've been there, "Will it ever, will they ever quit attacking? I deal with one thing after another." And I'll tell you what the hard thing is, is when they take something that you're not perfect at, it's certainly not a disqualifying sin but they spin it into a monster to make you look as bad as they can, and you just, you fight and you fight and you humble yourself and you try to deal with it, here's what I want to tell all of you pastors out there and you're in that phase, I call it you're, you're going up the bell curve, you're not over the top, just keep being faithful. Keep preaching the word. Keep preaching the word. Keeping standing and when you blow it or mess up, confess it and go on and God will finally give you a church where they just about all love you and they don't do that stuff anymore.

Now if our elders or an elder needs to be dealt with, well, I'll deal with that in just a moment, by the way, we're not through with the text, alright, but I wanted to say a lot about that because that's a big part of it, and the exception to this problem would be when a church becomes spiritually mature, this kind of stuff practically disappears because if there is a problem, it's not, it's not swept under the carpet, it's dealt with but it's dealt with properly and it's not a big issue of gossip and division in the church.

So we should be diligent to guard the reputation of all fellow believers. Can I say that again? Of all fellow believers. Understand if you've got a brother or sister and they're in the factory and they're in the office or they're in a place in town working and a lot of people in their work environment don't love God, they're probably going to start some rumor about them, somehow, some way. So when it comes to you, you be the place the rumor stops. I'm going to defend and protect the reputation of my brothers and sisters in Christ. We really need to, that, rather need to do, do that in today's world when so much is against us.

Let me just read Roland, Daniel Roland's quote, is a Baptist pastor 150-200 years ago. "Again and again noble reputations have been ruined by slander and the injustice and wickedness of the charges have been demonstrated when it was too late to repair the wrong. Men of lofty integrity and of stainless purity have lived under a cloud for years because of some disgraceful slander greedily caught up and propagated." He said it was his experience to see good men of God have to live under a cloud of suspicion and doubt because of lies, slander and falsehoods told about him. So Paul tells Timothy there's a higher standard. Protect the reputation of the man of God.

II. Now we come to the other side of the coin. We're going to be bold to rebuke any continuation in sin among an elder. He says in verse 20, "Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also will be fearful of sinning." Now the phrase "Those who continue in sin" is a present active expression. It means it's continuing action so the idea here is a one, here's one rather who is given to sin. He's embracing sin. Now again, we spoke about this on a Sunday night at quite some length but the Bible says love covers a multitude of sins and for lack of a better way to say it, the average garden variety sin is to be overlooked and just say God takes care of those things. Uh, and in Galatians, Galatians 6:1 the Bible speaks of a man who is overtaken in a fault or overtaken in a transgression. We're to restore him in a spirit of gentleness the Bible says.

So that's always true but that's not what's happening here. Here's the case of an elder, of all people, who's, who's embraced a sin, he keeps walking in it, and holding onto it as if it's not a big deal and finally he has to be dealt with. Perhaps this is a case where the elder has been approached by one or two other elders and they've been working on it but he's not willing to deal with it at all, it's not a gray matter, it's not a, a subjective eye thing, it is clearly an open and willful embracing of sin and at this point you're to be bold to rebuke him for that sin.

So if the efforts of private confrontation do not humble him, he remains unrepentant, then A., he's to be rebuked publicly. Publicly he says. Rebuke in the presence of all. Now of

course, that's when there is a clear case. When this is not promiscuous gossip. Um, now some things can come out even more quickly when there's public scandal and everyone knows it already. Uh, those type of things you would just come more quickly to the church. For example, in Titus 3:10, "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning." The idea there, that's so public and so damaging. Somebody who's forming a, a faction in the church against the rest of the elders must be dealt with quickly the Bible says. So that might be one that comes out even more quickly than what Paul's telling Timothy here.

In Galatians 2:11, "when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Here we have Peter, the Apostle Peter refusing to eat with the Gentile believers. It's racism. That's what we would call it. Racism in the church. And so he stood condemned. There was no excuse for it. Everybody could see it. It wasn't something that could've been handled privately because always we handle these things privately if at all possible. I mean, folks, to be brought publicly at Grace Life Church means you refused a thousand times to let us handle it privately. Can I get an amen there? But we do do that when we have to, but in this case Peter was doing this obviously outwardly and openly, uh, by his not being willing to fellowship with Gentile believers he was saying, "We are of the elitist group." You might today call it Jew privilege. "We're the privileged ones. We're the elite and we don't mingle with you." Except in this case instead of them being called the elite, they called themselves the elite. "We Jewish Christians are of a higher grade than you Gentile Christians." And Peter went along with the rank hypocrisy, the sinful evil of that and wouldn't eat with those Gentile believers.

Peter honored cultural distinctions as greater than spiritual unities. You listen to me, in the church of Jesus Christ there is no racist, there is no ethnic background, there is no nothing that makes one different than the other. The ground is level at the cross of Jesus Christ. And you know, with all this going on in our culture, I, I, I've been examining my own self and I don't know that I know everything about myself and you don't know everything about yourself, but I thought about the brothers and sisters I know who have darker skin, and the brothers and sisters I know who have lighter skin, and I can tell you with resounding conviction that I love my brothers and sisters with darker skin more than I love nonbelievers with lighter skin. That's just the way I am. That's, I love Christ. He's changed me. He's given me a love for my brothers and sisters, it's just that it's been settled for me. And by the way, we'll never get our culture called up here unless we get them all converted and that's a good thing to try to do, by the way. But anyway, Peter's doing this. He began to backslide for a moment and began to view cultural distinction as greater than spiritual unity. You see, Christianity by the power of the Gospel has obliterated all cultural divisions, period. Among true regenerate Christians, all culture distinctions become insignificant. Anything less will not be tolerated.

So Peter stood condemned Paul said in Galatians 2:11. So he was publicly condemned right away. Now I'm bringing that out because Paul's instruction to Timothy is, "If they continue in sin, bring it publicly." But occasionally, it didn't happen often but occasionally something is so severe they ought to be brought publicly right away like in the case of factiousness or something as scandalous and wrong as discriminating in the

church based on heritage or background which was what Peter did. And by the way, in all of this problem between cultures or racism or whatever it is, brothers and sisters, there's gotta be a place for forgiveness. There's gotta be a place for redemption because by all records, Peter got right back up and served the Lord and didn't do this junk anymore. Can we forgive someone, let him go on and serve God again in the church? "I don't, I don't, well, I've never seen anything like that at Grace Life." Well, I'll have to make that 40 or so years ago, there was one man, he's been deceased a long time and he was told, "Your view is not welcome here. You're gonna have to get over it or go on." And it was taken care of but that's been literally almost 40 years ago and don't try to figure out who it is. About four of you might, four of you might be able to figure out who it was but he's been gone a long time. But I can trust you, this pastor will never tolerate such a notion. If our Gospel is not powerful enough to allow us to love each other regardless of our background, then it's not the real Gospel. It's not the real Gospel. Now here's something else, brothers and sisters, you cannot take the truths that you and I enjoy and make them work in an unregenerate world. We want to be salt and light but that's why the church is so special because we have something the world can't do. They can't live this out like we can. They don't have the power of God.

Well, publicly he says if this guy continues in sin, this elder, he's to be brought publicly then he says, so that the, verse 20, "so that the rest may be fearful of sinning."

Making sure my watch, is my watch right?

The point is it's good for the church members to see somebody publicly disciplined every now and then to remind all of us we might struggle with sin, we might fall into a sin but we better not embrace it and wear it and walk in it. That's different and I want to say to you brothers and sisters, starting with Jeff Noblit and going through all of us, if you're humbled and you're fighting, we're for you. Our compassion is for you. Our love is for you. We'll work with you. But if you bow your neck and say God's truth doesn't matter, I'm gonna be this way, then that's a whole different story. That's to be rebuked publicly.

Well, then he says in verse 21, "Also, Timothy, without partiality." The rest of my points are, are smaller or quicker, let's say. Verse 21, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels," he brings a lot of witnesses there to make sure, "Timothy, this is important. Don't show any kind of discrimination or partiality in any of this, to maintain these principles," last part of verse 21, "without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality." We are all equal before God. Paul proved he had no partiality when he rebuked Peter, Peter who was functioning within a spirit of partiality. We are not to do this. We are, by the way, we're not out to prove how strict we can be, how many things we can rebuke and when dealing with someone, a person's track record does matter, by the way. Somebody who's honored God and lived for God and then something comes up, we will probably show more grace because we know they've had, have had a strong and faithful witness for Christ.

Some examples of partiality in the Bible that's condemned. James had to condemn them in the church because some of them seemed to favor the rich folks over the poor folks

who came into the church. Remember James gave pretty scathing rebukes to the church when they were doing that kind of thing. Another example as we talked about is the Jew and Gentile issue. That went on a lot, by the way. It had to be dealt with on several levels but the church dealt with it. Then, of course, Jesus rebuking the Jewish religious authorities as not being elitist and being sinners like all the rest of us. And there are many others but those are three prominent illustrations of partiality in the Bible that are not allowable and should never be allowed in God's church.

Alright, III. Pastoral ministry to pastors, we're to be cautious in ordination, verse 22. Cautious in ordination. "Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin." Now he's writing to Timothy and he says, "Timothy, when, when you're ordaining a man to the Gospel ministry, to the office of elder, you're to be slow about that. You're to be careful about that because if you're not careful and if you don't do due diligence." Now there's two aspects here that we have to always be aware of: has this man shown a clear biblical call to the Gospel ministry; secondly, has this man exhibited the character qualities necessary to go into Gospel ministry? Be slow, Paul tells Timothy, about doing that. If not, you'll share in the sins of their ministry that they will later perform.

There's been a, a great failure in the part of local churches for many many decades that I'm aware of in this very area and the consequence is great. There's been great damage done to the cause of Christ and great damage done to the health of local churches by men who were not ever really called or qualified to be in those roles. Somehow as denominations go along, there begins to be something of a machine or a system developed and men learn how to be good in that system versus called of God to preach the word.

I, I did, I wasn't raised in church. I didn't know anything about Southern Baptist stuff when I was 16, 17, 18. I was converted right at, uh, right in February, I turned 19 in February, February 2, 19, uh, well, I don't remember what date that was. Uh, '78? Anyway, I'm converted at age 18, right at 19, and I, I got to a Baptist church because I hear the Bible preached there and I'm drawn to that and, um, I had some people come into my life who were very prominent people in the Southern Baptist Convention and they told me just I'm just being honest, they told me, "You've got it made. You, you gonna, you can go to big churches, you can do big things if you'll just go along with what we're telling you to go along with." And I, look, I don't think these men were evil, I, I don't think they were up to anything. That's just what I was told. And then I went to Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, TN which at that time was still not technically, it wasn't a part of the Southern Baptist Convention because the seminary was started so that they'd have a faculty where every professor believed all the Bible all the way through. They believed in the inerrancy of Scripture and at that time none of our other schools could say that. And when I went to that school.... you've cut off your chances to be in the right places and quite honestly to make lots of money.

What I'm saying is the system is such that good men, and I believe men who love God and men who know God can get sort of in the flow of the system. I had and I'm so glad

that I was ignorant because I don't know that I would've had the spiritual conviction to have stood against it if I had known what I was standing against. I'm so glad God didn't let me go with the system. My point is in that system a lot of men get ordained and set aside for Gospel ministry because they fit the system, not because they fit God's qualification because they can make the system go, they can make the machine work, not because they fit what the Scripture says. Now let me clarify this and balance this out. There are some great and godly men in Southern Baptist life and I thank God for them. I do think the machine is broken beyond repair but I thank God for the good men and the good people who love God in Southern Baptist work.

Well, he tells Timothy keep yourself free from sin here and I think primarily he's talking about when you ordain this man and he goes out and he makes a mess and he, he falls into sin, he's not able to pastor long-term but hurts the church and hurts the cause of Christ, you've sinned with him. So Grace Life Church of the Shoals, let that be mindful to you as we decide who we're gonna bring before you to pray over them, ordaining them to Gospel ministry. We need to take this very seriously. We're to be very careful and cautious about ordination.

Well, IV. Be wise in measuring sanctification. Be wise in measuring sanctification. It says in verse 23 a very unique thing but in the flow of all Paul is saying here it makes good sense. Verse 23, "Timothy, no longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." First of all he says, "Timothy, be careful about how you're defining your own sanctification." Timothy was a most dedicated young minister. I mean, he, he wanted to do every i, he wanted to cross every t, he wanted to be pure and honorable before the Lord and this included him saying, "I will never touch a drop of alcohol. If there's a tiny tiny possibility a bit of alcohol could intoxicate me and I'm not gonna touch it." Matter of fact, that was the Nazirite vow of the Old Testament, to really be set apart and dedicated to God, they had what they called a Nazirite vow and one of the convictions of the Nazirite vow was absolute abstinence from all intoxicating beverages.

Then, of course, the elders of a church, 1 Timothy 2:3, are not to be addicted to wine. The point is you're not to use wine as a social beverage. You're not to enjoy its intoxicating nature. Don't have time to go into all of it, but in this day the water was often impure and it wasn't healthy just to drink water but the fermentation or the alcohol in the wine helped to kill the bacteria and it was a safer thing to do. So here's Timothy, Timothy, he's saying, "Timothy, you need to be balanced on this. You're thinking it's godly to abstain from all alcohol 100% but you've got a medical condition, Timothy, you've got a need that you need to be a little more balanced in your view of taking this wine because of your medical condition." We do know from the balance of teaching in the New Testament on Timothy that Timothy was a young man prone to anxiety, he was a man prone to stress, and probably melancholy, they would call it, maybe you would say depression today, and even more than the average person. So you add that kind of physical and emotional composition to the fact that his job was one of great and awesome responsibility with irksome details and so now he has stomach problems. Have you got stomach problems? Any of you don't have stomach problems? Nexium, Tagamet, Zantac, Tums, whatever it

is, it's, it's very very common. So he says, "Timothy, go down to the drugstore and buy some Zantac." That's in effect what he's saying. "Take a little wine. Your, your commitment to be holy and sanctified is a good one but you're out of balance, son. You're gonna, you're not gonna be effective for God if you let this stomach problem get worse and worse and worse."

So the point is be careful when you start defining what exactly it means to be holy and sanctified. There's some balancing truths that matter in some of these areas and this was a good practical specific one for Timothy. A couple of things I want you to understand. This, of course, was medicinal in nature for Timothy. This is not a biblical permission to use wine as a social beverage. Sorry, hunt some more. Go search some more. That's not what this is. Secondly and there's also a man who had gone all over the world and back to say that this had to be wine that had no alcohol. If it had no alcohol, it wouldn't fix his problem. It was alcoholic wine though it's not a permission to use it as a social beverage and it is not a non-alcoholic wine that's being referred to. The point is don't become so out of balance in your personal pursuit of holiness that your emotional and physical well-being is jeopardized. It's very important that you fulfill God's will and God's calling in your life and for, in this case you need a little help with your stomach. Take a little wine. Notice a little wine for your stomach.

Well, be, be careful in your, uh, cautious in your ordination, be wise in your measure in sanctification of yourself and for others. I'll just not much more than mention this. Notice it says in verse 24, "For the sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after." Isn't that true? Sometimes God in his providence just splashes a man's, woman's sins before everybody and sometimes they'll live their whole life and nobody ever knows it but it'll be exposed at the judgment. It will be exposed at the judgment. Be sure your sin will find you out.

Aren't you glad for grace? Aren't you glad? And by the way, I'm not suggesting that sins that you struggle with that are mostly private are to be splashed in front of anybody. I don't want to know them. You go to God in repentance with him and deal with that between you and him. Sometimes in God's providence David sins with Bathsheba, it's splashed before, it's recorded in Scripture forever. Other men have committed adultery and take it to their grave but there will be nothing hidden that will not be exposed the Bible says. I think the context, what he's telling Timothy is, "Timothy, as you deal with men, as you correct and reprove and publicly rebuke men, you can only deal with what's been exposed." God's providence will expose what you're supposed to deal with because obviously we can't deal with what we don't know.

Verse 25, same basic thing, "Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed." That means in the ultimate sense one day everything will be exposed.

So let me conclude with this thought. Now tune me in for just a couple more minutes. Not only do these two verses tell Timothy that you can only be responsible, Timothy, in the church for those things that are manifest, those things you can see; secondly, this is a

warning to all of us that nobody's gonna get by with sin. Either in this life or in the next or in both they'll be exposed. But here's what came to my mind so strongly meditating on this: there's hope only in Christ. There's hope only in Christ because notice how much sin is mentioned in this text of Scripture. In verse 19 he says there'll be sinful people bringing sinful accusations against pastors. In verse 20 he said there'll be sinful pastors who continue in sin that need to be publicly rebuked before all. In the last part of verse 20 he says sinful church members ought to be warned that since elders can rebuke before all, they too can be held accountable for their sins. Then he says, "Timothy, be careful. There's a temptation to sin in ordaining an unfit man for the office of ministry in the church." Then in verse 22, "Timothy, take a little wine for your stomach. Timothy, you're falling into asceticism. You're getting into, to fleshly sin by being so strict with this wine thing and you need a little for the medical needs of your body." Then lastly he says in verses 23 and 24, all sins will one day be revealed. Here's what I'm gonna say, there's sin everywhere. Sin. Sin. Sin. Sin. Sin. Sin. We're all sinners and we all need a Savior.

Romans 3:23-24, look at it on your screen, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." God made every one of you as the height of his creation. He made you to bear his image and to reflect his unique dignity, holiness and character to the rest of the universe and every one of us fall short of what he made us to be. Oh, but aren't you glad for verse 24? But "being justified as a gift," your justification standing just before God is a gift God can give you. Why? By grace. Unmerited favor. God chose, God chose and, and in a, in an aspect of his holy nature he has this capacity to look on us as sinners and say, "I'm choosing to show them some favor they don't deserve." That's grace. Justified as a gift by his grace. But God said, "I'm a just God. I can't just say that, I've got to actually have a vicarious atonement for you. Someone has to take the blast of your retribution that you deserve through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Jesus died on the cross and took the blow in our place, redeeming us from sin's power and sin's consequence including eternal loss in hell.

So as Paul's writing to Timothy, every verse sin, sin, sin, sin, temptation, sin, temptation, sin, sin, sin. Thank God for Jesus Christ. Thank God for our Savior. Thank God for our redemption. Thank God for grace. Thank God for the gift of God through Jesus Christ. But my charge to you this morning is do you know him? Have you come to him throwing, throwing all your hope and everything else aside? Don't put any hope in walking to the front of this church. Don't put any hope in repeating a prayer after a pastor. Don't put any hope in going through those baptismal waters. Put your hope in Christ and Christ alone. On your deathbed I want you to hear Jeff Noblit screaming at you, "Is your hope in Christ?" Because I've got news for you, I can't baptize you in the ICU unit but Christ can save you there. You see, you can't limit him to anything. He's always available. He's right there in the pew next to you. You can come to him. If I gave you some hoop to jump through, you'd analyze the hoop until you figured I didn't jump through the hoop just right. Jesus and salvation, they are not a hoop. He's a person. "I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today. I know that He is living, Whatever men may say. I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer. And just the time I need Him, He's always near."

Would you turn to Christ now by faith from your heart and say, "O Christ, I trust You. Not works. Not an ordinance in the church. Not doing better. I, I cast all my hope in all that aside. I come bankrupt as a sinner. Christ, save me." Listen to me, listen to me, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If you look to Him, He will in no wise cast you out." He will save you.