

A Blueprint For Ministry – 2 Timothy 1:13-18

I brought along some blueprints – not b/c we're starting phase 2 of our build-out

Lord willing that will happen in the near future

But b/c I want to illustrate and emphasize the importance of a blueprint for ministry

When I was in college the summer between my junior and senior year, I built homes with my brother in Des Moines

And every morning before we started swinging the hammer, we looked at the blueprint

Blueprints much like these, where you could see things from different perspectives and different views

With numbers indicating distances, and depths, and heights, and widths

And we had to constantly keep an eye on the blueprint in order to know what to do

Especially if there was something different in the plans or something we had never done before – this was our guide

- And what Paul lays out for us in 2 Tim 1, is the same thing when it comes to ministry
It's a page right out of *God's* blueprint for ministry . . .
With instructions and examples from Paul, that he expects us to follow

And you don't have to be a pastor for this to apply

Remember, according to 2 Cor 5 – we're all ambassadors for Christ, we're all ministers of reconciliation, and we've all been entrusted with the gospel

Which means we're *all* in ministry, *all* the time

So turn to 2 Tim 1:13-18 and let's see what this blueprint says*****

Page one of this blueprint for ministry is to . . .

Follow a biblical pattern (v13)

V13 – Paul's at the end of his life, the end of *his* ministry . . .

And looking back he says – Timothy, do it like I did

I've made all the mistakes you can make; I've charted the uncharted territory

I've experienced all there is to experience – good and bad . . .

So do it like I did

He didn't say – blaze your own trail; make it up as you go

Or look around to see who's hot, who's drawing the big crowds, who's got it going on . . .

And do what they do; Follow their pattern; Go to their conference

He didn't say that; He could've, but he didn't

Instead, he said – *follow the pattern of the sounds words that you have heard from me*

IOW do in *your* ministry what I've done in mine

Teach in *your* ministry what I've taught in mine

He wasn't saying mimic me in every way, but follow my *pattern* – the pattern of *sound words*

- The question is – What *is* that pattern?
And one of the most concise ways to answer it, is . . .
Worship Christ, Walk with Christ, and Work for Christ

That summarizes Paul's pattern for ministry as good as any – and it's not unique to him

It's the same pattern laid down by Jesus; And the same one passed on by other apostles
And it starts with worshipping Christ

If you're going to follow a biblical pattern for ministry . . .

• **Worship Christ**

B/c in Paul's words (**Ph 2:9-10**)– *God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*

That's worship – to submit yourself to the highly exalted One, as Lord of your life

And the biblical pattern is to do so *corporately* and *personally*

Corporately with other believers in gatherings like this on the weekend . . .

Or in SG's; Or in various other ministries throughout the week . . .

And *personally* – all the time

In your thoughts, prayers, actions, speech, work, play – worship him

Make him your highest treasure and your primary focus

Personally *and* corporately; On your own *and* with others

- I gotta tell ya – I'm so grieved these days by how many of u don't do that
Especially corporately; How many of you are spectators on the once or twice a month plan, instead of participants

I'm not talking about those of you who hate to miss, but can't avoid it sometimes

I'm talking about those of you for whom it's easy come, easy go

If you make it you make it, if you don't you don't

And I've really had to guard my heart against frustration with that

So to that end, I've been praying that God would do a work in you

That he would turn your hearts toward home

That he would somehow grip you with his goodness and greatness, and move you from the periphery to the center

B/c we need you, you need us, and he deserves better

A biblical pattern for ministry starts by worshipping Christ – personally *and* corporately

And it continues by walking with Christ

• **Walk with Christ**

Like Paul says in **Col 2:6-7** – *As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him* [i.e. conduct your life in his strength, according to his pattern, with him as your constant companion], *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith* . . .

To do so you're going to need to read your Bible, and apply it

You're going to need to spend time with Jesus in prayer

You're going to need to join a SG or Bible Study b/c you weren't made to do this alone

Here again, walking with Christ is both an individual thing, *and* a corporate thing

You must do it yourself, but you can't do it alone

God created us for *community*

To give encouragement, and be encouraged; To sharpen, and be sharpened

To do ministry according to a biblical pattern – you need to walk with Christ

And third . . .

- **Work for Christ**

Rom 12:6 – *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them*

For instance, in serving others on a service team

Or helping in one of our ministries; Or reaching out in one of our Compassion Opp's

Or sharing the Good News of Jesus with boldness

That's a biblical pattern for ministry – Worship Christ, Walk with Christ, Work for Christ

- But *knowing* the pattern is only half the equation

The other half is applying it with a humble, tender heart – *in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus* (13b)

Everything we do must be bathed and clothed in that

A sterile, heartless orthodoxy is not what Paul had in mind – just believe the right things and do the right things and you're all right

No! God's blueprint for ministry means following a biblical pattern, w/ a heart full of love and faith in Jesus

A heart that yearns for God to be glorified, sinners to be justified, and saints to be sanctified – yearns

That's how we should follow a biblical pattern for ministry – with the yearning of love and the confidence of faith

Is that you?

Does your heart yearn to worship Christ, walk with Christ, and work for Christ?

And see others do the same?

Do you yearn to see God glorified in all things?

Do you *long* to see sinners justified and saints sanctified?

If so, keep on

If not, you better get back to the blueprint before you make a mess of things

Follow a biblical pattern, and second . . .

Protect the integrity of the gospel (v14)

As in protect its soundness; its purity; its reliability . . .

Just like the Highway Administration is charged to protect the integrity of our roads and bridges – like the inspection and repair of the I-80 bridge these days

So too, we're charged w/ protecting the integrity of the gospel as its been entrusted to us

That's the good deposit Paul refers to in v14

As in protect the message and means of salvation

Guard against the tendency to compromise it, or water it down . . .

And protect it from those who try to change it or explain it away

How do you do that?

Well, one way is to avoid falsehoods

Like 1 Tim 6:20 says – *Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*

Irreverent babble like works-based religions that add man-made requirements to your faith

Irreverent babble that advocates Jesus as 1 way among many – avoid that kind of thing

And avoid so-called *knowledge* that contradicts core truths like the *hypostatic union* of

Jesus Christ – the biblical teaching that he was fully God and fully man

And teachings that deny the *penal substitutionary atonement* of Christ in his death

That he died in our place, for our sins, bearing our punishment

And contradictions that deny the *verbal plenary inspiration* of the Scriptures

That the entire Bible is God-breathed, down to the very words on the page

One of the ways you protect the integrity of truth, is to avoid falsehoods

- Have you ever seen those couriers in larger cities?

You know, those guys on bicycles that dart in and out of traffic with satchels over their shoulder? They're crazy

Why? B/c they're obsessed with getting the message from point A to point B

No stopovers, no dilly-dallying, no scattering of the papers, and certainly *no changing of the message*

Just protect it, and deliver it – as is

That's our job – we're couriers as well; couriers for Christ

The only difference being that they do so under their own power, and we do so *by the HS who dwells within us* (14a)

The same Spirit with the same power that gives *life to our mortal bodies* (Rom 8:11)

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you have the HS within you – to lead you, guide you, and in this case *empower* you . . .

To guard the good deposit of the gospel that's been entrusted to your care . . .

And to protect its integrity against any cracks, falsehoods, or compromises

Are you on that page (blueprint)?

Follow a biblical pattern; Protect the integrity of the gospel; and third . . .

Be a faithful partner (v15-18)

That's the third page of this blueprint for ministry that Paul lays out, by way of examples 15 – with names like that it sounds like they'd turn away, doesn't it?

But thankfully there was Onesiphorus (16-18)

Paul wanted the best for O

And if that seems pretty straight forward to you, it might come as a surprise that some use this passage to justify *prayers for the dead*

They try to say that b/c Paul wishes blessings on O's *household*, instead of O *himself*, that he must be dead – and therefore this is a prayer for him

As you might guess, there are at least 4 problems with that, starting with this:

1. The verbiage is inconclusive

Although O *could* be dead at the time of Paul's writing, he doesn't *have* to be based on the verbiage

Paul could be simply wishing blessings on his whole household, *including* him, b/c of their sacrifice in his absence

Either conclusion could be true based on the verbiage – it's inconclusive

So to base prayers for the dead on this text is not wise, nor defensible

2. Our fate is sealed the second we die

The Bible very clearly says that *believers* will immediately pass into the presence of the Lord, and later dwell w/ him in glorified bodies on the New Earth (2 Cor 5:6-8; Rev 21:1-4)

While *unbelievers* will be thrown into the Lake of Fire b/c their name is not written in the Book of Life (Rev 20:15)

Which means that prayers for the dead are inconsequential – they have no effect
Our fate is sealed the second we die

3. There's no such thing as purgatory

Those who advocate prayers for the dead, usually do so b/c they believe in purgatory

A place of additional suffering for sin, in order to get into heaven

Problem is, there's no such thing as purgatory or anything like it in the Bible – its fiction

Not to mention that it's a serious affront to the sufficiency of *Christ's* death on our behalf

And contrary to the clear teaching of Rom 8:1 that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

4. It gives false hope to those who are still alive

To advocate prayers for the dead, only gives false hope to those who are still alive . . .

And diverts time and attention from those things that *could* be influenced by our prayers

This is not a prayer for the dead on Paul's part . . .

It's simply an expression of his desire to want the best for someone who was a faithful partner to him – a faithful friend; a faithful follower

Something for which every good leader yearns, especially in ministry

• Every good leader wants . . . People they can count on no matter what

People who will stick with them through thick and thin

People who catch and embrace their vision, instead of quietly subverting it in order to promote themselves, or do their own thing

In the first few months of our church, I used to yearn for men like that

Men to help me carry the load; Friends who would love at all times

Brothers born for adversity (Prov 17:17)

People like O who were . . .

Supportive (*he often refreshed me*), loyal (*wasn't ashamed of my chains*) . . .

Proactive (*searched for me earnestly*), and other-oriented (served much at Ephesus)

Every good leader wants faithful partners like that

What they don't want and don't need is a Fair-weather Francis

• Don't be a Fair-weather Francis

When it comes to making the most of your ministry, don't be like Phygelus/Hermogenes

Someone who's there when the goin's good, and the sun's shining . . .

But who disappears when the shadows grow and darkness falls . . .

Ashamed of being associated w/ their leader b/c of what's happening to him

Don't do that – be a *faithful* partner; loyal through thick and thin

• Don't be a Stingy Steve

Notice in v16 that O didn't come *once* to visit and bless Paul, but repeatedly

It says he *often refreshed me*

And the refreshment he gave wasn't just physical

The word here for *refreshed* carries the connotation of *spiritual* refreshment, or *soul* refreshment

Which only comes by spending time with someone, especially in prayer

Don't be a stingy Steve in that respect

Look for ways to refresh your leaders, especially when they're in need

And do so often

• Don't be a Flaky Florence

We can't be sure why O had a hard time finding Paul

But it's likely that he had never been in Rome

And even if he had, the city was probably in shambles due to the fire

And, if any of the other believers knew his whereabouts, they were probably scared to divulge it, especially to a stranger

So O searched, *earnestly* so (17)

He didn't give up after a day or two

He didn't flake out just b/c he ran into opposition

He was proactive; He kept at it; And he went the extra mile for Paul

Be *that* way, and you'll be a massive, massive blessing to your leaders – whether it's at work, in the community, or here at church

• Don't be a Self-centered Sally

O was such a faithful partner, that he was *known* for his service (18b)

First on Timothy's behalf in Ephesus, and now on Paul's

This guy was the epitome of other-oriented service on behalf of his leaders

The farthest thing from a self-centered Sally (or Sam in his case)

Don't be that way*****

Take a look at your blueprint for ministry

And make the most of it by being a faithful partner . . .

Who protects the integrity of the gospel . . .

And follows a biblical pattern

Let's pray and prepare our hearts for **communion**