

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 4:11-16 (Week 14) 02/01/2026
Succeeding as a Good Servant

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:11-16)

Introduction and Review

- Today's passage is a continuation of what we looked at last week **in verses 6-10 of 1 Timothy**.
- There Paul **encourages and instructs**, his son in the faith (Timothy) on being **a good servant of Jesus Christ**.
- He does this first by telling Timothy to **engage in good teaching**.
- To **teach the words of faith and good doctrine** that he had been trained in.
- Then second to **engage in godly training** which is of **great value**.
- And finally, to **engage (to toil and strive) in the global task of world evangelism**.
- These are the things that a good servant of Jesus Christ will do.
- And in our passage for today, Paul continues this theme.
- He continues to give instructions and encouragements to help **Timothy become a good servant of Jesus Christ**.
- But there's a shift in Paul's emphasis.
- While **verses 6-10** were fairly general (easily applying to all believers) ...
- In **verses 11-16** he speaks more directly to **Timothy's specific situation**.
- Paul wants Timothy to **succeed in being a good servant of Jesus Christ**.
- And to do that he must **succeed in the specific ministry** he's been given.
- So, before we look at our text, I want to **remind us** about **Timothy's life and ministry**.
- **This is the context into which Paul is writing**.
- **Timothy** had just recently begun to lead the **church of Ephesus**.
- And from the get-go he had **to face some major difficulties**.
- **First among them** was the fact that the church was **troubled by false teachers**.
- Men who were probably **elders in the church**.
- And this bad situation was certainly compounded by the fact that unlike most Pastors in our day, **including myself**.
- **Timothy was not chosen by the congregation, or even the church elders**.

- Rather, Paul had appointed Timothy to lead the Ephesian Church.
- There's no indication that anyone in Ephesus had asked for him to come, much less appointed or elected him to leadership.
- And there's even some indication that Timothy would rather be somewhere else.
- Remember back to **chapter 1:3** where Paul writes...

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:3)

- Paul felt he had to **urge Timothy to remain at Ephesus** and face the difficulties of ministry.
- And one of the reasons **for this urging** may have been **Timothy's timid nature**.
- We see this in **Paul's first letter to the Corinthians**.
- Prior to Timothy's being appointed to lead in Ephesus, Paul sent him to Corinth.
- And in **1 Corinthians 16**, Paul prefaced Timothy's arrival with these words...

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹ So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. (1 Corinthians 16:10-11)

- It seems that Timothy needed a lot of urging and encouragement in his ministry.
- Apparently, he was more of an **introvert, not a "take charge" kind of guy**.
- And this may have **partially been because of his young age**.
- Most Bible scholars believe that he began leading the church in Ephesus in his **mid-thirties**.
- Which may not **seem so young to us**, who live in a youth driven culture.
- But in Timothy's culture, as in most throughout history, **one's elders were highly regarded**,
- and in a church where **the elders** would have been **older than him**,
- his relatively young age was at least part of the **reason for his timidity**.
- So, you can imagine how Timothy might have become a natural target for critics.
- **"Who is this pipsqueak to tell us what to do? We need a bold man with experience!"**
- I'm sure there were times when Timothy awoke with a pain in his **sensitive stomach** and murmured, **"What am I doing here? Help me, Lord."**
- And Paul was not unaware of Timothy's difficult situation.
- Even though Paul was **more of a take-charge kind of guy**.
- He still suffered under the pressures and concerns of pastoral ministry.
- Just read his **second letter to the Corinthians**,
- In it you will find several places where Paul confesses the great difficulty he was experiencing.
- In **Chapter 11** after a long list of the suffering he'd faced, he concludes...

²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:28)

- Paul understood the pressures of ministry, (**of service**) that Timothy was facing.
- So, in **verses 6-11** he addresses Timothy in **very personal terms**.
- He begins, in verse 11, by **harkening back to what he had written in verse 6...**

⁶ If you put these things before the brothers (if you teach these things to the church), you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus... (1 Timothy 4:6)

- And then in **verse 11** he follows up...

¹¹ Command and teach these things. (1 Timothy 4:11)

- And again, what are “these things” that **Timothy is to command and teach**.
- Well generally, as we saw last week, these things would include, the word of God...

...the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you (Timothy) have followed. (1 Timothy 4:6)

- But more specifically, these things would include what Paul has already addressed in Chapter 4...
- Opposing the false teachers' **asceticism as "things taught by demons"**
- As well as teaching the church about the importance of the word, of good teaching, sound doctrine, teaching the church the importance of Godly training
- And the need to engage in the global task of world evangelization.
- So, Paul first reminds Timothy of his primary calling to boldly teach the word of God to the church.
- And then he goes on to give Timothy a series of instructions, encouragement for His ministry.
- Along with last week's verses this section of **1 Timothy 4:6-16** has provided **classic wisdom for all who desire to succeed in ministry**.
- And by success I don't mean numbers, leading a mega-church, or anything to do with man's response to your ministry!
- I mean, and I believe Paul (Scripture) means, success in life and ministry is defined by faithfully and wholeheartedly doing what God has called you to do and leaving the results to HIM! (OKAY)
- Simply being a good servant of Jesus Christ.
- Now it's clear that this passage has special application for Pastors, church leaders, elders, missionaries,
- But remember, **we are all servants of Jesus Christ**,
- and so, Paul's words to Timothy provide application for every Christian who would seek to **Succeed in being a Good Servant of Jesus Christ, which I pray is all of us here at Bridges**.
- And that takes us to our **first point...** Paul want's Timothy to understand that

1. Success (in life and ministry) Comes Through Godliness

- Earlier in **verses 7 & 8 of Chapter 4** Paul focused on the **value of godly training**.

⁷ ...train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way... (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

- And here in **verse 12**, he points to Timothy's need to **live out that godliness**.

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

- Because of Timothy's youth, there were those who despised him.
- That word despised means to show disdain or **think little of**.
- To some Timothy was **too young to matter**.
- They put him **down and questioned** his leadership and authority.
- And apparently, he wasn't reacting properly to their disdain.
- Maybe in his timidity, he was outwardly ignoring them, but inwardly harboring bitterness.
- **Or maybe he was despising them right back.**
- Becoming **defensive and dismissive**, who do you think you are?
- **God put me in charge here. Who are you to question my authority?**
- I can certainly understand that reaction, and I don't **think I am alone**.
- Anyone who's had their authority questioned can easily succumb **to the sin of pride**.
- **But this is not the road to success!!!**
- **As Solomon warns**,

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

- So, what is **the right response** when we're despised, **looked down on**.
- When our leadership or authority is questioned or ignored? **Well, Paul tells Timothy...**

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example

- Timothy can't really control how people feel about him, whether they despise him or not...
- But he can control his reaction to them.
- So, I think Paul is saying don't let these **despisers** get to you,
- Don't lash out, don't be **defensive or dismissive**, don't punch them in the nose.
- Instead take the high road.
- And set a **godly example for the believers (including those who despise you)**.
- **Basically**, Paul is saying don't let the despisers get you down and interfere with your ministry.
- Just go about the business of being a Godly man, **a Godly example to the church**.
- Paul then gives Timothy **five words (five ways, five areas of life) that he is to be an example**.
- **First, set an example in your**

speech.

- **Exemplify godliness through the words you speak!**
- Now remember Timothy was raised by a Jewish Mother and Grandmother,
- So, he certainly knew what this meant.
- He understood what the **OT taught about speech**, particularly **in Proverbs**.

- For example, **Proverbs 10:19** tells us...

¹⁹ When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. (Proverbs 10:19)

- Part of setting a godly example in speech is showing restraint, not babbling on, considering your words before you speak. And in **Proverbs 18:13** we read...

¹³ If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13)

- Part of godly speech involves listening before you speak.
- The good servant of Jesus is first a good listener.
- And in **Proverbs 10:32** we are told...

³² The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse. (Proverbs 10:32)

- This verse ties our speech to **our righteousness to our godliness**.
- As we grow in **godliness through godly training**, what we say **will be impacted**.
- We will know what right and acceptable speech is.
- Now every good servant of **Jesus Christ should seek to set an example in their speech**.
- But this is **especially true for Pastors**, church leaders, **like Timothy**.
- As we stand in front of the congregation every week.
- As we **speak many (sometimes too many)** words,
- We must **be particularly careful** about what we say.
- We must **guard against the temptation to become** the focus of our own words.
- Wanting to be seen as **intellectuals** (by speaking fancy big words),
- or comedians, by speaking lots of jokes,
- or philosophers, by speaking our own opinions on the events of the day.
- Instead, our speech must be simply focused **on communicating the word of God**.
- **The speech of the good servant of Jesus Christ**, will focus not on **the speaker**,
- on his life or opinions but on Jesus Christ and his Words of Truth.
- So, first Paul commands Timothy (and all good servants) to "set an example . . . in speech."
- But even **for the preacher life** is more than words...
- So along with speech, **Timothy is to be an example**

in conduct

- **Conduct** here means "**the manner of life.**" **Your behavior**.
- In **our normal daily lives**, in our **homes**, at our **job**, in **neighborhood**, at the **gas station**,
- in the **grocery store**, on the **golf course**, **washing the car...**
- Every place life takes us; **we must conduct ourselves in a godly manner**.

- For those who are in Christ, we must, by the **power of the Spirit**, live in obedience to **God**.
- **Our conduct must be in accordance with the word of God.**
- So, Paul has told Timothy to set an example in speech (what he says) and conduct (what he does).
- **Both of which can be seen; they are outward and observable examples.**
- But as we know, it's possible to be a "good example", to say and do the right things, **with wrong (even sinful) motives**.
- When it comes to what we say and do, **we can be hypocrites**.
- **Wearing a mask, performing for our church friends.**
- So, Paul not only calls for Timothy to be an **example in outward ways**, but more importantly inward, heart ways as well. **First...**

set an example in love

- Your outward speech and conduct should flow **from a heart of love**.
- A heart that **loves God and therefore obeys God**.
- Jesus said,

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)

- And Jesus commands us to love our neighbor!
- We must have a **heart that loves** people and therefore seeks what is best for them.
- And along with love...

Set an example in faith

- True faith is a matter of the heart, but it can and must be lived out **in our speech and conduct**.
- We must **proclaim and defend our faith with words and deeds**.
- We must be **faithful people**, true to our word, and true to God's word.
- And finally, Paul says...

Set an example in purity

- **That word purity** in the Greek includes chastity (sexual purity).
- But it **speaks also to a pure sinless heart**,
- A heart that has been **cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ**.
- And a heart that **seeks to live for him...**
- **From a pure heart, flows pure speech and pure conduct.**
- So, we see that Paul is telling Timothy, and all believers, that being a **good servant of Jesus Christ** involves **setting an example for other believers**.
- Not reacting sinfully, pridefully when you are **despised**. **But reacting with Godliness**.
- Flowing from a God transformed **heart of love, faith and purity**,
- **we must speak the words of God, and do the will of God.**
- And if Timothy or we do that, no one will ever despise us again! **NOPE**.
- There's no promise that the despisers will change their minds.

- But those who are willing to judge a man not based on his age, but his **godliness, will be won over.**
- And no matter how **people** react, **God is pleased with those who demonstrate Godliness.**
- **And that is the ultimate success, when we hear Jesus say, well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your master.**
- And so, like Timothy, **every believer should focus** on growing and living in godliness.
- And **in addition to success through godliness**, Paul tells Timothy that...

2. Success Comes Through The Word

- As we saw, in **verse 6**, Paul exhorted Timothy that a good servant of Jesus Christ puts **these things, “the words of faith and good doctrine”** before the church.
- And here in **verse 13** he adds...

¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. (1 Timothy 4:13)

- Paul is planning to visit Ephesus, to come and help Timothy in person.
- But until then, **he tells Timothy what the focus of his ministry must be.**
- This is what Timothy is to devote himself to.
- That word **devote** means to **give oneself to, to take heed of, to apply oneself to.**
- And so, in **this short verse** we're given **an outline** of what **Timothy, and any pastor, or teacher of God's word** should devote his time and efforts to.
- **First comes...**

The public reading of Scripture.

- This was not new for **any Jewish convert to Christianity,**
- Reading Scripture **took place in the Jewish synagogue.** We see this in Luke's gospel...

¹⁶ And [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.... (Luke 4:16-17)

- **This practice of publicly reading Scripture** in the Jewish synagogue had its roots in the **OT,**
- specifically in **Nehemiah** where in **chapter 8** we read...

² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ And he read from it... (Nehemiah 8:2-3)

- So, **the early church adopted this custom of reading the Old Testament.**
- But they added readings from **the apostles' letters and the Gospels.**
- We see this at the end of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians where he commands...

²⁷ I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. (1 Thessalonians 5:27)

- This meant that the church was to put the **apostles' writings** on the same level as the OT.
- And that's what the early church did, they read from both the OT and what would become the NT.
- Justin Martyr wrote just after the close of the first century...

On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has finished, the president speaks, instructing and exhorting the people to imitate these good things. (Justin Martyr)

- Pastor Kent Hughes comments...

The overall effect of this regular reading of the Old and New Testaments at worship was twofold. 1) It emphasized the radical continuity between the Old and New Testaments. 2) It meant that the authority of the preaching that followed was secondary to and derived from the reading of Scripture. (Kent Hughes)

- And this public reading of Scripture was **especially important** in the church prior to the **16th century**.
- Because it wasn't until then (after the printing press was invented) that it was common for a believer to have access to a Bible.
- **But that's not to say** that the public reading of Scripture **is now obsolete**.
- It's still important that when the church gathers, we hear the word of God together.
- **Especially the word of God that will be preached that day.**
- We see this in what follows **the public reading of Scripture**.
- Timothy is to devote himself...

to exhortation, to teaching

- Which is what preaching is.
- Preaching involves teaching the word of God (doctrinal instruction)
- and exhorting the hearer to apply what is preached.
- Now I believe this link between **first reading Scripture** and then preaching the word,
- gives us an important insight into how a preacher should preach.
- That is, he should preach from the text that is read.
- We call this **expository preaching**.
- And as the great Bible expositor, **John Stott**, has written...

It was taken for granted from the beginning that Christian preaching would be expository preaching, that is, that all Christian instruction and exhortation would be drawn out of the passage which had been read. (John Stott)

- **Biblical exposition** was the norm **in the early church and beyond**.
- Therefore, any preaching that is not based on Scripture,
- and does not guide the listener through the Scriptures is not really preaching.

- It may be a **good talk**, it may be **interesting or funny**, but it's not **the exhortation and teaching of God's word**.
- **Bottom line:** the focus of preaching **must be Scripture**.
- The preacher must not come to the word seeking verses to promote or prove his own political, social or religious agendas.
- We call this **proof texting**, using isolated verses or short passages to support an argument, **not considering the original context**.
- Instead, the preacher, prior to preaching, must come to God's word, seeking it actually means.
- And then he must teach that meaning,
- **exhorting the congregation to apply the Scripture to their lives**.
- So, we've seen that succeeding in being a good servant of Jesus Christ comes through focusing on personal godliness, **that is certainly true for all believers**.
- And devoting your ministry to the proper preaching of God's word, which has special application to Pastors, and those who preach and teach the word of God.
- **And to those Paul adds...**

3. Success Comes Through Giftedness

- Again, Timothy (who could be timid) was facing those who despised him (looked down on him) for his youth.
- **I can imagine that a question kept running through his mind...**
- Because it's certainly a question, I've often asked myself. **"Do I have the right stuff?"**
- **Am I really supposed** to be leading this church or has there been a **big mistake**.
- And again, Paul knows the **Heart of His Son in the Faith...**
- So, he takes this opportunity to affirm that **Timothy does indeed have what it takes**,
- But with **the affirmation** Paul gives a clear command...

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

- Paul charges Timothy to remember that important moment in the past when Paul and the local elders placed their hands on him,
- speaking prophecies and prayers about his **giftedness and future ministry**.
- Paul had **alluded to this in 1:18...**

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, (1 Timothy 1:18)

- And Paul will do so again in **2 Timothy 1:6...**

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, (2 Timothy 1:6)

- Clearly Timothy needed to be reminded **of his calling and gifting for ministry.**
- And in his case, based on the context of the previous verse...
- This gifting almost certainly had to do with **his ministry as a preacher of the Word.**
- Timothy had heard with his own ears that God would enable and bless his preaching.
- And therefore, **he was not to neglect the gift God had given Him.**
- And there is a word here **for all believers.**
- For each of us has received **a gift from God** to use in His service. Peter tells us..

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... (1 Peter 4:10)

- **Do you know in what ways God has gifted you to serve?**
- Is it preaching, teaching, evangelism, administration, intercession, giving, hospitality, helps, leading, mercy, wisdom, prophecy, discernment.
- **These are just some of the spiritual gifts that the Bible mentions.**
- So how has God gifted you?
- If you know then don't neglect your gift, **engage in the ministry God has gifted you for.**
- And if you don't know then my advice is threefold,
 - all of which can take place in the same time period.
 - **First**, go to the Lord in prayer and ask him how He's gifted you.
 - **Second**, talk to a mature Christian friend or a pastor,
 - ask them to help you discover how God has gifted you.
 - And **third**, start serving somewhere, **DO SOMETHING!**
 - **For those of us whose gifts were not given by prophecy**,
 - we might need to start serving before we discover how God has gifted us.
 - In fact, I believe **that God often gifts us to serve in the midst of our service.**
 - That He often doesn't **give his gifts to his children** until they need them.
 - That was certainly true for me, **I felt totally ungifted to teach or preach.**
 - I was at least as Timid as Timothy if not MORE!
 - But when I was willing to step out in faith and **JUST DO IT**,
 - I found that God enabled and empowered me.
 - He gifted me for the ministry he had called me to.
 - Because the truth for Timothy and me and every believer is that **when God calls you to serve**,
 - He will gift you to serve.
 - But along with this assurance that God will gift you in what he calls you to do.
 - There is a warning here for those who do not use the gifts God has given them.

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have...

- The implication is if you neglect what God has given, **you will lose it**. Use it or lose it.
- That is why he told Timothy to,

fan into flame the gift of God

- Timothy's gift (or the gifts God gives us) are not a once-and-for-all, unchanging permanent part of our life and ministry.
- They have to be used; they have to be cultivated.
- **Use it or lose it!** This is true for **any good servant of Jesus Christ**.
- So, Paul has given Timothy three important factors if he is to succeed in ministry.
- Pursue Godliness, devote yourself to the Word, and Use the Gifts God has given you.
- And to these Paul adds...

4. Success Comes Through Practice

- Paul links Timothy's success to his practice...

¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. (1 Timothy 4:15)

- The word **practice** here harkens back to the **athletic metaphor** of verses 7-10,
- where Christians are urged to **train themselves for godliness**.
- Paul is calling Timothy to practice, godliness, devotion to the word, teaching and exhorting,
- **to practice using his gifts. As the saying goes, Practice makes perfect.**
- And this practice is intensified by Paul's command to

immerse yourself in them

- (literally, "be in these things so as to be absorbed in them"). **Live and breathe these things.**
- Timothy is to give **all he has - all his life - to godliness, to the ministry of the Word,**
- and to **exercising his gift of preaching.**
- And this should mark not only every pastor or minister, **but every servant of Jesus Christ.**
- We must practice, we must immerse ourselves in godliness, in the word, in serving the Lord with whatever gifts he has given us.
- We must **all diligently practice being good servants of Jesus Christ.**
- And as we **saw in verse 10 last week...**

¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive... (1 Timothy 4:10)

- There is simply no success in ministry, **in serving the Lord apart from hard work.**
- We must practice, toil, strive, **immerse ourselves** in the things of the LORD.
- But it seems that in our culture we are more concerned with being **overworked than hard work.**
- And I know that **workaholism** can be a sin, **especially when it is directed at gaining wealth.**
- **But so is sloth, laziness!**

- In fact, I'm not sure if there are any passages that specifically address the problem of being a workaholic, **especially in the context of ministry**.
- But there **are plenty that address the problem of laziness**.
- Maybe the most famous is **the illustration found in Proverbs 6**.

⁶ Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. ⁷ Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, ⁸ she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. ⁹ How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? ¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, ¹¹ and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man. (Proverbs 6:6-11)

- **Bottom line:** when it comes to succeeding in being a good servant of Jesus Christ.
- God has called you to be like **the ant, not the sluggard**.
- Practice, immerse yourself in godliness and the ministry God has called you to...
- **And finally, along with practice...**

5. Success Comes Through Persistance (v. 16)

- Paul's **final instruction** to Timothy

¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)

- The opening line is a summary of what has gone before... **Keep a close watch on yourself**
- This refers to the **fivefold example of godliness** commanded in verse 12.
- Keep a close watch on your speech, conduct, love, faith and purity."
- Make sure you continue to be a good example for believers. **And then...**

Keep a close watch... on the teaching

- This refers to Timothy's preaching and teaching and exhortation that he had been gifted with.
- Keep a close watch on what you teach, make sure it is centered on the word of God.
- Make sure you are using your gift in service to the LORD.
- Make sure you... **continue to practice these things, for this will result in success.**
- But there is one final thing that **Paul must exhort Timothy and us in... he adds**

Persist in this

- This speaks to **our long-term godliness and service**.
- Ministry, service to the Lord, is often **difficult and challenging and troublesome**.
- **Timothy certainly knew this**, because he was facing **fellow elders who were false teachers**.
- Can't think of a much more difficult challenge than that.
- And I'm sure he had thoughts of throwing in the towel.
- I, in the midst of difficulty in ministry, **have certainly had such thoughts**.
- But Paul's words come to Timothy, **they come to me and they come to you**.

- **Persist in this.** Hang in there, don't give up, never surrender.
- In fact, giving up (not persisting) is the **only sure way to never have success in service.**
- **And so, we too (like Timothy) must persist in godliness and in service to the Lord Jesus Christ? Why? Paul says...**

for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)

- Now what does Paul mean by this...
- Does he mean that **if Timothy persists is godliness**, in preaching the word, in using his gifts...
- **He will earn his salvation and that of those who hear his preaching.**
- NO, because Paul has **taught again and again** that salvation comes only through God's sovereign mercy and grace.
- Most of us know **Ephesians 2:8-9** where Paul writes...

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- And here in **1 Timothy** he wrote of himself...

¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:16)

- So, Paul has **left no doubt**, we do not and cannot save ourselves. So, what does he mean by...

Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)

- Well, I think his point is this:
- Those who persist (persevere in godliness and teaching/doctrine) will **persevere in salvation**.
- **This is a theme throughout the New Testament.**
- **Yes, we are saved by grace through faith alone**, not through any works.
- But our salvation is proven by our persistence, by our perseverance.
- As Jesus plainly said...

¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 24:13)

- So, if Timothy or you or I quit seeking godliness and we quit seeking to serve the Lord.
- We decide, **Hey, I've put in my time, now I can do my own thing.**
- Paul is saying, **if we don't endure if we don't persist,**
- if we reject God's call to godliness and service, **if we walk away from God,**
- then we will not be saved, because we were never saved,
- **As the apostle John writes...**

¹⁹ They went out from us (they did not persist), but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us (they would have persisted). But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:19)

- But even though that explanation is needed, **that's not really the point Paul is making.**
- He wants to encourage **Timid Timothy** who is in a tough spot.
- **He's pastoring a church** that didn't call him.
- He's ministering to people, some of whom despise his youth and inexperience.
- **He is facing false teachers in the church.**
- But in all of that he can still succeed...
- 1) If he persists in being an example of **godliness**,
- 2) If he persists in preaching **the Word of God**,
- 3) If he persists in exercising his **giftedness**,
- 4) If he persists in **Practice, in working hard.**
- If he persists in being the man, **the pastor** God has gifted him to be,
- then he will succeed, **the result will God's pleasure and salvation.**
- He will prove his own salvation, and God will use him to bring salvation **and perseverance to many who hear the word preached through Him.**
- **And that my friends is success.**
- To be used by God to faithfully proclaim His message (and HIS reality) of salvation to a lost world.
- And this success is not just for Pastors, and missionaries.
- God will use, he will gift, each and every one of his children to have success in ministry,
- Success in faithfully serving the Lord Jesus and His body, the Church!
- But to achieve this success we too must persist in goodliness,
- in focusing on the word of God, in exercising our gifts from God,
- and by the power of God's Spirit **working hard.**
- **So, as Brian comes to lead us in Communion...**
- **Would you join me as we pray that God would work these things into our lives,**
- **All for his glory and our good....**