Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Commitments of a Powerful Leader, Part 3
Scripture: Titus 1:3
Code: 56-3

If you will, open your Scriptures to Titus, we'll return to the introduction to this wonderful epistle which is still the point of our study. Titus chapter 1 and we're looking at verses 1 through 4 under the title, "The Commitments of a Powerful Leader." Certainly apart from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, no one in the New Testament was as powerful, as influential or as effective in ministry as the Apostle Paul. He was obviously unusually gifted in many ways, both intellectually and spiritually. But all of that divine opportunity, all of that divinely granted ability and giftedness was only potential without his own dedication or commitment to be all that God had enabled him to be. He took advantage of his gifts. He took advantage of his opportunities. And indeed became certainly all that any man or woman could ever be. He maximized his God-given potential by being fully and totally dedicated.

He gives testimony to this a number of ways in the New Testament. He says that he beat his body into submission to avoid falling victim to his own lusts. He continually cleansed his life of any filthiness and pursued holiness in the fear of God. He resolutely resisted the world and set himself to fight diligently the powers of darkness. He refused to do anything that would offend another Christian. He made sure there was no flaw in his life that would hinder the progress of the gospel. He shunned any hypocrisy in his own character that would make his boast in Christ a sham. And he unequivocally was loyal to his calling by God to the very end. A more dedicated man would be hard to find. Certainly the intellectual ability and the spiritual giftedness and the reception of divine revelation and apostleship and all of that were his by God's choice, but it was his choice to respond with the supreme level of commitment and thus fulfill all that God had potentiated in him.

No verse indicates better the fulfillment of his potential then the last chapter of 2 Timothy which should be right across the page from where you are in Titus. And if you'll notice in verse 7 he says, 2 Timothy 4, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith," which is another way of saying I have done exactly what I've been called to do, I've done exactly what I've been gifted to do. No Christian could want more than to come to the end of his life or her life and say I did exactly what God wanted me to do.

But, frankly, such devoted faithfulness may seem rare among today's ministers and among today's Christians. Many would desire to think like Paul and to preach like Paul and persuade like Paul and to be as powerful as Paul and as influential as Paul and as respected as Paul and as loved as Paul and as successful as Paul without being as committed as Paul. But it doesn't happen.

One commendation of Paul that is markedly thrilling is Galatians 1:24, I'll just read it to you, "And they were glorifying God because of me." I mean, wouldn't that be a wonderful thing to have said about you? Because of him we glorify God, because of her we glorify God. I believe every Christian can have that kind of commendation. I believe every Christian can hear "well done, good and faithful servant." I believe every Christian can say at the end of his or her life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." I believe that the potential to do that is there, to fulfill all of our opportunity and all of our giftedness if the commitment is there.

And speaking of commitment takes us in to the first four verses of Titus because here it is that we really touch the heart of Paul's commitment, the foundation of his power. Look at verses 1 through 4. "Paul, a bondservant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness in the hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie, promised long ago but at the proper time manifested even His Word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

Now woven into that very long and unpunctuated almost sentence is the framework or the structure or the strength or the substance or the form that supported Paul's effectiveness. Just by way of review, first of all we noted that he was committed to God's mastery. He says he is a bondservant of God and a messenger of Jesus Christ. It is clear in his mind that he's a man under orders, he is a man under authority, he is a man who must submit to God's mastery. He is a doulos, a slave of God and the nature of that slavery or the function of that slavery is to be a messenger on behalf of Jesus Christ. He was committed to God's mastery and his life had no personal agenda.

Secondly we noted he was committed to God's mission. And he divides God's mission up in to three parts. First, for the faith of those chosen by God. Second, for the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness. And thirdly, for the hope of eternal life. We broke those down and said his mission was evangelism, that is to bring the gospel to elicit saving faith in those who were chosen by God. Secondly, edification, to bring the knowledge of the truth which produces godliness. Thirdly, encouragement, to teach people how to live in the hope of eternal life so they can persevere and endure trials. So his three-fold mission: evangelism, edification, and encouragement with the regard to the future eternal hope that gives endurance and perseverance through suffering in this life.

Thirdly, he was committed to God's message. You'll notice he says at the end of verse 2 that all of this that he uses to bring the elect to faith, to bring the saved to godliness and to give people the hope of eternal life comes from God who cannot lie and who promised it long ago but at the proper time manifested it in His Word. So that the message is in the Word of God. The mission, of course, is dependent on the content of divine truth. The mission is dependent on the right message. All that pertains to the saving gospel, all that pertains to the knowledge that produces godliness, all that

pertains to the hope of eternal life that produces endurance is only found in the Scripture. And I can't make that point strongly enough. I know you all affirm that but it has tremendous implications. What believers experience as to salvation, sanctification and glorification is from the revelation of God planned in eternity past and manifested in time and then recorded in Scripture. In fact, you will notice it says right there clearly at the beginning of verse 3, "At the proper time manifested," and the best translation, "By His own Word." Idios, the emphatic word "own" is inserted there in the Greek, it's a shame in a sense that the English translators didn't include it. "By His own Word," that is to say His own as opposed to anybody else's.

The message then which accomplishes the mission is found no where else but in the Bible...no where else. So if we're all about evangelism, we're dependent upon the Bible. If we're all about edification, we're dependent on the Bible. If we're all about encouragement, we're dependent upon the Bible. If we are trying to lead people to salvation, we have to use Scripture. If we're trying to lead them to sanctification, we have to use the Scripture. If we're trying to lead them to deal with the issues of life and endure through trials and suffering triumphantly in view of the future, we have to use the Scripture. There is no other source. God promised it long ago and in the proper time He manifested the unfolding of all of this truth to produce all of these effects in His Word.

Now that brings us to this morning and a fourth point. He was committed to God's means. He was committed to God's means. And if I sound like I'm advocating my own profession a little this morning, you'll pardon me. I have biblical warrant for that. Verse 3 in the middle of the verse, "The proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior."

Now here he indicates to us that he understands the means God has designed for bringing the message to accomplish the mission. The mission again, to save and sanctify and strengthen. The means is always the Scripture. That's the message...I should say the message is always the Scripture, the means, he says, look at it verse 3, is the proclamation...the proclamation. What he means by proclamation is preaching...preaching. I told you I was going to talk about what I do. And the words are the same. The word proclamation is the word preaching. It basically comes from a Greek verb kerussowhich means to proclaim or herald in ancient times. They had heralds, they didn't have newspapers, they didn't have television, they didn't have radio so there was need for the king to communicate or the rulers to communicate new laws, new data, information or whatever it was, a crier, a town crier as we called them in American history, or a herald, a proclaimer would come and he would kerusso, he would herald out the news. Paul says this is God's means. It's the same word for the preaching. Sometimes euangelizo, to preach the gospel, is used for preaching. But the term herald has to do with a preacher and is so used in the Scripture.

Now notice he here speaks of the preaching, or the proclamation, not the preacher. He's saying I was called for the preaching, the kerugma, that's the noun form. I was called for the preaching, that's what I do, preaching. That is God's means. I was entrusted with it, it is a stewardship and it is not

optional, it is according to the commandment of God our Savior.

So Paul says God's means is by preaching. If you trace the word kerugmawhich is a noun form of kerussothe verb through the New Testament you will see it translated frequently preaching, sometimes proclamation, but it always has to do with the same thing. The term refers to the public heralding, the public proclaiming of the revealed Word which evangelizes which edifies and which encourages. And so if you know the Greek and you want to follow the word kerugmaaround your Bible you'll find numbers of places where it is used.

For example, in Matthew 12:41, "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in this...with this generation at the judgment and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold, something greater than Jonah is here." And there the word is the same word, kerugma. It means the preaching, sometimes translated the proclamation. You can see it again in Luke 11:32.

Look at 1 Corinthians for a moment because this is a more familiar text. It says in verse 21 of 1 Corinthians 2, "Since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom didn't come to know God, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached," or literally, "the preaching." God was pleased through the kerugma, the preaching, to save those who believed. Preaching is God's chosen means.

Down in chapter 2 verse 4 of 1 Corinthians, Paul says, "My message and my preaching...same word...were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith shouldn't rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God." Again the word kerugmaappears, chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians and down in verse 14, "If Christ has not been raised then our kerugma, our preaching is vain and your faith also is vain." So, Paul was committed to the means God had chosen, namely preaching.

Now go back to Titus chapter 1 and when you're there look back to 2 Timothy chapter 4 down to verse 17 because here he uses the term again, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me in order that through me the preaching might be fully accomplished and that all the nations might hear." Then he goes on to say how God protected him.

Now he is involved in the preaching. That was the means. He was called to be a herald. He was called to be a preacher. Now that's not unusual, that's not unusual. Jonah was called a preacher therefore we can conclude the Old Testament prophets were preachers. We saw that mentioned of Jonah in Matthew 12:41. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was a preacher. In fact, somebody wrote, "God had only one Son and He was a preacher."

In Matthew chapter 4 verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach." And you find that indications of Jesus the preacher are throughout His ministry and even in those places in Scripture where His

ministry is commented upon, in Acts 10:36, "The Word which He sent to the sons of Israel preaching peace through Jesus Christ." There it says God sent His Word through the preaching of Jesus Christ. Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 17 again notes that Jesus came and preached peace to you who were far away and preached peace to those who were near. Jesus was a preacher, there quoting Isaiah 57:19.

The early followers of Jesus were also preachers. This preaching started with the prophets. It was picked up and followed, of course, by our Lord Himself and those who followed Him were preachers. In Luke 9:60 it says, "He said to them, Allow the dead to bury their own dead but as for you, go and preach everywhere the Kingdom of God." This was a would-be disciple who came along and sort of wanted to follow Jesus and He said, "Fine, then you let your people take care of what's going on in the domestic side of life, and in the issues of life, and you start preaching the Kingdom."

Not only were those who followed Jesus to be preachers but certainly the Apostles themselves were preachers, those especially called and anointed men. It tells us in Acts 5:42, "Every day in the temple and from house to house they kept on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." In chapter 10 of Acts and verse 42, "And He ordered us, they said, to preach to the people...so says Peter...and solemnly to testify that this is the one who had appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead," namely Christ.

The prophets of the Old Testament were preachers. The Lord Jesus was a preacher. The early followers of Christ were called to be preachers. The Apostles were preachers. Preaching has been God's means.

Now look for a moment at Romans 10 and we're just kind of wrapping this up. The foolishness of preaching is the means God has chosen. In Romans 10 we have an explicit statement with regard to that. Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." Then verse 14 asks some rhetorical questions, "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they haven't believed? And how shall they believe in whom they haven't heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written...I love this...how beautiful are the feet of those who literally preach." Now some of you are saying, "I've seen your feet and they're not that much to look at." And I've seen the feet of other preachers and I'm not frankly impressed.

That quote out of Isaiah 52:7 simply means this, because of the message we bring, the approach is beautiful. It's not that our feet in themselves are beautiful, it is that when we approach we bring such a glorious message that our approaching feet are beautiful. The beautiful people that everybody talks about in our world are the preachers, they're not the people down at Gold's Gym, they're the preachers. Our society doesn't know it but how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News. The gospel, the sanctifying truth doesn't fall out of the sky like rain, it comes through the

mouths of preachers. How beautiful, how full literally in the Greek, how mature, how vigorous, how wondrous are their feet as they approach us with the Good News.

Now Paul was such a preacher. In Galatians 1:23 he writes to the Galatians. He says, "The people kept hearing, He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." He was a preacher. Colossians 1 verse 24 he says, he's very concerned to suffer, verse 25 he says the Lord made him a minister and the Lord made him a minister to fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God. And in verse 28, "We preach Christ." He was a preacher...he was a preacher.

Look at 2 Timothy chapter 3, and I just will take you to this last text in regard to this whole matter of preaching in general. In 2 Timothy 3:15 Paul reminds Timothy that from a child, from his childhood he has known the sacred writings, that' the Scripture, that's another name for the Scripture, "Which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation." He says it is Scripture that saves you. And then in verse 16 he says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and not only saves you but is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness and the Scripture will make the man of God perfect or adequate, equipped for every good work."

Now on the basis of that, look at chapter 4 verse 1, the next two verses, "I solemnly charge you, Timothy, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead and by His appearing and His Kingdom...do what?...preach the Word." Why? It's able to save. It's able to teach. It's able to reprove. It's able to correct. It's able to train in righteousness and to make the man of God adequate, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. You see the message is the Scripture and only the Scripture and the means is preaching it...preaching it...preaching it. The same Christ who preached peace made His preachers the heralds of His peace.

The full kerugma, the full preaching, the full preaching...follow it...involves justification, sanctification, glorification. It is preaching with a view to evangelize, edify and encourage. It is preaching with a view to save and sanctify and secure. First Corinthians 1:23 Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified." Second Corinthians 4:5 he says, "We preach Christ as Lord." First Corinthians 2:4 and 5, "We preach not the persuasive words of wisdom but we preach God's wisdom." We preach.

A further clear statement of his commitment to that is at the very end of Romans. Chapter 16 verse 25, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ." What a statement. God will establish you, literally strengthen you, set your feet in concrete, make you a rock, make you firm, mature, able by the preaching...by the preaching. The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation. You're going to preach about Christ according to God's revealed truth which is Scripture which has been kept secret for long ages past and now is manifested in the New Testament and by the Scriptures of the prophets which means the Old Testament. So he says God will establish you. How? By the gospel which saves you and the preaching of Christ according to the full revelation of the mystery that is now revealed, that's the New

Testament, and the Scriptures of the prophets, that's the Old Testament. So if you're a preacher, you preach the Bible.

Now let's go back to Titus again. Paul says, the proclamation or the preaching to accomplish these three things in this very defined mission was entrusted to me. It's a very clear word here, this isn't something he chose to do. You know that. He was on the road to Damascus when God stopped him in his tracks and entrusted him with a responsibility of dealing with Him...that is with Christ. And then with the responsibility of preaching for Him. He says, "I was entrusted with this." It was a sacred trust from the Lord. He's very clear about it. First Timothy chapter 2 verse 7 he says, "I was appointed a preacher. I was appointed a preacher and an Apostle in order to teach the Gentiles in faith and truth." I was appointed. Who appointed him? God did. Second Timothy 1:11, "I was appointed a preacher and an Apostle and a teacher." Twice he said the same thing. He was appointed to this.

I just read you Colossians 1 verse 25, "I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me that I might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God." I was made a minister, I was entrusted with the stewardship. And so here he says not by the pleadings of God but by the commandment of God our Savior. It wasn't ever optional with him, it was a divine command. He never really had a choice about it. God commanded him to preach.

To show you how he felt about that look at 1 Corinthians chapter 9 for a moment. This is such a potent text and an inevitable one in this discussion for us to look at. First Corinthians 9 verse 16, he says, "For if I preach the gospel...and he does...I have nothing to boast about." Why does he say that? Well because of what he says immediately following. "For I'm under compulsion."

In other words, look if I chose to preach on my own volition, my own will, you might pat me on the back and say you're a noble guy, Paul, because out of all the things you could have done you chose this, that shows what a wonderful person you are. You've got some deep character, you're a noble person, you're a commendable Christian because you chose to do the hard task, the most noble task, the most challenging and difficult task yet the one with the highest spiritual dividends, you're a very noble Christian.

But he says, "Look, you can't say that to me, I have nothing to boast about, I am under compulsion, I didn't ask for this, in fact woe is me if I don't preach the gospel." In other words, if I don't preach the gospel God is going to curse me, that's what woe means. There's no cause for personal boasting, I had to do it. There's no cause for commending me, not to do it would be to disobey God, I am under necessity, I am in serious trouble if I don't do it. Woe is me. God has laid this burden on me.

In fact, in Galatians 1 he says, "God set me apart even from my mother's womb, called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles. I didn't immediately consult with flesh and blood. I didn't go up to Jerusalem even to go through any kind of

ordination. God did it all and it started from my mother's womb. Preaching was no optional, I didn't choose it on my own so don't commend me. In fact, it was even against my will." Verse 17, "For if I do this voluntarily then I have a reward, but if against my will then I have a stewardship entrusted to me." It's against my will, I'm not a preacher because I want to be, it's against my will, he said.

I can identify with that personally. God had to give me my own Damascus Road and throw me out of that automobile and slide me 120 yards or so down the highway on my backside and put me in bed for three months so that I could preach against my will. That wasn't what I would have chosen for myself. A stewardship was committed unto me. There was no option for Paul, absolutely no option.

And then he very very importantly identifies God in a special way. "I was entrusted according to the commandment of God." He could have said, "God almighty, God all powerful, but he said God our Savior," that's very very important. What he is saying is that God by nature is a Savior. God by nature is a Savior from sin. In fact, God as Savior is identified six times in the pastoral epistles...three times in 1 Timothy, chapter 1 verse 1, chapter 2 verse 3, chapter 4 verse 10...three times in Titus, , 2:10, and 3:4...six times God is said to be our Savior. And I only need to remind you that though you think of Jesus Christ as your Savior, it was God who initiated the saving plan. Remember last time we talked about God wanting to give a redeemed and saved humanity to the second person of the trinity as a love gift? By the way, in Titus Jesus Christ is also called Savior three times...the first of them is in verse 4 as you can note, then chapter 2 verse 13, chapter 3 verse 6. But God is a Savior and so what he is saying is, "Look, by nature God is a Savior and in order to accomplish His saving purpose which He promised before time began to our Lord, in order to fulfill His saving purpose to demonstrate His love to His own Son, he called me to preach." Yes it was Christ who came to the earth and died and provided the saving sacrifice, but God is a Savior.

First John 4:14, "And we have beheld and bear witness of the Father that He has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." The Father sent the Son to be the Savior because the Father had a saving purpose. So it is God here who is Savior, it is God who had the plan to save the lost humanity as a love gift to the Lord. God who desires to save sent His Son to be the Savior and now sends His preachers to preach the saving message. So it is God's saving purpose that is the reason why He has entrusted me with this preaching...with this preaching. He knew God's means was preaching.

Now as I noted for you earlier in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, Paul shunned manipulative oratory. He didn't do like many preachers do today. He wasn't in to manipulating his crowd. He says in chapter 2 verse 1 of 1 Corinthians, "I didn't come with superiority of speech," that's oratorical ability. I didn't come to bowl you over with my...with my oration. I didn't come with wisdom. He says, verse 4, "My message and my preaching not in persuasive words of wisdom...I didn't use technique, I didn't use manipulation, I didn't want your faith to rest on the wisdom of men, literally the wisdom of their information or their approach." He said, "I came to you with God's wisdom, I came to you in God's power. I came to you in weakness, in fear and in trembling." He didn't use techniques that excite and

stir and move people's emotions to achieve results. He preached the Scriptures...listen to this...to the mind.

Many preachers today and I suppose through history are good at the art of persuasion. They know how to move people to respond without the Scripture being the issue. They can manipulate them emotionally. And frankly, that kind of stuff really prostitutes the preacher's stewardship because it makes him no different than a secular persuader. I want to talk about this for a moment because it is an issue.

A number of years ago a man named Dwayne Lidvon(??) who is now pastoring back in Tennessee wrote a very interesting article called, "The perils of persuasive preaching." And there are a number of things in that article that are worth understanding and I share them with you because I want you to be alert to what some people endeavor to do and what you can see them endeavoring to do with crowds of people that claim to be preachers and in fact are not preaching the Word of God but are manipulating the people.

In this particular book that Lidvon in his article quotes called Hypnotism: Fact and Fiction, Frederick Marcuese(?) reports a research study conducted at a large eastern university. The researchers attempted through hypnotic suggestion to induce a convinced and focal atheist to become religious. The attempt was so successful that it had to be halted and all suggestion removed from the subject's mind when his entire attitude toward religious faith changed after only three sessions and for the first time in his life he began to attend church. The investigators decided that the ethics of the situation prevented them from pursuing their research any further.

They could literally make atheists religious by manipulating their minds. While the example is admittedly a dramatic one, it serves to raise a monstrous question. Would it be possible through hypnotic suggestion to create a believer quite apart from any work of the Holy Spirit? And would such a person really be a child of God? Such questions, he writes, are not simply academic. Psychologist James McConell(?) has said, "The time has come when if you give me any normal human being and a couple of weeks I can change his behavior from what it is now to whatever you want it to be...if it's physically possible. I can't make him fly by flapping his wings, but I can turn him from a Christian into a Communist and visa versa."

Although researchers have shown that audiences are not merely so malleable as once thought, nevertheless skilled persuaders including some who stand in the pulpit are often able to exert a tremendous influence on other human beings. And they do not have to resort to such dramatic methods as hypnotism. Consider, for example, the words of the well-known social scientist Milton Roketch(?), quote: "Suppose you could take a group of people, give them a twenty-minute pencil and paper task, talk to them for ten to twenty minutes afterward and thereby produce long-range changes in core values and personal behavior in a significant portion of this group. Suppose further that you

could ascertain quickly and that you could predict accurately the nature and direction of these changes. My colleagues and I have in the last five years achieved the kind of results suggested above. As a result, we must now face up to the ethical implications that follow from the fact that it now seems to be within man's power to alter experimentally another person's basic values and control the direction of the change," end quote. That's from "Psychology Today" magazine.

If you have any questions that that's true, just remember what I've told you in the past about how many psychologists are creating false memories and restructuring a person's entire life with fantasy and causing those people by manipulating their thinking to believe that it's the real story of their life. And preachers who are gifted communicators and who are articulate and who use the emotional techniques and the sad stories and the tear jerking approaches and who get the mood music playing behind the scene and can create the kind of manipulative environment can effect in people behavior changes...and even alter their basic values and never need to use the Word of God.

But what is the result? What is the ultimate result? It is true regeneration? Of course not. The only legitimate tool is the Scripture. And the only legitimate bridge to change is the mind. Lidvon also says in this article in an excellent article on attitude change in the Handbook of Social Psychology, Volume 3, "Psychologist William McGuire suggests that human attitude change may be broken down in to at least five steps or levels." This is interesting. This is the process that people go through when they change attitudes. "Attention, comprehension, yielding, retention and action." In other words, they move across that kind of spectrum, they go from attention...something gets their attention...to comprehension, to yielding, to retention and action. And he writes, "The hearers must go through each of these steps if communication is to have ultimate persuasive impact. And each depends on the occurrence of the preceding steps. The traditional approach to homiletics seems to suggest that the goal of preaching is the third step, yielding. And probably you have experienced that. There was attention, the preacher got your attention, and then there was a certain amount of comprehension, and then they started to talk about you need to surrender, you need to yield, they started to play the organ, the mood music began, maybe you have been in a meeting where they played and they played and they kept telling people raise your hand, come down the aisle and they tried to force or manipulate the yielding and not with clarifying truth, but with sounds and sights and they'll even tell you...we have all these people that we start down the aisles just to prime the pump because it gets a flow going and people get caught in the flow. That is sheer manipulation."

I'm not saying people can't be converted in a situation like that but I am saying people who aren't being converted get swept up in it. The people who are converted are converted because they comprehend the truth and because the Spirit of God effects the transformation.

Now, Lidvon says, "I suggest that the preacher's goal should not be viewed as the yielding step at all, but the previous step, comprehension." And I want to let you know that I agree with that absolutely. I think it is the preacher's responsibility to get attention and comprehension, and it is the Holy Spirit's

responsibility to produce yielding, retention and action. That's not my job. It's not my task to manipulate you to do something emotionally. All the slick techniques, all the gospel marketing packages, all the pulpit histrionics of jumping and stomping and flailing around and beating the organ and doing whatever they do to create the mood, all the sad stories, the mood music, the endless invitations, the hand raising, the walking, all of that kind of pressure is not preaching the Word. It has nothing to do with comprehension. The decision of yielding, surrendering and then retaining and acting is between the hearer and God and not the hearer and the preacher, it is the Holy Spirit's work. Preaching is proclaiming saving truth, sanctifying truth, and strengthening truth from Scripture, the rest is up to the Holy Spirit.

So Paul says I was entrusted with the proclamation, that's all I can do. All I can do is get their attention and bring comprehension. And the message is the Scripture. And since the message is the Scripture, beloved, it should be patently obvious to everyone that the proper kind of preaching should be expository preaching. It's the only legitimate way to be true to the divine message. You know as well as I know that I could manipulate people with stories. I mean, you can tell a tear- jerking story and effect emotional trauma on people. And you can move people with things other than the Scripture, but you're working on their feelings and not on their mind. The message is Scripture and if the message is Scripture and the preacher is to preach the message, he has to preach the Scripture and preaching the Scripture means you must exposit the Word. It's strange to me but the Master's Seminary stands in some ways unique with just a few other seminaries across this country that are interested in teaching people how to do expository preaching. How hard is it to figure out we should be doing that?

By the way, I was happy when Dick Mayhue, the dean of our seminary told me that the book that our faculty wrote on expository preaching was given the award "Book of the Year" by the Preaching Journal, which is the professional journal of preaching. They named it "Book of the Year." Also, the EPA, the Evangelical Press Association has nominated it for the Gold Medallion Award and it's been nominated even in Christianity Today for Book of the Year in its field. Obviously that book is having an impact because there's such...there's such a deadness out there in terms of understanding the importance of expository preaching. A preacher's job is not to force his people by some manipulative process to yield, his job is to make them comprehend the Word of God which will save them, sanctify them and strengthen them.

And what does it mean when we say expository preaching? To exposit simply means to explain the meaning. It means to preach the Bible in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented entirely and exactly as it was intended by God. That's the challenge, the divine Word coming through the preacher. Walt Kaiser wrote in his wonderful book Toward Exegetical Theology, quote: "It's no secret that Christ's church is not at all in good health in many places of the world. She's been languishing because she has been fed as the current line has it `junk food,' all kinds of artificial preservatives and all sorts of unnatural substitutes have been served up to her. As a result,

theological and biblical malnutrition has afflicted the very generation that has taken such giant steps to make sure its physical health is not damaged by using foods or products that are carcinogenic or otherwise harmful to their physical bodies. Simultaneously a worldwide spiritual famine resulting from the absence of any genuine publication of the Word of God continues to run wild and almost unabated in quarters in the church." We've got to get back to preaching the Word of God, what a calling...what a calling. That's our calling. That's what God has commanded us to do.

Well, we didn't even get to verse 4 did we? Is time gone? It is. Well what I told you was true. Just so you can not get off the hook, you're saying, "Well I'm glad you were talking to yourself, I'm not a preacher." Listen to Mark 16:15, He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." You may not have a pulpit like I do but you have a mandate from God, don't you?, to preach the truth, to proclaim it wherever you can.

Father, thank You for our time in Your Word this morning and the reminder of the priority of the means of preaching. God raise up many preachers right out of this congregation. What a task, what a duty, what a privilege, what an amazing calling to stand in the line of the prophets and Christ Himself and the Apostles, the preachers of the past who proclaim the Word. O God, I pray that You will raise up many preachers. We thank You for those men in our seminary who are learning now to preach Your Word who will bring the message that saves and sanctifies and strengthens, the message that justifies and sanctifies and gives hope for glorification, who will faithfully open the book and teach it. God, raise them up and make them powerful as was Paul. And may all of us reach the potential wherever it is that we can preach truth to whatever small congregation from whatever small pulpit, even a one on one, make us faithful to be proclaiming Your truth. We pray in Your Son's name. Amen.

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