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

4 Marks of the Man of God
Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:11-14
Code: 80-301

This is a notable year, this is the fiftieth year of Grace Community Church. This is half a century for this church. We will celebrate that a little more definitively in the fall of this year, but this is, nonetheless, the fiftieth year of this church. Amazing to think about. This is also the twenty-fifth year of Shepherds Conferences. So for a quarter of a century we have been holding Shepherds Conferences here, people have been coming from all over the world. It started with a few hundred men and has developed now to about thirty-five hundred plus and over a thousand have never been here before. So we're looking forward to really an important week. And it's a huge thing for the life of our church. You make sacrifices in your giving to this. Many of you have given toward scholarships for the men who couldn't afford to pay. You volunteer in so many ways to serve and to help. Your giving allows us to do to the campus what we've been able to do and much of that is sort of directed at this big event in our church life. We're so grateful for that. The chapel is finished, wait till you see it, it's absolutely magnificent, more than we ever could have hoped for and for a lot less money than it would have cost to tear to it down and build a new one. You've made a huge investment. You've given through the years to support the seminary and the training of the seminary, it's part of our church life to have these 400 men and their wives and their families in our church. You've invested in the Master's Academies all over the world where we're duplicating in some way or another the training of the seminary and training pastors on the continents of this globe.

This church has had an unusual approach to ministry, it's far beyond just a local church in the confines of a local neighborhood. And that by the divine plan of God. And so you're a part of something that's much bigger than just us. And I feel it in my own life that I have been sort of carried away, sort of swept away. I...this was not a plan, in case you wondered. This was not scheme or dream, this is not in any vision that I ever had. I have been hanging on to this comment from the very beginning and just trusting the purposes of God.

But from the very start, I wanted my own person ministry to be what God wanted it to be. And I have always had it in my heart, and I suppose the Lord planted it there, to have an impact on other pastors. Loving the Lord means loving who the Lord loves. Loving the Lord therefore means loving His church. Loving His church therefore means carrying about how His church is treated. Carrying about how His church is treated ends up meaning you care about how pastors pastor. I have always had a passion for pastors. Everywhere on the planet that I have gone, my primary ministry has been to pastors through all these many years. I've spoken to groups, I've preached evangelistic messages to non-believers, I've preached in churches to saints and in universities to non-Christians, have done it all,

but the focus through all the years I can only trust by the purpose of God has been to direct the great emphasis toward the raising up of faithful pastors. And that means understanding what a pastor's responsibility is. And it starts with his own life, not so much the function, that sort of in a way takes care of itself if the man is what the man needs to be. And so the emphasis of our ministry has not been to try to develop a scheme of ministry or to develop a style of ministry and then sort of refine it here and export it everywhere else. That's not been our purpose. We have really endeavored to shape the way pastors and the leaders of our Lord's church do their ministry from their own life perspective...not style, not the nuts and bolts of how you do what you do, but far more importantly the motive, the character of that ministry because styles change from period to period and nation to nation. The Word of God is the one enduring, lasting, unchanging defining source of information about what ministry is to be. And so through all these years we have been led by the Lord to help pastors all over the world understand what biblical ministry is about.

It was important when I was very young in early years coming to Grace for me to get a grip on this. I mean, I knew some things about ministry but I really needed to have a cogent clear concise defining perspective on ministry that pulled it all together. And it happened for me many years ago when I was reading 1 Timothy chapter 6. And I would invite you to turn there in your Bible. Because in preparation for this week, this morning, I want to talk to you from this section of Scripture. You know, this is the twenty-fifth anniversary of Shepherds Conference and the fiftieth anniversary of the church, and those are notable milestones and this is a good time to go back and sort of reaffirm why we are what we are and how we got to this point where 35 or 36 hundred leaders from around the world are coming here to participate in a conference in your church, a conference in which you have such a great part.

What shaped it? What formed it? What are we really trying to accomplish here? I had planned to say some other things this morning, coming back off of a few weeks of study leave, and I couldn't get past this passage. It just kept coming back and re-gripping my heart and I kept thinking to myself, "Now I've preached this to pastors all over the world, but I don't think my church really understands this. In fact, the last memory I have of preaching this was in 1990 and I was standing on the fifty yard line in the Louisiana Superdome which has become familiar to all of us since Katrina because that's where all the refuges were being kept, as you well know. I was standing on the fifty yard line preaching to 25,000 pastors and this was my text. And that message that day sort of got a life of its own. That happens once in a while to the preacher. It just got a life of its own and it ended up in all kinds of places, in all kinds of formats because it was definitive. And so it started a long time ago when I as a young pastor began to read this passage almost in a casual reading, trying to understand my responsibility in the church and it just jumped out at me. And the outline was so simple that those of you who have a MacArthur Study Bible will find in the notes that the outline appears there. I don't often do that, but in this case it was so clear that I did include it there. This became for me the defining way to view ministry personally. And it represents the way in which we've endeavored to influence men through the years, in the Shepherds Conference and in every other outlet that we have

to influence pastors. We've tried to go down this same path and largely everything we say, everything we do sort of extends out from the elements that are in this text. It is a very good and a very substantial framework to understand ministry from the personal view. Again, we're not talking about how you do it, we're talking about who you are before God which is the critical issue.

First Timothy, chapter 6, as you well know, the Apostle Paul writing to Timothy, passing the mantle to him to take over for the great Apostle, Timothy who is gifted to preach and teach, who has functioned and will continue to function as a pastor of a local congregation, not only pastoring a local congregation but also will be a pastor of pastors because he will have influence over many others who will be under his teaching and preaching. He will no doubt be used by God to raise up many others as the one who was himself raised up under the tutelage of Paul. He needs to have an understanding of the essential elements of effective ministry in the church. These guidelines from the day they sort of jumped off the page and gripped my heart have been the substantial structure underlying what we've endeavored to do in ministry, helping pastors to be what God would have them to be for the sake of His beloved church, for the sake of His own eternal glory and joy.

Now, look at the phrase in verse 11, "You, man of God...You, man of God," here the Apostle Paul designates Timothy as a man of God. In a more general sense, in 2 Timothy 3:17, Paul refers to THE man of God, referring not just to Timothy but to all who fall into that category. All Scripture inspired by God, profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, that THE man of God may be adequate equipped for every good work. Twice this expression is used in the New Testament, man of God. Once to refer to Timothy, and once to refer to all those who fall into that category who are equipped as a man of God by the Scripture.

Now just exactly what does this phrase mean? Maybe if we just took a very simple approach to it and said it means, "God's man...God's man." That is to say, a man who belongs personally to God, a man whom God in the truest and highest sense owns or possesses. This is not a man who belongs to the world. This is not a man who belongs to the culture. This is not a man who belongs even to the church. This is not a man who belongs to the board of the church. This is not a man who belongs to the denomination or the association or those who ordained him. This is God's man. This is the man who personally belongs to God. This is a very unique title, this is not generic. This is a very technical title drawn out of the Old Testament. And while it only appears twice in the New Testament, it appears in excess of 70 times in the Old Testament, God's man, the man of God. It is said of Moses that he was the man of God. It is said of an angelic messenger sent down with a message from God to the wife of Manoah, the mother of Samson, he was the man of God. It is said of the prophet who spoke for God to Eli, the high priest, predicting judgment on his family. Samuel is called the man of God. Numerous of the prophets are called the man of God, Elijah, Elisha. David is called God's man. It is a technical term so much so that in every single usage of that phrase it applies to someone who spoke the Word of God, someone who was a spokesman for God. It is a technical term, a man of God is someone uniquely called to proclaim the Word of God. In this case, it is Timothy. In the

broader sense, it is any man of God who is equipped for this by all Scripture, and that, of course, 2 Timothy 3, as I read, "All Scripture is provided so that the man of God can be adequate to his work." How can you speak for God unless you know the message of God? You cannot know the message of God apart from the Scripture. All Scripture then is given to us as men of God that we may be perfected or made adequate to the proclamation of the Word of God which is what it means to be a man of God. Paul labels Timothy, "You man of God." He places him in a long line of very elite company. It's pretty amazing to think about being a man of God, pretty amazing, overwhelming really. And I think Paul his whole life was overwhelmed with this, that God had plucked him up out of the horrible sin and iniquity and hatred of the gospel that he lived with and purged him and cleansed him, a blasphemer and a murderer and turned him into a man of God. There was always that overwhelming sense of transformation and gratitude. Timothy is a part of that long line of elite company, and so is everyone who is in the responsible service of God as a spokesman who speaks the Word of God. These are historic designations that belong uniquely to all who speak for God. From the very beginning of my ministry, this riveted me to the Scripture, to understand that I am not my own, I'm bought with a price, that's in a general sense true of every believer. But beyond that I cannot speak my own opinion, I cannot speak my own ideas. The Apostle Paul makes that so wonderfully clear to the Corinthians. He will preach Christ and only Christ. He will not speak of things that relate to worldly wisdom. He will know nothing but the foolishness of God.(???) It is because he knew he was God's man, given God's message.

And while it is true that all of us belong to the Lord in a general sense, those of us who are men of God in a very elevated sense are given the deposit of biblical truth as a trust to be disseminated to the people of God. We are, you might say, a man belonging to the spiritual order, a man for which temporal, transitory, perishing things have no reals significance. We aren't the world's men. We have been raised beyond that and we have one dominating driving compelling mandate and that is to preach the Word, to be instant in season, out of season, constantly speaking for God, constantly saying, "Thus saith the Lord." As Paul writes to Timothy, Paul recognizes that it's not easy. He knows that Timothy is going to be confronted by false teachers. He knows that already in Timothy's church there are sinful leaders who are having a deadly effect on the church. He knows there is doctrinal error, both present and coming. He knows there is ungodliness. All of this has already surfaced in the church at Ephesus to which Timothy was assigned. The whole epistle is a call to Timothy to posture himself in light of all of this as a man of God. He is God's man. That in opposition to all the phonies and the fakes and the frauds and the false teachers and the false apostles and the charlatans and the imposters who parade themselves as if they represent God. You can always tell a man of God, because a man of God speaks faithfully and lives faithfully the truth of God. That's what sets him apart.

Now as we look at this title, and expand it a little bit, I saw four things here that jump out at you because if even the way the English way lays them out, the man of God is known by four marks...four distinguishing characteristics. And again, these are the categories in which we endeavor to confront

leaders and to bring them into line with the Word of God so that for the sake of the church and the Lord of the church, they can be effective in representing the God to whom they belong.

Number one, the man of God is known or marked by what he flees from...he is marked by what he flees from, verse 11. "But flee from these things, you man of God." That is a present imperative, that is it is a continuing action, a continual action being commanded. The Greek verb, *pheugo*, from which we get the English fugitive. We are, to begin with, fugitives. We are a running man. We are running relentlessly. We are running all the time. We are fleeing all the time. And from what? From these things, you man of God. The question is, what things are we fleeing from? If you go back just a little bit into verses 9 and 10, you read, "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction, for the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang, but flee from these things." From what? From the love of money and all the attendant corruptions that come with it. You can even go back to verse 5 where he says in verse 5, There are..there are some people, he calls them men of depraved mind, deprived of the truth, that's a pretty serious indictment...men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth. There are those who suppose that godliness or religion is a means of gain. There are people in the ministry for money. There are people who...who realize you can make a lot of money through religion, and that is absolutely true. Look at the wealth of the cults of the world. Look at the wealth of the false religions in the world. Look at the wealth of the false teachers and false prophets and religious frauds and fakes. You can make a lot of money if you tell people you can heal them, you can literally guarantee they're going to win the divine lottery. You can make a lot of money if you promise people God in heaven, and miracles. You can make a lot of money if you tell people you know the secret of the ages and the truths of time and eternity. There are people who suppose that religion is a means of getting rich. And they're right, it is a way to get very, very rich. And then you can even develop a theology of health and wealth that makes it look like you're rich because God made you rich because your message is the right message. But godliness, verse 6, actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. True godliness is marked by contentment. You brought nothing into the world, you're not going to take anything out either. If you have food and covering, that's enough. You don't ever want to get caught into all of the temptations and traps and foolish and harmful lusts that plunge people into ruin and destruction that go along with materialism...loving money produces all kinds of evil. It's not just the evil of loving money, it's all the evil that goes with being preoccupied with the material, the physical.

If one is to be a man of God, he is a running man. He is a fleeing man. First Corinthians 6:18 warns all of us, "Flee sexual sin, flee fornication." First Corinthians 10:14 warns all of us, "Flee idolatry." And here the man of God is warned, "Flee loving money and all the material things that go with it, all the passing fancies of this fading world, all of the evils that are attached to self-indulgence, self-fulfillment, self-aggrandizement. Paul told Timothy in chapter 1 verse 4 to avoid myths, endless genealogies which give rise to speculation. Avoid those things that corrupt your clear mind and assault and attack

biblical truth. In chapter 6 at the end of the epistle, verse 20, he says in the middle of the verse, "Avoid worldly, empty chatter," *bebalos*, it's an onomatopoeic word. Something literally...it means...something outside the sacred temple, non-sacred babble and avoid the opposing arguments, the antithesis of what is falsely called knowledge. Avoid all the garbage that comes in the name of religion and philosophy. Don't let your mind be corrupted. Second Corinthians 2:22, he says, "Avoid youthful lusts." You have to run, your whole life in ministry you're a fleeing man and you are running from everything that can corrupt you. Ideas can corrupt you. Lusts can corrupt you. Material things can corrupt you. You run from all those worldly idols. False teachers and liars and frauds, false apostles who pervert the truth of God for money, who make merchandise of people for personal gain, who pretend to represent God for the sake, as Peter puts it, of filthy lucre, who preach for money are always going to be around. They are not men of God. There will always be a Balaam, a prophet who can be bought by the highest bidder. There will always be a Judas who will sell Jesus cheap for 30 pieces of silver. There will always be false prophets as there were in Israel who were greedy dogs that never had enough, were never satiated and consumed everybody in sight for their own personal gain. There will always be the covetous prophets and priests that Jeremiah wrote about. There will always be the kind that Ezekiel saw in his day who could literally be bought by handfuls of barely and pieces of bread. There will always be those who Micah said divined for money. There will always be those whom Paul wrote in Romans are false teachers who speak good words and give fair speeches to deceive the innocent for the satisfaction of their own bodies. There will always be those, as recorded in Titus, unruly empty talkers, deceivers who subvert whole houses, teaching what they ought not to teach for filthy lucre's sake. Believe me, the love of money has perverted many. Second Peter 2, "Greed has called false teachers...Peter says...to exploit you." Paul was so careful on that, to run from everything that was worldly, everything that was attached to this passing world, including the love of money. Acts 20, he says to the Ephesian elders, "I coveted no man's gold, I coveted no man's silver. I coveted no man's clothing. That is not what I'm interested in. I can have it or not have it, I can be abounding in it, I can be abased without it, it doesn't matter. In all things I am content. I have a right to be supported," he says in 1 Corinthians 9, "but there are circumstances where I don't want that support because if I take that support I will then be misjudged and accused of preaching for money. There are times when I will work with my own hands," he says to the Thessalonians, "to earn my own way so as not to cause anybody to criticize me for preaching the gospel for personal gain, though I have a right to it."

You run from that your whole life, you are escaping those corrupting influences that come along with this passing world. And when the Lord does give you and bless you with more than you need, you have to be the model steward of that. Demonstrating what we learned in Luke 16 a few weeks ago about purchasing friends for eternity, investing in that which is eternal, giving generously to the Kingdom of heaven. You can't be God's man and the world's man. You can't be God's man and money's man. If you work for money, you have prostituted the call of God into personal gain, you are not a man of God. You may wish to have the title, but you are not. Never put a price on your calling, never put a price on your ministry or you've just devalued yourself to zero in God's eyes. A man of

God is known by what he flees from. And what we've endeavored to do all across the world through all of these years, and we'll do it again in various ways as time goes on again and again is to tell men that in order to be faithful to be the man of God, you have to disconnect yourself from the corrupting elements of this world. You have to be a fleeing running man.

Secondly, the man of God is known not only by what he flees from but what he follows after. Same verse, verse 11, you see in the NAS the word "pursue," it's actually the verb to follow after, "Flee from these things, you man of God, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness." While we're fleeing from the world, we're running after spiritual virtues. We're fleeing temporal values and pursuing spiritual virtues. And this also is a present imperative indicating continuous action under command. We are commanded to be always fleeing and always following. The negative side always fleeing the corrupting things, and always following after, pursuing the righteous godly things.

Paul is simply saying, "Get out of the sight of the things that corrupt and never let the things that produce virtue out of your vision." The Christian life is too full, it's for you the same, it's for us the same with perhaps greater implications. Your Christian life is an effort to run from evil and to pursue God. That's what it is. That's what it is for us. Proverbs 15:9 says, "The Lord loves him that pursues, that runs after, that follows after righteousness." The man of God has to ask himself, "Am I running with all my might? Am I fleeing man? And am I a following man?"

What am I after? What am I after? This is the message to pastors and leaders in a day where success and fame and esteem and promotion and money and popularity and notoriety and all that stuff is very seductive. What are you running after? What do you want? What is your ambition? I was reading again last night as I was sitting in my study, in fact, through the day going back over 2 Corinthians 5:9 and 10, Paul says, "I have as my ambition to be pleasing to Him." My goal, my driving desire is to please God. That's what I am running after. I can't be running after success, a bigger church, more notoriety, bigger fame. I have to be running after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

Let's talk about those for just a minute and I won't belabor that because we're familiar with them. Righteousness has to do with doing what's right. How simple is that? I mean, your life is set in the direction of doing what is right. You're running from what is wrong and you spend your whole life running with all your might toward what is right. The Christian life has gone on for me now for a long time. Since I really came to grips with what it was to be a Christian as a teenager, many, many years have gone by and the race has been relentless all through all those years, running after righteousness, desiring to do what is right. To do what is right not just before men but to do what is right before God. We're talking not here about imputed righteousness that comes in justification, but the practical righteousness that comes in sanctification, obeying the Word of God. The most comprehensive summary term for all virtues, doing what is right before God.

But he adds godliness. And it's not redundant because godliness really goes inside. It's not about doing what is right, it's about thinking what is right. Now we go from the conduct to the heart. Paul did what was right because he thought rightly. His life was right because his thoughts were right. He was winning the battle on the inside. He was cultivating godliness in his own heart, reverence, holiness, piety in the heart. He was truly loving God and therefore loving what pleased God. He was delighting in God and therefore delighting in what brought joy to God. Behind right behavior is a right attitude. And when you're training leaders and you're training pastors, when you're trying to influence men, you can't start with how they do ministry or ways they can structure their church or ministry models. You've got to start with are they running men, are they fleeing things that they ought to flee and are they following after things they must follow after? We are to serve God, says Hebrews 12:28, acceptably. How do you do that? With reverence and godly fear. This all has to come from a worshiping heart. I've been trying to say this for many, many years that your ministry is nothing more than a reflection of who you are. It's nothing more than an overflow of the heart. Godliness is critical. By the way, the word godliness is used nine times in these three pastoral epistles, 1, 2 Timothy and Titus. It's at the heart of everything we do. It's...if that isn't there, if the heart is not godly, eventually it's going to show up. I've said this to many people for many years, time and truth go hand in hand, given enough time the truth will come out. Given enough time, the truth of who you are will come out. Be sure your sins will find you out. Inevitably it's going to show up. And so hypocrisy will reveal itself in most cases, so watch your heart, watch your motives, watch your desires. Don't be an unsanctified preacher.

Back in Psalm 50 there are a couple of statements in verse 6...16 and 17 that are very helpful in this regard. Listen to this. "But to the wicked, God says, 'What right have you to tell of My statutes?'" Look, if you're wicked, then I don't want you telling about my statutes. I don't want you preaching my Word if you're wicked. What right have you to tell of My statutes and take my covenant in your mouth? Shut your mouth, stop preaching if you're wicked. For you hate discipline and you cast My words behind you. You're a hypocrite. Stop. It's like Amos 5 where God says, "Stop your songs, your hearts aren't right." I don't want to hear your songs. It's a mockery. In Psalm 101 and verses 6 and 7, similar statement, "He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to Me. He who practices deceit shall not dwell within My house." I don't want anything to do with somebody who is a phony. I don't want anything to do with somebody who is a fraud, somebody who is deceitful. If you live in a blameless way, then I want you to minister to Me. Watch your heart, watch your motives, watch your desires. Don't be an unsanctified preacher. Paul was so concerned with the integrity of Timothy's life as the substantial foundation for ministry. When he said to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 verse 28, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock," he put it in the right order. Be on guard for yourselves and then for the flock of God. Or at the end of chapter 4, 1 Timothy verse 16, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching." Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 says, "I beat my body into subjection lest in preaching to others I would be disqualified." This tremendous fear that remaining sin in Paul if unchecked an undealt with would disqualify him and bring shame on the Lord. And Paul

knew his heart. I mean, he knew the sin of his own heart. As I referred to it earlier, the Apostle Paul knew what he was, he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent aggressor. I mean, the man had some strong influences and impulses in his natural flesh that he knew could surface again and bring discredit upon the Lord. And so, he lived in disciplined subjection to the Word to live a pure and virtuous life. And he came to the end as he tells Timothy at the end of his final letter and says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I've kept the faith and I'm headed for my reward." It can happen. It can happen.

The sad reality is, however, that we see so many men who have no power in their lives because they have no real virtue. John Flavil, the Puritan, said, "It's easier to cry against a thousand sins in others than to mortify one sin in ourselves." And John Owen wrote, "A minister may feel his pews, his communion roll the mouths of the public, but what he is on his knees in secret before almighty God, that he is and no more. And given time that shows up." Unholiness and sin in the heart of God's servant disgraces the ministry, disgraces the Savior, brings shame upon the church, the man of God then must be a running man, he must employ all the means of grace in his own personal life, all the means of grace, the disciplines, the self-denial, the accountability, the worship, the communion, the openness to God, communion with God with others who are in the fellowship of God, he must let the Word speak first and foremost to him. I say this to men all the time, if there's no other reason at all to be an expositor of Scripture, one is enough. If you will preach the Word of God verse by verse, it will transform your life and it will hold you accountable to every passage every week of your life. And that's what produces holiness and godliness. And if you had no other reason to be an expositor than that, that's enough.

Charles Bridges in the Christian ministry wrote many years ago, "If we should study the Bible more as ministers than as Christians, more to find matter for the instruction of our people than food for the nourishment of our own souls, we neglect to place ourselves at the feet of our divine teacher. Our communion with Him is cut off and we become mere formalists in sacred profession. We cannot feed ourselves by feeding others."

It is for me relatively easy to grab some material to say to you. And I suppose if I were in another church and had 37 years worth of sermons I'd be prone to teach them all again and I might bring a halt to the intense study that is required of me in my life right now. One of the reasons I continue to stay in this church at your mercy and discretion, of course, is so that I can continue the depth and intensity and necessity of the deep study of the Word of God for therein lies the work of the Word in my own soul and there in lies the joy of discovery that keeps the enthusiasm in my ministry. People say that to me, "You don't seem to have lost any passion." Of course not because I'm subjecting myself to a fresh approach to the Word of God every week of my life and first it washes over my own soul before it ever gets to you. The study of the Word of God is not for me a profession, it is very, very personal. In fact, I will confess something I've probably never confessed, I think I am a far better student of Scripture than I am a preacher of it. That is to say, I find the Scripture opens up to me in

the discipline of my study in far more vast riches than I'm ever able to disseminate to you and always feel inadequate in doing so anyway. In one way, I guess, I always have a far better sermon in my study than you ever hear.

The man of God then pursues righteousness and godliness. And he adds faith. What is that? He's known because his trust in God is unshakeable. He's known because he is confident in God for everything. He's known as being loyal to the Lord, unswerving confidence in God's power, God's Word, God's purpose, God's plan, God's promise. He lives under divine sovereignty as a benediction on his life. He lives in the light of God's promises. He believes that if you do it by the book, God will honor it that way. He is unshaking in his commitment to a biblical ministry. He knows that the sovereignty of God resolves everything, that the providence and the power of God is expressed in response to the Word of God. His life is lived in the consciousness that everything is controlled by his Lord and everything good happens by the Spirit using the truth that comes from the Word. And so, there's no frustration, there's no forcing, there's no manipulation, there's just diligence in the proclamation of the truth and entrusting it to the one to whom we can give everything in confidence faith. The true man of God is a man who lives by faith in the sovereign outworking of the purposes of God through the Word preached.

Fourth, he's marked by love, *agapan*, volitional love, unrestrained, unrestricted love toward God and men. He loves the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, or desires to do so, desires to love all who are around him. He is a lover of God devoted to the Lord, committed to self-sacrificing service on behalf of the Lord to people. He loves men in the sense that he gives his life away to them. The love of God is his motivator. It causes us to diligently study, if we love you truly. The pastor who really loves you is going to pour himself into the Word of God so that he can give you the best that it has to offer. That's how he expresses his love. He's going to encourage you when you need encouragement. He's going to confront you when you need confrontation. Richard Baxter said, "Don't pretend to love your people if you favor their sins." Any pastor who says "we don't deal with sin here" doesn't love his people and it's questionable whether he loves his God. Anybody who loves God loves what God loves and what God loves is holiness and God loves His people to be holy. And if you're indifferent toward their sins, then you don't love people. If you say to God all the time as you hear preachers say, "God loves you, God loves you, God loves you," then you have to immediately say, "And if you don't turn to receive His Son, you're going to hell." If you love God and you love people, you say that. And if in the church you say God loves you, God loves you so much that He gave His Son, you're going to have to also say God loves you so much that He wants you to stop that sin, He wants you to abandon that sin or you're going to be put out of His church. He's a man who expresses the true and the pure kind of love, not some mushy sentimentalism.

Patience is another of these virtues, also perseverance in the NAS. It has to do with being steadfast, *hupomone*, to remain under. *Hupo*mean under, from the verb *meno*to remain, to stay under. He has an ability to endure. I love this. He has an ability to hang in there, to be under the burden of it, under

the weight of it, under the power of it, under the disappointment of it. And it's not passive acquiescence, it's victorious kind of endurance. It's an unswerving loyalty to the Lord, the people, the truth. The man of God has this amazing resilience, hangs in there. And it can be good, it can be bad, it can be up, it can be down. It can be disappointing or affirming. It can be heartbreaking or triumphant. And he endures it all.

That's what you follow, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness. You fight, thirdly. The man of God is known by what he flees from, what he follows after, what he fights for. This has been a large part of our ministry, hasn't it? Sometimes you have to tell people flee these sins. Sometimes you have to tell them follow these virtues. Sometimes you have to tell them, "Fight this fight." It says fight the good fight of faith. What it means is the noble fight, *kalos*, the noble fight for the faith, the content of the Christian faith. Why? Because biblical truth is always under attack. Every faithful preacher is a fighter. That's been a large portion of my ministry. I remember the first time I went to Russia, they said, "Help us build a fence around the church that has never known false teachers because under Communism only the true church survived. Build a fence around the church to protect us from what's going to come." And we've been doing that ever since over there and all around the world. We tell people how to fight. This is an agonizing battle in which we are engaged and a faithful man of God is a soldier, a warrior, a fighter, a boxer, a battler. Fight the good fight. I don't know if you know how it was in ancient times. Kenneth Weistro(?), said the gloves of Greek boxers were fur-lined on the inside and on the outside made of ox hide, sewn into the ox hide was lead and iron. That's how you fought. And the losers had his eyes gouged out. It's pretty serious conflict. And so is spiritual warfare. It's sad to see pastors who don't want to fight, who don't want to go to battle, who don't want to guard the truth, who don't want to protect the truth. Chapter 6 verse 20, "Guard what has been entrusted to you," that's just part of your duty, guard it...guard it. Second Timothy chapter 1 verse 13, "Retain or guard the standard of sound words." Verse 14, "Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure that's been entrusted to you." It's a guardianship. There's a battle out there for the protection of the truth and we have to be fully engaged in that battle.

Well, out of time, that's no good. Just give me another five. All right. Now look, verse 12, he says this, "Flee these things, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Go back to your conversion. Timothy, remember this is about salvation here, this is about eternal life. It's the very eternal life to which you were called and to which you made a good profession in the presence of many witnesses. He's probably harking back to Timothy's actual conversion and saying, "Timothy, here's what pulls it all together." Lay hold on eternal life is in apposition in the structure of the Greek, it's in apposition to the three verbs...flee, follow, fight. Why are we fleeing so hard from the corrupting things? Why are we following so hard after the glorious virtues? Why are we fighting? Because these are issues that relate to eternal life. We're not dealing with temporal things, we're dealing with eternal souls.

Does this matter? It's the only thing that matters. Nothing else matters than this, nothing else. We're all drowning in a sea of political harangue, aren't we? Do you ever get weary of it? Every news channel, every cable news channel, everything that could be said, should be said, should not be said on every single issue goes on ad nauseum. And you know what? It doesn't matter, none of it matters. Get a grip on what is eternal. That's what he's saying to Timothy. To which you were called...that's an effectual call into salvation. And to which you made a confession when you established that you had put your trust in Christ...remember, Timothy, the man of God is one who is committed to serve God by proclaiming the Word of God with a view to eternal results. We are far above the pitiful struggles for things that are perishable and useless. We're battling for what is eternal.

Finally, one more thing that characterizes the man of God and this too has been a part of the emphasis, this maybe has been the big part. We have endeavored to tell men they need to flee certain things, follow certain things and fight, and fourthly, the man of God is known by what he is faithful to. What he flees from, follows after, fights for and is faithful to...verse 13, wish I could develop this, but I'll just give you the main idea, "I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Wow.

Here's the fourth...keep the commandment...keep the commandment. What is the commandment, *ten entolen(??)*in the Greek.. It's synonymous with the law...keep the law. In fact, *entolen*a number of places in the New Testament is translated by the word "law." And here the singular, according to Bower Lexicon takes in all the commandments of the Scripture, all the commandments of the law of God. This word commandment used in the singular numerous times in the New Testament, I won't take you to all of them, refers to the Law of God, not a single commandment, not this commandment as opposed to that one, keep the commandment. Like in Romans 7, Paul says, "I saw the commandment and I died." Second Peter 3 "The commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by Your Apostles," meaning the New Testament in that case. Second Peter 2:21, "The holy commandment," meaning Scripture. So the man of God is known because he is faithful to the commandment, to the Scripture. We are men of the Word above all, that's why we know what to flee from, follow after, and fight for. So he says I'm commanding you in the presence of God who gives life to all things. What does that mean? Don't worry if they kill you for being faithful, He'll give you life. Jesus didn't worry, He testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate knowing Pilate had the right and the power and would take his life. I charge you, the God who gave life to Jesus after death, will give you life. Fear nothing, just keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ which He will bring about at the proper time, be faithful to the very end until Jesus comes. And don't worry about the consequences, cause if they take your life God will raise you from the dead. Faithful to the Word, faithful to the Scripture, faithful to the revealed commandment of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

This is what marks the man of God. This is our high and holy calling. And this is why we had a Shepherds Conference. This is why we do what we do because we want to raise a generation of men who follow these patterns. Why? For the glory of the church which is the glory of the Lord of the church which is the glory of God. And the whole thing is so marvelous that Paul explodes into a doxology in verse 15, "He who is the blessed and the only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see, to Him be honor and eternal dominion, amen." Wow, he's just literally carried away with the glory of this calling. He wants nothing but what will honor the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Only what will recognize His honor and eternal dominion. You see such massive elevated transcendent implications of faithful ministry.

And so, we will go on as long as God gives us breath and until Jesus comes, hopefully there will be men of God who are faithful to this description.

Our Father, we thank You for the little time we've had this morning to deal with a massive subject of great critical importance to You, to Your church. We pray that this week as we pray and as we serve and as we preach and as we teach there will be these great realities under the surface, moving in the hearts of all who are here, causing them to flee the things that will corrupt them, causing them to follow after the things that will produce virtue, cleanse them. May they be ennobled and strengthened for the fight and the guardianship and may they be elevated to a new level of faithfulness to the truth so that their lives become in themselves a doxology in themselves a testimony and a benediction to You. To this end we pray for Your glory, in Christ's name. Amen.

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