

**1 Timothy 4:6-11** <sup>6</sup> If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. <sup>7</sup> But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. <sup>8</sup> For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. <sup>9</sup> This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. <sup>10</sup> For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. <sup>11</sup> These things command and teach.

The Love of Christ Compels You Also

To Preach

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To Exercise

I remember hearing once of a rare type of flower that only grows on the cliff faces of the mountains in Hawaii. This flower is fading quickly from existence, and would probably be extinct today if not for the efforts of one man. Who at the right time of the year takes his boat across the waters - you can't get to these cliff faces except by boat - ties his boat to whatever he can find to tie it to, and proceeds to climb these sheer cliff faces. The flower is so high up the cliff face that he can't make it in one day. He must sleep hanging over the ocean. After he finally gets up high enough he attaches himself to the cliff face and swings around thousands of feet above the pounding ocean waves pollinating hundreds of these flowers by hand. Then he descends back to his boat and waits for the next season.

Now I had to ask myself why would he do that? I imagine that if roses or orchids or maybe even tulips were on the verge of extinction many people would go to great lengths to save them. Flowers and especially those types I've just mentioned are nice to have around, they brighten up a room, they add color and beauty to what might otherwise be drab and boring. So maybe I was thinking he does this to save a pretty flower, to get sentimental about it - to save something of beauty in this cold dark ugly world. But when I saw the flower I realized that was not it. There are some flowers that are beautiful and some that are plain and ordinary these were neither, they were just hideous, they were the ugliest flowers I have ever seen. They looked like something someone pulled out of the garbage and tried to replant in between two slabs of concrete. If I were to go on a date with some girl and brought these along and said here I brought you some flowers there is no doubt in my mind that she would never speak to me again, even if I explained how rare they were and what great lengths I went to get them.

So why did this man expend all that energy and time and risk and danger just to save this thing, I don't even think I would call it a flower? Was it a waste of his time? Others might disagree with me, but I certainly think so. But you know what the funny thing is, you could ask that same question of Christ. Why exactly did you waste all that time and energy, why exactly did you endure all that pain and torment? He certainly didn't come to save anything beautiful, he certainly did come to save anything useful. No He climbed, in this case, down the cliff face in order to exchange his soul for a bunch of worthless plants. All we can do in answer to that question is marvel at His great love, at his exceedingly great mercy.

This is exactly where Paul is, the Apostle Paul is standing gazing up at this great love of Christ, and his conclusion is: such a magnificent love compels, compels me and compels you

Timothy. The love of Christ Compels Us: To Preach what we have heard, and to exercise what we have learned. And the words of our text are exactly that. They are a summary of what every Christian can not help but do, since he has witnessed the unimaginable love that God showed to us.

## I.

Before we get into the text there is one matter, we need to clear up. Some otherwise very devout ministers might not want to listen to this text. Some very intelligent people think that if they are sitting down when they hear these words they don't need to listen. [Let me show you how it works . . . now I'm sitting down that means I'm not the minister]. But since when has the Lord ever restricted the ministry to a select few people, since when has the Lord ever said I want only those people who wear black somber gowns and have a certificate of ordination hanging in their office to preach/ to teach My Word. You know what has always amazed me? How much the taste of water can be affected by the color of the cup which it is in. I remember very distinctly that when I was 6 or so the only flavor of water I liked was the water that came in the blue cup. That red cup water was just nasty. [you laugh because] Of course that is nonsense. It doesn't matter what color the cup is, it doesn't matter what shape the cup is, and neither does it matter if you wear a black robe and stand during the Sunday service, or if you dress in something else and are sitting.

Moses had an interesting problem once. The people of Israel were complaining again, something they were rather too good at doing, something that we are probably a little too good at for that matter. The people were complaining this time because they had no meat, and they started talking about how they would have been better off in Egypt. And so the Lord tells them you want meat fine I am going to give you so much meat that in a short while you are going to loath the smell of it. And then Moses gathers the elders of the house of Israel together at the tent of meeting and the Lord gives Moses His Spirit and Moses passes the Spirit on to the 70 elders of Israel and they begin to prophesy. The bible doesn't say what they were prophesying but they were probably prophesying about the meat that the Lord was going to send. And they were probably telling the Israelites how sinful they had been to complain against the Lord, and certainly they would have been talking about the grace of the Lord in that He was going to send the meat anyway. But while this was going on people began to notice that two elders who had not come to the meeting and had therefore not received the Holy Spirit from Moses were prophesying anyway. So they run to tell Moses. Well Joshua was standing there with Moses and when he hears this he is just appalled. What people who haven't received the Spirit from Moses are preaching. Moses you have to stop this, you can't let just anyone preach the words of God. But Moses turns and says simply, **"I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!"**

In this sentence Moses expresses the heartfelt desire of every true Pastor. C. S. Lewis once said that a teacher works to make his job obsolete. So does a pastor. Any true pastor of the Word would jump up and shout if he woke up one morning and found out that he was out of work because there was no one left that was in need of spiritual care. Of course unfortunately that is never going to happen because there are too many people who still think if they are sitting down they don't need to listen. That is never going to happen because there is too much sin. Which means ironically that probably the only type of person in this world who wishes he had no

job security at all, is exactly the only type of person in the world who has the most job security of all. Sad but true.

Paul, it is true, was thinking specifically of Timothy when he wrote the words of our text. But there is not a single Christian who is not included in the words “minister of Jesus Christ”. That word means servant, and Christ calls all men to take up their cross and follow Him. Paul in many places speaks of the fact that we are set free from sin not so that we can do whatever we want but so that we may serve Him who set us free. The only question is are you a *good* minister. If you call yourself by his name, Christian, if you have had the seal of His love placed upon you through baptism, if you call Him lord, that is master, and believe that He is high King over all, than you are a minister yourself and you have this instruction from Jesus through the lips of Paul, **“instruct the brethren in these things”**. The Lord says it already way back on the top of Mount Siani speaking of His people, **“They will be to me a nation of priests”**. Every one of them, He says, will proclaim my word. Moses says it as we have just heard, **“I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets”**. And Christ himself commands it, **“Go,”** He says to every one of his disciples, **“and make disciples of all nations.”**

## II

But Paul doesn’t leave room to wonder about what makes the difference between a good servant and a bad servant. When it comes to those that are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, he tells Timothy there is only one thing that makes any difference, those that proclaim the true and pure Word of God and those that don’t. Either because they do not proclaim the Word of God at all or because they mix it with false teaching.

Sometimes I will be talking with fellow Christians, fellow members of the CLC, and we’ll start discussing some point of doctrine and the person I am talking to will make a comment that goes something like this. “Well I have my own view about that.” And then they will start talking about something else. You know what that means, you know what they are really saying, “I disagree with you, I think you and the rest of the CLC are wrong about that doctrine, but I don’t want to make a fuss about it, because I know no one will agree with me.” Now if you are trying to decide what day of Creation the Angels were created on, then by all means switch the subject. But if you are discussing fellowship issues, which is where I usually hear it, now you have a serious problem. And how are you going to be a good minister, how are you going to teach the brethren yourself if you don’t know what is right?

But you notice Paul isn’t worried about what Timothy will teach. He doesn’t go through a list of doctrines and say Timothy okay here is the truth and here is falsehood teach this and don’t teach that. He doesn’t say Tim, remember when I talk with you for months on end and we discussed all the various doctrines, you remember to teach those I told you to and not anymore. Paul doesn’t do this. Why because Paul knows Timothy and Paul knows that Timothy has been, **“nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine”**. Paul says straight out **“which you have followed.”** Timothy will be a good servant of Jesus Christ if he merely teaches those things which he has already learned, those things he has received, through his immersion in the words of God.

People often ask me why I decided to become a pastor. And I guess I tell them various things. But what I should tell them and what is closest to the truth is: What other occupation allows me to spend all my time in the Word of God, learning, applying and teaching it. Every time

I write a sermon I have one serious problem. My vocabulary is limited to human words. I'm like the man that sees the most amazing thing in the world and comes home and all he can say is it was awesome, or it was beautiful. How are you going to describe the glory of the mercy of the Lord? How are you going to describe the depth of meaning instilled in every verse of scripture? I wish I could bring that to you every Sunday, but I can't I am bound by human words and with a human mind. All I can do instead is echo the words of Paul **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"** But like the man who cannot possibly describe what he has just seen, I will follow it up with these words, "This is something you have got to see for yourselves." **"Come behold the everlasting kindness of our God."**

But you have got to, like Timothy, make the Scriptures the heart of every day of your life, you have to devour them, immerse yourself in this word of God. The greatest joy in my life is that I am forced to dig deeply into the scriptures. It is not ok just to read through a chapter and say all-right, well I got my bible reading out of the way for the day. Doing that you will not find the glorious picture of Christ love. You will not see how truly magnificent the empty cross is. You will instead be like a man who has a large reservoir of oil in his backyard, but digs up only enough to fill his own tank every day on the way to work.

### III

In the next verse Paul says, **"But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness."** But Paul here isn't giving Timothy advice on what type of doctrine Timothy ought to listen to. Paul isn't saying Timothy I don't want you to preach fables to other men. Paul has already testified that Timothy would not preach anything but the truth. Rather Paul is giving Timothy advice on time management.

There is a word that we hear all over our society, time management. How many people do you think take classes every week on how to organize and manage their time? And here Paul gives the ultimate time management advice. Stay away from foolish and profane stories, don't bother to even discuss these worthless myths with people who suggest them. They aren't worth your time. Just leave such foolishness alone. And, Paul continues, use your time instead to exercise toward godliness. What is godliness? Hebrews explains godliness in this way love, faith, and hope is the word in the English, but it is a dismally pathetic word to describe the Greek. The Greek word leaves no doubt as to whether the hoped for thing is going to happen, so we'll use the word confidence instead. Godliness = love, faith, and confidence. So here you don't need to pay hundreds of dollars to learn how to manage your time Paul tells you right here. Don't waste your time on trivial matters but exercise yourselves in love, faith, and confidence. Because, **"bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."**

I have never actually seen Marty here run but I have heard that he is quite fast, and I have heard him talk about His training, and I know that he didn't just roll out of bed one day and say hmmm, I think I am going to run 26 miles and run it really fast, and then go and do it. [Did you?] No it has taken him years of hard practice and dedication. And he has certainly benefitted from that exercise. Those of you who will never run 26 miles at record breaking speeds can still also benefit from bodily exercise. Exercise gives you energy, it keeps your body in shape so that everything works together better. It wakes you up in the morning. It gives you confidence and competence to meet the challenges of the day. Bodily exercise can do all this and yet these results

are but little in comparison to what exercise in godliness can accomplish. For godliness always has benefits not only in this life but in that which is to come.

Here is the real problem with sinning: When the moment comes we have to actually do it. Back in Eau Claire where I go to school there are these stone cliffs right on the bank of this river and often I and my friends, and many other people for that matter too will go down there and jump off the cliffs into the river. Now there are a couple different cliffs at varying heights, and none of them are too bad, but the highest is not only quite a bit higher, but also it is not quite a sheer drop, it slopes down to the river instead, so you have to make sure that you jump far enough off the cliff so that you land in the water and not on the land below the cliff. It really isn't a very hard jump to make, but it can look rather intimidating. The first time I was going to jump off this cliff I had no problem, I was completely confident, this was going to be fun, until I actually got to the cliff, then all of a sudden, it just wasn't so easy anymore.

The same is always true about sin, we think it isn't that hard to resist sin, we just won't do it no problem, until we actually get to that point and the sin is staring us straight in the face, or it sneaks up on us and there we are in the middle of it before we even realize. No matter how much confidence we have before the event suddenly there is no power to resist that sin. That is why we need to exercise, we need to gain real confidence through bible study and through prayer, and also through actually doing what we have learned. You can't say oh I'll get on that bike tomorrow, oh I'll go running tomorrow. That is how you never get started in the first place. You need to get up refuse to listen to excuses, and practice godliness, which starts by studying the Word of God, and then continues with love, faith, and confidence or the word that Peter uses is patience. **“For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Exercising your self in these things, you will be a good minister of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be in a position to carry out the command of our Lord, “Go, and make disciples” and you will be in a position to offer encouragement to your fellow brethren. This is how the Lord works, he also the little temptations those things that don't seem like a big deal to come at us, and as we exercise with these little temptations we grow stronger and then we are able also to conquer all things. The Lord says if you cannot be trusted with the small things than no one is going to trust you with large things.

And we work at this and we endure being mocked and scorned by men because we have confidence that God has saved all men and most especially he is the Savior of those that believe.

Paul calls Christ the Savior of all men and so He is. He has redeemed all men by His death and resurrection. But if He is the Savior of all men, how much more precious is He to us who have received the benefits of that salvation. We ought to just be so astounded so thrilled so full of love for Christ that thinking of Him we would like to just walk up to Him and give Him the biggest bear hug we've ever given anyone. Think of that just grabbing God and saying, “Thankyou, Thnakyous Jesus.” And I don't think Christ would mind, in fact I know he wouldn't. He really is our big brother. His greatest joy is to see us get it right. That is why he admonishes so often and give us such powerful weapons to use in our fight.

And that is why we work so hard. That is why we endure all things, including the gravest insults upon our own person, so that we can see the joy on His face when we do get it right. So that we can hear those precious words from Him, “well done, I am proud of you.” Have you ever heard those words from someone you really admire, someone you really look up to. It just makes

all the difficulties all the pain worth it, just that one simple phrase. At that point when I hear those words of Christ spoken to me, I think I'll probably start crying. The bible tells us that Christ will wipe away every tear from our eyes. But I don't think it is speaking of those tears, I don't think that Christ will wipe away those tears. For they will be tears of pure joy. And even if in the years following that joyful reunion my memory were to forget all things, never through all eternity would I ever forget those words.

This is what the apostle Paul labored for, this is what we labor for, because Christ has shown His incomparable love, because he has saved me, because He has saved you, even though we were ugly and useless. And being filled with the power of the scripture, we call this out to others, each and everyone of us, we don't sit around and wait for the pastor to do it, we call out to all those around us. There are so many everywhere around us that don't know that Christ has already defeated our slave master, that we are no longer bound to do what Sin commands. You are free, we want to let them know, we are free and so are you we no longer need to take commands from sin, we no longer need to fear death.

The great tragedy of this week is not that a large area which contained an unique society was destroyed. The great tragedy was not that we lost part of our history and heritage. The great tragedy was not even that hundreds or thousands of people are dead or dying. The great tragedy is that how many people had to face the Lord God without the knowledge of Jesus and the empty grave. But in this horrible disaster is also an opportunity. An opportunity for us who have the words of eternal salvation to show our love for Christ in helping our fellow men. Men whom Christ also came to save. And an opportunity for us who have the words of eternal life to share them with people who are probably pretty ready to listen, since they have nothing else. I think that if you can at all in anyway volunteer to go down and help don't wait around this is a perfect opportunity to exercise godliness by acting in love.

But whether we go down or not we still stand as sentries crying to all men, "O come and see what the Lord has done, come and witness and take part in His riches." We are not those who sit around and let others do the work that is ours, no we are those who while we wait patiently for the Lord we run to prepare for His coming, we race to do His work, because all of it will be well worth the effort when He returns and says to each one of us. Well done, I am proud of you.