

Pastor Appreciation 2-05-C

The apostle Paul wrote two letters to a young man that was a “fellow worker” in spreading the Gospel. His love for Timothy is seen in the fact that he refers to him as a dear son. Paul wanted to encourage and challenge Timothy as well as the Ephesian church. Paul used his letter to Timothy to also speak strongly to the church about how they were to honor their church leader, the person we often call the pastor. Paul used three different examples of how a pastor should work and the type of message he should deliver.

Part of being a pastor is to pass on the things you learn to trusted men who will help carry out the work, or to teach the next generation who will continue the work that is begun. Paul cautions Timothy to find reliable and qualified men to teach. There are three ways that a pastor influences his/her people. The first example Paul uses is a soldier. Paul encourages Timothy to specifically be a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Then Paul states two aspects of good soldiers. They must endure hardship, which was a good description of what many Christians were doing under heavy persecution. A good soldier also needed to stay focused on the orders from his commander and not become involved in the civilian affairs around him. That means that the Pastor should concentrate on what the Lord has ordained him, and not be caught up in the things of the world.

Paul explained to Timothy that a pastor is also like a good athlete. The roman athletes and those who took part in the Olympics had to follow specific requirements. The athletes had rules to prepare themselves for the competitions. It was important that they followed all the rules, otherwise they would be disqualified. The obvious goal for the athlete was to win the price, the victor’s crown. Likewise the pastor needs to build up himself and be in good spiritual condition. The Bible is the instruction manual and has the rules that a good pastor will follow to win the price of God’s calling in his life.

Paul also used the example of a hardworking farmer, that should be the first to receive the share of the crops. Without the advanced modern technologies, the farmers could only reap a good harvest if they worked very hard. The Bible often uses the picture of the harvest to talk about people we bring to the place of salvation. Paul wanted to emphasize the spiritual harvest to Timothy. Pastors can be very busy with many things, but only the pastor that works hard sowing the seed of the Gospel will reap a large harvest, and see God change peoples lives.

No matter if we compare him to a soldier, a good athlete, or a hardworking farmer, God will reward the dedicated efforts of a good pastor. Paul was enduring the prison chains for being a preacher of the Gospel, but he reminded Timothy that the message of the Gospel is never chained. There are no chains or limitations to the Word of God. And no suffering we have to endure is too great compared to the joy of seeing lives transformed through the message of Jesus Christ. If we die with Christ we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will reign with Him; and even if we are faithless, He is faithful.

A pastor today, the same as Timothy, needs to accept the words of Paul, and feel confident in the never chancing message of Jesus Christ that he is to proclaim to the world.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **A good soldier.**
 - A. Endure hardship.
 - B. Stay focused.
- II. **A good athlete.**
 - A. Follow the rules.
 - B. Receive the crown.
- III. **A good farmer.**
 - A. Work hard.
 - B. Share the crops.
- IV. **A good message.**
 - A. Remember what’s important.
 - B. God never changes.

Activity

Students can design simple cards to personally express their appreciation to the pastor. An alternative is to design a large card or simple poster so everyone can write a few lines on it to present to the pastor. Discuss with your students the duties that a pastor performs, the work seen by others, and the hours of unseen prayer and preparation.

Teacher Growth

Encourage your class to participate in a time to honor your pastor. You and the class could create a gift or celebration time to demonstrate your support of the leadership and your appreciation for all the work behind the pastoral title. You can send your pastor a personal note of appreciation and encouragement as well.

Scripture Passages:

2 Timothy 2:1-13

Memory Verse:

2 Timothy 2:10 – *“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.”*





