

1 Timothy 4:9-16

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] Take your Bibles. Let's go with me to 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy chapter 4. 1 Timothy chapter 4. You say, wow, pastor, you've never finished all your Bible classes. You've never finished all that. And you're right. I haven't.

I love to study. I've never had it. My ambition to pursue so that I can hang a piece of paper on the wall, that's just me and my ministry. But I want to continue to learn and continue to grow. And so, you know, at times I still do take classes. I haven't taken them in some while. Adrian Rogers told pastors, said, the best education you can ever have as a pastor is to be behind the pastor's desk.

I sat in the office and studied. So if you ever wonder why I read so much, it's not because I enjoy reading. It's because I know my limitations. So we read and we do as what Paul will admonish Timothy to do in 2 Timothy, study to show ourselves approved.

But we are making our way to this point. 1 Timothy chapter 4. Last time we were together, we got up to the 8th verse. So that was last Sunday. We're going to pick up verse 9 and go to the end of the chapter, which gets us down to verse 16.

[0 : 59] But for context, we're going to go back and read verses 7 and 8. So we are in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Our text will be verses 9 through 16. But in order to have it in the proper context, and you'll see why when we get into it in just a moment, we're going to back up and read verses 7 and 8.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God with one another. I found in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Let's read verses 7 and 8, and then we'll read to the end of the chapter.

Paul says, It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. Prescribe and teach these things.

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Show yourself an example of those who believe. Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

[2 : 17] Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Take pains with these things.

Be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for the day. We thank you for the wonderful opportunity we have of gathering together as a church family. We pray that as we have seen the Word of God, we've read it, we've heard it, that now you would speak to us.

We pray that our ears would be attentive to your voice, that our eyes would be open to the truth, that our lives would be available to the application of that truth for your glory and your glory alone. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. The temptation when coming to passages such as this, especially when they are nestled within what we refer to as the pastoral epistles, the pastoral epistles being 1 and 2 Timothy, and the book of Titus, and then Philemon as well, is to discount them as only having application to the man that is standing behind the pulpit.

[3 : 34] But I caution you in that because while we will see that there is definitely application there, there is a further application to each and every one of us as individuals. Because the Word of God tells us that all of Scripture is profitable.

Right? That is, there is something that we can gain from each and every portion of it. By the way, that passage which says and declares all Scripture is profitable, good for reproof and doctrine and truth and righteousness and all these things is nestled also within the pastoral epistles.

So we understand the reality that when we come here that we are not using this passage as a platform to judge the man who stands behind the pulpit on the platform, but rather saying, Lord, what are you saying to me?

Now, admittedly, there are a number of things in the passage before us that have direct application to men that are called to the ministry. There are great truths here of how we ought to hold men up to this position, how we ought to call them to walk in the requirements of it.

It is something that ought to be taught and something that ought to be modeled and something that ought to be exhorted to every man that enters into the pastoral ministry. And by the way, I'm not mistaken when I'm saying man because we've already settled that matter here in other texts.

[4 : 50] But when they enter into it, this is something that the older men ought to teach the younger men and something that older pastors need to pass on to younger pastors as to their responsibilities. It is the deviation from these responsibilities that I think has been the detriment, by the way, to the church in North America today.

It is moving away from this clear admonition that is giving to those who hold the position as pastor, namely to focus on the public reading and exhortation of the word of God.

Just in case you have missed it in the past, I know that I've shared this with you before. Or Ephesians 4.12 is what I refer to as the job description for the minister of me, that God gives some as pastors and elders for the equipping of the saints for the work of service.

That is, in a nutshell, the job description of the pastor and elder to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. And how do they equip the saints to do the work of the ministry? Well, we can go here to this passage before us where Paul tells Timothy to give attention to the public reading of Scripture and the exhortation of it.

That it is the reading of Scripture. You do not need my opinions. You do not need my thoughts. You do not need my judgments. What we need as the people of God is the word of God.

[6 : 04] But now that we've kind of laid that framework, let's see the application that it has to each and every one of us, myself included. Because I want you to see this morning, and I think it is really fitting that the Lord has given us this text on this first Sunday morning of the new year because this is a time when most people begin to try to do something new.

As Brother Caleb says, if you want to get more involved in the church, then we will happily get you more involved in the church, right? We have things and matters we can get you to do, but we want to ensure that you want to be involved for the right reason.

But I want you to see from the text the great pursuit of godliness. We touched on this just a little bit at the close of last year with our text from last year that there is a discipline that needs to be built into the individual's life, and it is the discipline of godliness.

But I want you to see from our text this morning this great pursuit of godliness. I want you to see how this pursuit is kind of lived out and why it is worth our attention.

It is the great pursuit of godliness. The first thing that I want you to notice is that godliness must be a truth we are convinced of. It is a truth we are convinced of.

[7 : 19] It says in verse 9, it is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. Now, it seems out of place, but we understand this phrase here is a repetitive phrase that Paul uses earlier in this very book as he's writing to 1 Timothy.

He uses it again later when he's writing to Titus. It is confined in the New Testament, by the way, to the pastoral epistles themselves. So it is Paul conveying a message to the pastor or to the elders of the church so that they can convey it to the people around them.

The first time that we see this phrase in the book of 1 Timothy is it follows the statement, or what follows after it is that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

It is a trustworthy statement deserving of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. And now we find this statement again repeated for us. So we want to understand why Paul keeps saying this thing that he's saying.

And we need to understand the reality that the Word of God, again, is not just Paul sitting down going, oh, I think this is a good place to put it. No, we believe that the Word of God was written by the men of God, by the Spirit of God, as God himself was breathing.

[8 : 30] The Word is there. They are God-breathed passages. And so we believe that he is declaring to them through the Holy Spirit what they ought to write with their hands. So there's intentionality to the text.

Now this phrase, it is a trustworthy statement deserving of full acceptance, is a phrase that is confined to matters which are declared to be important doctrines.

That is, Paul uses them to highlight a doctrine that is deserving of acceptance by the entirety of the church. He puts it either before or after a doctrine.

We would call that big rock issues, right? It is a big rock issue that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. It is a big rock issue that is deserving of full acceptance. It is something that we ought to all readily admit.

And many people not only agree that this is something that Paul uses to highlight a doctrine, but he also uses it to repeat what was most often a commonly accepted reality.

[9 : 30] That is, everybody in the church already knew that. But he is just reminding them of what they already know. Confessions began very early in church history.

That is, the confession of the saints. It is something that we've kind of deviated from and moved away from in latter times, but the confessions began very early in church history.

As a matter of fact, before even all of scripture was completed, the confessions of the church began to start. We see Paul kind of writing some of these confessions out. Many people believe that our focus passage here of 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14, 15, and 16, is part of a confession of the early church.

And then moving on down to verse 16, he who was revealed in the flesh was vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on the world, taken up in glory. That is a confession of the church.

It is by these confessions that the church found unity amongst their diversity. And so what Paul is using, I know I'm giving you a lot of history here, but I want you to do it so that you can absorb it.

[10 : 36] Paul uses this statement to highlight an important doctrine that the church ought to be confessing. And the one here is not what follows, but what precedes the statement.

That's why we read verses 7 and 8. And to put it really in short text, it is that godliness is profitable for all things.

That is a trustworthy statement deserving of full acceptance. That godliness is profitable for all things. And here we see the reality that until we pursue godliness, we have to be convinced of the truth of godliness.

That is, if we are not fully convinced of the truthfulness of that statement, we will not make it our pursuit. If we do not really believe, I mean to the core of our being, that godliness is profitable for all things, then we will never pursue it.

We will not pursue that which we are not convinced of. You don't have to look very far among mankind or even in church history and see what people give their ambitions and their pursuits to and see what energy is spent on things.

[11 : 55] And it is always something that they are convinced of the truthfulness of a matter. Men will not expend very much energy on something that they do not believe to be a reality.

One of the greatest testimonies to the resurrection of the savior is the reality that each and every one of the apostles died the death declaring his resurrection.

That each one of them would have had the opportunity to recant the fact that they had seen the risen savior and none of them did because men will quite often recant that which they are not fully convinced of.

So at the very least, we have to say that all of those church martyrs, those early martyrs, were convinced to the core of their being, to the reality that Jesus Christ came out of the grave and walked among them, ate meals with them, came into locked doors with them, they touched his body, they saw him ascend to the Father in the clouds, they were so convinced of that reality that they gave their lives for it.

They all died the martyr's death except for John. And he was exiled. They did everything but kill him. They tried to kill him and they couldn't kill him. And finally, he's exiled on the Isle of Patmos and he's there that he writes the book of Revelation.

[13 : 08] And what is he writing about? The risen Savior. See, this is a truth they are convinced of. Friend, listen to me. We will not pursue that which we are not convinced of.

And if we do not understand that this is a trustworthy statement deserving of full acceptance, that is, that godliness is a means of great gain, then we will not have any ambition to be godly. Because, to be honest, some people think, well, if I'm godly, I'll miss out on something. Or if I'm godly, there'll be something that falls short. Or if I'm godly, I'll have to give up something. See, it is a means of great gain. It is profitable in all seasons. Not only is it profitable at death, well, I'll take care of that at the end of my life. After I get what I need in this life, then I'll take care of it then.

You're not convinced of the reality of the truth. You think that godliness is a means of gain then. The Bible says godliness is a means of gain now. It is profitable for all things.

[14:09] And it is deserving of full acceptance. Here is a truth that we must be convinced of for we will not, we will not pursue that which we are not convinced of the reality.

And until we say, yes, godliness really is profitable, then we will not expend the energy that it requires to pursue it. You say, well, pastor, I thought that I was not saved by works.

You're proper, you're exactly right. We are saved by faith, not by works than any man may boast.

You are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, slain before the foundation of the earth.

But that sets you on the path to godliness, right? That doesn't make you fully godly yet. There's still a lot of work, I believe. Scripture teaches the reality.

We see it even in the Exodus event. Some of you have been with me the entire time. This started my ninth year here. So some of you have been here every Sunday and every Sunday night I've been here and you were here when we went through the book of Exodus and there's this refrain that I continue to repeat to you and for you when we went through the book of Exodus.

[15:17] What was it? We do not properly understand the salvation event until we understand the Exodus event. Because the Passover has such direct implication on what Jesus is and who he is.

So when we go back I believe in instantaneous salvation and I believe in progressive sanctification. That is in a moment God took them out of Egypt. In a moment they were free.

In a moment when the death angel passed and he saw the lamb's blood over the doorpost and he saw that in a moment they were redeemed. In a moment they were delivered. In a moment they were set captive from their captives.

In a moment they plundered the Egyptians and walked out but they wandered around for 40 years in the wilderness until God could get Egypt out of them. It took him a moment to get them out of Egypt and took 40 years for them to get Egypt out of them.

I believe in instantaneous salvation and progressive sanctification. The moment you come to Christ, friend, listen to me, you are free indeed. But there are some deeds that need to be out of our lives because we are free.

[16:26] And this is the pursuit of godliness. We do not arrive at the end the moment we accept him as our savior. It is there that we are born again to a new birth and therefore we are called to walk in the newness of life.

Each one of these bears with it the implication that there is something that we will be doing. Paul says to work out your what? Own salvation. That is, we ought to be pursuing godliness and until we are convinced of the reality that it is profitable then we will not pursue it.

Number two, here is a reality we are committed to. We see a truth we are convinced of, a reality we are committed to. It says in verse 10, for it is for this we labor and strive.

For it is for this we labor and strive. The word labor and strive there bear with it. The implication that there will be great effort and that there may even be persecution that comes from that effort.

To strive means to push through trials, to push through struggles, to, it is not something that comes easy. Godliness is not easy. Even pursuing godliness is not easy.

[17:44] But Paul says it is for this we labor and strive. We want to be godly. We long to be godly. We'll fall woefully short of it, sure, but it does not mean we'll quit laboring.

It does not mean we'll quit striving. Why? It is because of this reality because we have fixed our hope on the living God. We have fixed our hope on the living God.

Friend, listen, you cannot pursue something that you do not have anchored in the hope of the living God. That is why relationship with Jesus Christ comes primary.

That is why it comes before your pursuit of godliness. You do not try to be godly and meet Jesus on the way. Jesus comes to you and meets you while you are yet a sinner and sets you on the road to pursuing godliness because we will not do it until we have a fixed hope.

Look at what it says. We have a fixed hope, fixed our hope on the living God. We are not pursuing something, not realizing how it's going to end.

[18 : 48] We pursue godliness because our hope is fixed on the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. Now, I want you to understand this text does not preach and teach universalism.

That is, it does not say in the end everybody is saved. You say, well, pastor right there says that he is the Savior of all men, right? But then he puts a comment and says especially of believers. So Paul had something in mind.

What he was saying is that all mankind, by the way, just stop for just a moment and notice that he refers to the living God as the Savior who we would refer to as Jesus. So in case you ever doubted the deity of Christ, here Paul is testifying to the reality that he is both God and Savior, right?

He is fully God and fully man. Now, being the reality he says the Savior of all men, that means that what we would refer to as the common grace of all people. People expect Jesus would say it this way, that God causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine on all mankind, right?

Everybody wakes up. The book of Job tells us that if God was to call the Spirit back to himself that every man would die, all people would perish. The reality that everybody on the face of the earth woke up this morning, that all eight billion plus individuals are walking around is a testimony to the common grace of the Holy God and Savior Jesus Christ.

[20 : 05] Because until he calls his Spirit back to himself, men are allowed to live. That does not mean that they are eternally redeemed because that is especially the believers. He is the Savior of all.

His death is sufficient for all, but it only has application to those who have accepted him. So don't trust in the common grace of our Savior to be the saving grace of your life.

We see here this testimony. He says, we have fixed our hope on the living God. Why can we do this? Because here is a reality. Have you read through the book of Acts lately? Do you see what the apostles keep declaring?

They keep suffering. They keep pushing on. They keep doing things. Everything is changing. The church is born. It's a powerful time. What do they keep declaring? The only thing they're talking about is the living Savior.

They keep preaching Jesus Christ and him resurrected. It is the leaders, the religious leaders, they get mad at them. They flog them and beat them and say, we told you to quit talking about this.

[21 : 09] Jesus, you're making us guilty. We told you and they said, well, he's alive. We can't quit talking about him. Why? Because their hope was fixed on the one who was living. It was not fixed in this life but on the living Savior.

And the hope that is fixed there will cause us to live a commitment of pursuing godliness. It is a reality we are committed to until we know that he is the living God and the Savior of all believers then we will not pursue godliness.

This is a reality so we see this truth we are convinced of that godliness is profitable. We see this reality that he is the living God who is the Savior of all men especially of believers.

And number three, by the way, this is where the rubber hits the road, right? This is the application.

This is a way we are consistent to live. We see a truth we are convinced of, a reality we are committed to, and a way we are consistent to live because truths and realities bear application. If something is true and it is real then it must do something. That is, a doctrine does not impact our life until it changes how we live our lives.

[22 : 31] He says in verse 11, prescribe and teach these things. Now that is an admonition to a pastor or an elder. Prescribe and teach these things. These are matters which need to be set before the people of God.

And let no one look down on your youthfulness. So, Timothy had kind of the card stacked against him here. Many people believe he was about 30 years of age here and he was considered a youth in the Greek culture.

He was left there in that society where the society had to place such esteem on people that were older and such esteem on the elders among them. And yet, here's Timothy who was supposed to come in and admonish these people and to teach them these great truths that would change their lives.

But he says, don't let this be a hindrance to you because the way you live will offset any stumbling block. Don't let the obstacles in your life and you say, well, the Lord didn't make me this way or that way and the Lord didn't do all this and I don't have this giftedness and I don't have this reality. Don't let those be the limitations of his usefulness for you. I've declared to you before and I've told you and some of you think that I'm joking but I don't like public speaking.

[23 : 40] I'm just not really comfortable with it. I've never been much of a public speaker. I don't always like to be, I don't mind being around people. I just don't always like to be the one up in front of people. And it was something that I was like, Lord, I don't need to be that guy.

But there's always something that we can say that that's not me. Timothy could say, but I'm too young. He says, don't worry about it because we don't let these limitations limit the way God can use us because we allow our lives to be a testimony.

It is the consistency of how we live. Look at what he says, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. In speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example.

So he's telling Timothy here and the application goes a little bit further beyond pastors and telling all believers. People are going to look at you and say, well, who are you? You don't know what it means.

You can't tell me how I should live. You can't tell me how I should behave. Who are you to tell me what's godly and what's not? Well, as you pursue godliness, you live a consistent life.

[24 : 45] It says in speech, conduct, love, purity, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Look at what it says. Show yourself an example. What does it say? not to those who believe, but of those who believe.

See what he's telling Timothy? That if you really believe the truth that godliness is profitable, and if you really believe the reality that you have fixed your hope on the living God, then live your life like one who believes it.

Live in such a way that your life is a testimony of those who believe. that is, those who fully believe and really accept these things, their lives will look different, and they will look different in these areas, in speech, and in conduct, and in love, and in faith, and in purity, in every aspect of their lives, the way they talk, the way they care for people, the way they behave in society, the love they have, even for those who don't like them or disagree with them, the faith not just to believe, but the faith to move forward, and in purity in all aspects of their life, they will show themselves of one who believes.

Why? Because the world needs to see what a believer looks like. And who's going to show them? I referenced D.L. Moody earlier.

Someone once told D.L. Moody, the world has not yet seen what God can do with a man who has fully surrendered to him. Moody looked at him and said, I will be that man. No formal education, couldn't write really good.

[26 : 20] If you ever read any of Moody's handwriting, his spelling was abominable. I mean, you just can't hardly read it. You have to kind of think about what he might have said. Was never ordained as a pastor, never pastored the church which bears his name now.

He was never the pastor of Moody Bible Church. It was Chicago Bible Church and the very first thing he did was call a qualified man to be the pastor of that church. He was never the pastor of that church, yet he turned this continent and the continents around the world upside down because he was fully surrendered.

Jim Elliot, another one, who lived a very short life. He was not a man of great game, not a man of great esteem. He died a martyr's death when he's trying to reach the Indians in the Amazon jungle but his prayer, if you read his journal, was, give me neither a long life nor a prosperous life, but Lord, set me on fire that all the world may watch me blaze.

When he died in that wilderness, when they found his body, there was this thing across the campuses in America, this great awakening that called many, many young people, young men and women, to the gospel and sent them to the mission field like never before.

See, God used these people because their lives testified what it looked like to be a believer. It was a life of surrender, of pursuing godliness and they showed themselves as example of those who believe.

[27 : 35] So the people said, I want that. Is this the consistency of our lives? That we would do it in these ways, he says, until I come, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

This is what holds the church together. This is the call of the pastor, but we keep going on. He says, do not neglect the spiritual gift within you which was bestowed on you through the prophetic utterance with the laying on the hands of the presbytery.

So we need to understand what's going on here. Timothy had a giftedness of the Lord. There was the prophetic utterance, was probably Paul telling him and his grandmother and his mother telling him, we get that in a second letter to Timothy that the Lord was going to use him in a mighty way and then there is the ordination.

By the way, this is one of the only times in passages, we only see it a couple of times in scripture where there is actually the laying on of hands or the ordination, the laying on of hands of the presbytery literally means the laying on the hands of the group of elders, the multitude of elders ordaining him and commissioning him.

Prayerfully, by the end of this month, we as a church will be able to take place an ordination service. We will be able to see the ordination of our elders and ordination of deacons as we add to that body.

[28 : 45] We've already voted on it and I know some of you say, well, wait a minute, pastor, we haven't voted on the addition of deacons yet. I know. That's why we're having our deacons and elders meeting this afternoon instead of the second one.

We're moving forward. I've got, it's in my head, okay, we've got a plan. Those are the ones who need to know, know and we're making our way there and we'll try to, we'll do these matters but it will be a beautiful thing to see the ordination that takes place there and what he's saying is that there's the confirmation of the gift.

You say, oh, I'm glad Timothy didn't neglect that. Well, the question is, does your life neglect the gift God gave you? Because the moment you are saved, he empowers you and he gifts you for ministry work.

And you say, well, I've never been ordained into that. Yes, you have, the greatest ordination. Friend, listen to me. Moody never pastored his church because it was not really fitting for an unordained individual who was unintelligent to, to receive ordination at that time in American history.

But yet he preached all over the continents. He came into this very own land, was it Stones River Battlefield, leading men on the battlefield to salvation. He preached all over and he did not let the limitations because he knew his greatest calling and giftedness was from the Lord and not from man.

[30 : 05] So do not neglect that which God has given you. Look what it says in verse 15. Take pain. Take pains with these things and be absorbed in them.

By the way, this is, there is one verse that has been resonating within my mind and in my heart this entire week. It is this verse. Take pains with these things and be absorbed in them. With what? Being absorbed with this pursuit of godliness.

Why? So that your progress will be evident to all. Direct application, Paul is telling Timothy that he ought to be so engulfed in his ministry that those who sit before him see him progressing.

The application to me is that I ought to be growing in my knowledge of scripture and in my knowledge of faith and ought to be growing in my understanding of relationship with Christ that it ought to be evident to you. You who sit before me each and every Sunday those who come in sporadically ought to notice I should not be a stagnant pastor.

I ought to take pains and be absorbed in them. I ought to be growing and continuing to educate reading books that push me. I ought to be thriving. I ought to be in the word of God more and more every day not thinking that I've ever arrived because it ought to be evident to you that I am progressing in my walk with the Savior.

[31 : 19] But in your own life the application is that you ought to be so absorbed with desiring to be godly that those around you notice it. that it is evident.

Godliness is a recognizable attribute that people see it. So wow do you understand do you see the change that is going on in that individual?

This is the way we are consistent to live that our lives ought to consistently reflect the desire to be godly. Fourth and finally why?

Because of the message we are communicating to others. Because of the message we are communicating to others. Look at what it says. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching.

Robert Murray McSheen some of you read his Bible reading plan I read his Bible reading plan had a very short earthly ministry died at the age of 30.

[32 : 22] Robert Murray once said the greatest need of my people is my personal godliness. As he was pastoring the church he said the greatest need of the church I pastor is my godliness.

They don't need more of my time. They don't need more of this. They need my godliness. They need for the pastor to be godly. And this is where he gets it from. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching.

You say yes pastor we want you to be godly. But what if you put yourself there because I believe in the priesthood of the believers. That is that we are all called to be those who declare the risen savior to the world around us.

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Because the reality is that each one of us as believers are teaching someone something about our savior.

Your life is teaching others around you what you fully believe about the savior you confess. It is not just the pastor that is the teacher. He is to what?

[33 : 23] Equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. The greater part of the work of the ministry falls upon the saints. Because God does not confine, he does not professionalize ministry.

Ministry is the calling of every believer. And it is the testimony that each one of us are teaching around our dinner tables in our homes. The book of Deuteronomy says what?

When you are going, when you are walking, when you are going along the way, when you are walking down the path fathers ought to be teaching their sons and daughters and we will read a little bit later that the older men ought to teach the younger men, the older women ought to teach the younger women.

Each and every one of us are called to be teaching. So before we teach, pay special attention to yourself. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. And he tells us persevere in these things.

Persevere. Perseverance is a word that implies again a struggle. Persevere in these things. They are a pursuit of godliness. It is going to be hard. It is going to be hard.

[34 : 23] Many of you know that many New Year's resolutions, I'm not a New Year's resolutions guy, many people make great promises on New Year's Day and they usually break those promises really quick. Right? It calls for perseverance.

You ought to persevere in these things. Why? For as you do so you will ensure salvation both for yourself. Stop right there. It does not mean you're going to be saved because of your works.

We talked about this a little bit last week. the enemy of your soul loves to sit on your shoulders so to say and tell you you're not a believer. You know the greatest way to convince yourself that you are? Live like you are. Pursue godliness. Admitting that you're going to mess up. Realizing that you're going to fail. Every day that you pursue that godliness and you understand your own weakness then you know your need for a savior and it leads you calling out to him in a greater way.

That you say I need a savior more today. Friend listen to me. I have been saved now. Let me go back. I was immediately before I turned 21 this year I'll turn 45 so you know I've been saved longer than I was non-believer but I need a savior more today than I needed him then.

[35 : 32] Each and every day as we're pursuing it we understand there are different things different areas of our life that I need the lord to deal with that. The greatest way to ensure salvation to yourself. You're not having to convince your savior that you're his.

You need to convince yourself that you're his because the enemy in this world longs to convince you you're not. And the greatest way to convince yourself that you really belong to Jesus Christ as his child as you've been redeemed and you have now been adopted into the family of God.

The greatest way to convince yourself is to live that way by the power and spirit of the lord himself. And by doing so by pursuing this you will ensure salvation for yourself and for those who hear you. That does not mean that everybody that you come into contact with is going to be saved but what it means. Because if I thought that was the reality each and every Sunday I would come down and I would be so depressed. I know pastors that are.

If I thought that this verse was telling that if I lived right and I taught right then I would ensure salvation for everybody that sits in front of me then every Sunday I would get down and I would be utterly depressed and I would go into the deepest darkest depression cycle that I ever could.

[36 : 40] Many of my pastor friends do that. I know many people that have struggled with that. Charles Spurgeon dealt with that. Pastors throughout history have dealt with depression because of the lack of spiritual response that they see at times.

But we understand this is not saying that if I'm right then not everybody that hears me will be right. No what this is saying is that if I am pursuing godliness living my life trusting the Savior then I am positioning myself to now be the instrument and the tool of the master's hand for him to use me to cause someone to salvation.

him. And when you do that when you're pursuing godliness now you are not only convincing yourself that you are his child you are also positioning yourself to be the very tool that the master will use to bring others to know him.

You are putting yourself at his disposal and say here am I. I'm a broken vessel but I'm a vessel and you can use me Lord for your glory so that those around me may be saved.

But without godliness that doesn't happen. What are we pursuing? What is our great pursuit?

Because look at what it says for those who hear you.

[37 : 47] People are hearing us. The question is is what is our life saying and what message are we declaring to those around us? Let's pray. Father we thank you so much for this day.

Thank you for your word. Thank you for the calling and the challenges of it. We pray oh father that through our relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we'd be fully surrendered to you for your glory and honor.

Lord we know that the pursuit ahead of us is greater and grander than we could ever accomplish apart from you. But we say here we are. Use it for your glory, for our good, and for the sake of the kingdom.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[40 : 35] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.