

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

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[0 : 00] 2 Corinthians chapter 4 as we continue just to make our way through this letter to the church at Corinth. This morning our text will be verses 1 through 6, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 1 through 6.

Just for context, Paul is in the middle of his great aside. He has begun to defend his concern, his apostolic concern for the church and the believers at Corinth.

And in the middle of defending that, he began to speak of ministry. He will be in that vein until we get to the 7th chapter. Now if we agree, as we should, that the Word of God was the Word of God moved by the Spirit of God upon the hand of man and man wrote the Word of God, we know that this is not just an opinion which Paul had at that moment he wanted to share, but rather it was something that the very Spirit of God was imparting to him so that he would write this Word for our mutual benefit.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, starting in verse 1. And we'll read down to verse 6.

It says, Let's pray.

[2 : 09] Lord, we thank you so much for this day which you have given us, a day of gathering together, a day of worshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ, a day of reading and hearing the Word of God.

We pray, Lord, as we have seen it, now that you would speak into our hearts and minds the truth of it, that the truth of Scripture would resonate within our being and that it would be glorifying and honoring to you and you alone.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Paul has for some moments here begun speaking of the ministry.

When Paul opened up this section, he spoke of himself as being held captive by Christ and being led in the processional of victory.

Not his victory, but the victory of Jesus Christ. That he was a captive who was in the parade. He had been captivated by Christ. Christ had won the victory and he was put on display as some of the spoils of war.

[3 : 09] He was being led before Christ as Christ was behind the triumphant one. Christ was the one who had gained the victory over death, hell, and the grave. And it was Paul who had been captivated by that gospel message and set on the course of what we call pastoral ministry.

Paul has declared that he was a sweet aroma of Christ to God, not unto man. He has spoken of the reality of the difference between the much more glorious gospel that we have in Jesus Christ than the standards we have in the law of the Old Testament.

The new covenant is so much more glorious than the old covenant. He has spoken of the reality of the veil which resides over the face of the individuals who are still living according to the law, but the veil that is removed when they come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

And now he enters into a subject which is very becoming of us and something which we must pay special attention to. I want you to see this morning the key to enduring in the ministry.

How to endure in the ministry. I'll be honest. This is one of those messages at times. I have them and then I'm thankful how the Lord kind of rebukes and kind of conforms your pastor's heart and mind.

[4 : 23] I can look at this and say, oh, this is a fitting message. This is a fitting message for a room full of pastors and how these pastors need to hear this message. And this is one that could be declared in a multitude of church leaders.

And then God says, but wait a minute, my friend. And then he calls me to go to 1 Peter 2, verse 9, where it says, for you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, so that you may declare the glories and the wonders of Jesus Christ to a broken world.

So I do sit today in a room full of ministers so that we can declare the word of God, how that you may endure in the ministry. Because, see, one of the most harmful things that has happened is the professionalization of the ministry.

That is, we have made ministers professionals and we have taken it from the pews and moved it up to the pulpit. When very clearly in Ephesians chapter 4, it tells me that my job description is not to do the work of the ministry, but to equip you to do the work of the ministry.

One of the most degrading things that we have ever done to church is that we have taken the ministry assignments from the people and we have put it up there at the pulpit and we have given it to a few.

[5 : 32] When the word of God declares to us that we are a holy priesthood. We do not want to be people with a priest. We are people who are the priest. And we are those who have been called to declare the glories of Jesus Christ.

And the reason that it has done such great detriment to the church and to the society at large is because we have confined the pastoral and the ministerial work of the many to a few.

We have taken it and we have put it into the hands of just several and they cannot accomplish the work of the ministry. Now, pastoral ministry is a calling to a local church, but ministry is the assignment given to every believer.

You have a ministry assignment. And it is an assignment in which you must endure in. Pastoral ministry brings with it its own challenges, its own needs for endurance.

But so does every ministry. The ministry of being a mom or a dad needs endurance. The ministry of being a grandparent or to being a neighbor, to being one who loves your enemies, to being those who encourage those that you come into contact with.

[6 : 40] The ministry of the workplace that you have been given. There is a great need for endurance. And the same manner of endurance which Paul expressed is the same manner of endurance which we all can express.

How do we endure? How do we last? Because the ministry is not something which others do. The ministry is something which we do. That does not mean that all are called to vocational ministry.

That is, they make their living from it. But it does not mean that none are called to the ministry. See, I'm severely convinced that the reason we see such shortages of pastors or those called to vocational ministry is because we have tried to convince ourselves that the ministry is something that only a few can do.

That is, it has not been their normal practice every day of their life. And therefore God used their life circumstances to say, well, maybe I am called to the pastoral ministry.

Maybe God is calling me to something special. We don't, as the old saying goes, we don't call out the called ones anymore. Because we're afraid that if the church begins doing ministry, we won't have a job anymore.

[7 : 53] I promise you that the more ministry you do, the greater responsibility I have. Because the more you mature, the greater I have to study so that I can continue to equip you to do your ministry. It makes it harder on me, right?

That's what we need. That's what we want. And that's what God has commanded us to do. But how are we to endure in this? Number one, to endure in the ministry, there has to be the ownership of the ministry.

Look at what Paul says. Therefore, since we have this ministry. Therefore, since we have this ministry.

Paul owns it. He declares that he has been giving a ministry assignment from Holy God according to the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior.

And since he has this ministry, there is something he must do. The first way that we can ever hope and pray that God enables us to endure in the ministry is that we must own it.

[8 : 57] Too often people seek to avoid it or to ignore it or to discount it. And you say, well, God hasn't called me to be a pastor. God hasn't called me to be a missionary. God hasn't called me to do any of these things.

Well, friends, pastor just means servant. That's all it means, right? So you haven't been called to be a servant of a church that stands up on a raised platform and reads the word of God. Well, God has called you to serve in another capacity or in another way.

So God hasn't called you to serve as a missionary in a foreign country, but God has called you to serve as a missionary in your country. And God has called you to serve in the missionary of your home. Because the last time I checked, the Great Commission, which is a commandment, begins at the home and then extends outward.

So how can we expect to be called to serve other places when we're not serving in this place, right? We understand this reality. Too often we do not own the ministry that God has given us.

We say, well, I don't know if I'm called to the ministry. There are some things that we do not have to go to the word of God and ask God about. We don't have to ask God if we're supposed to declare the gospel because he told us we should.

[9 : 58] We do not have to ask if we should be involved in the ministry because God has told us that he has good works prepared before the foundations of the world for us that we may walk in it.

That is a ministry assignment. Anything that God commands us to do for himself is a ministry assignment. Sometimes the greatest ministries are never seen.

Sometimes, quite often, they're never heard of. But the reality that Paul shares is since we have this ministry, he owns it. He realizes that he has been entrusted with something glorious and something of eternal impact and something of magnificent weight.

Sure, he declares who is fit for these things, who is worthy, who can endure these things. Paul acknowledges his own weaknesses. We're not here to say that we are worthy nor able to carry the responsibility that God has given you.

I remember the very first ministry assignment that God ever gave me. As a matter of fact, it was the ministry assignment that broke me and led me to Jesus Christ. You know what it was? I had to be a husband and then I had to be a dad.

[11 : 05] I realized that I was not fit to be a husband nor a dad. I mean, I couldn't do either one of them. I had tried to do it for a couple of years up until that point. I was 18 when we got married and by the time I was 20, I had spent two years figuring out I wasn't a good husband and I wasn't a good dad.

I couldn't do these matters. I couldn't do them on my own. But I knew this was something that God had given me to do. And in my own self-stubbornness, I realized that God had given me this responsibility and I didn't want to default and just hand it off to somebody else.

This was me. But in that ministry assignment, I realized I needed someone to empower me. I knew that I wasn't worthy to do it. And it was that assignment that led me to fall upon my knees and say, Lord Jesus, I can't do it, so I give it to you.

Praise God for ministry assignments that are bigger than you are. Because then you have to depend upon the God who called you and not upon yourself. My mentor in the faith used to say, we need to step out on things so big, so large, so grand, that unless God accomplishes it through us, that it will not be done.

He'd say, step out on a limb of faith. Take the saw and cut the limb off the tree and expect the creator of the tree to hold it in place. You ought to stand there on that reality that God has given you a ministry assignment.

[12 : 16] Will it overwhelm you? Yes. Will it overpower you? Yes. But is it yours? Yes. Own it. Since we have this ministry, I wonder how many of us walk out thanking God that we don't have someone else's ministry rather than acknowledging the ministry we have.

How many of us, oh, I'm thankful God didn't call me to do that, or he didn't call me to do that, or he didn't call me to do that. Be careful there, by the way, because I used to thank God that I wasn't a pastor. And now for the past 18 years, I've been a pastor.

It's the longest job I've ever had, is being a pastor. See, God gives us a ministry assignment, and we must own it.

We will not endure in something that we will not own, because until we realize this is who we are, this is what he has given us, this is what we have been entrusted with, then we will not strive towards it, we will not push towards it, and the option will always be to neglect it nor forget it.

But we can't do that. Therefore, since we have been, and since we have, there's something we must do. I wonder what you would say if you say, well, since God has given me this ministry, what is the this?

[13 : 39] Don't try to measure it according to anybody else. What is it that he has given you? That's what he wants you to endure in. God never called you to endure in someone else's ministry.

You may support and encourage and even rebuke sometimes others in their ministry. You are there to walk beside them, but you are to endure in your ministry. You must own it.

We see here not only the ownership of the ministry, we see the origination of the ministry. That is, you need to know where it came from. Because this is not something that you pick and choose. We know the story of Paul, right?

We know that if Paul was to choose a ministry assignment, that Paul's ministry assignment is he wanted to persecute the believers. He was on his way to Damascus, Acts chapter 9, to persecute those who were walking according to the way.

And while he was in that ministry of his own choosing, something that he wanted to do, something that he went to the religious leaders about, something that he thought was his purpose in life, he wanted to go persecute those who were walking according to the way.

[14 : 38] Do you know that five times in the New Testament, Paul talks of us about his conversion on Damascus Road? Five times. And each time, Paul gives us a little bit more insight. That was a moment that he could not forget, because it was at that moment that the ministry he chose stopped, and he had to go wait at a street called Straight for a man named Ananias to come lay his hands on him to tell him the ministry that he had been given.

Because, see, we need to understand where the ministry originated. Because the work you've been given to do, it really matters who gave it to you. If someone walks up beside you, and I've told you this, when you join the church, if people join the church and they say, Pastor, I want to work, put me to work, what's the response that I give you?

If you've joined recently, you know. You tell me what you're passionate about, and I'll find a place in the church that'll match. Because the last thing that I want to know is to tell, the last thing I want to do is tell you what to do. I have a list of things to be done.

I have a list of things that can be accomplished. I have a number of things that anybody could ever do. But if I tell you to do it, it's a ministry from me, not from the Lord, and I promise you, you won't last.

You won't endure, and you won't make it. I've done it in churches. I know you've done it in churches, right? There are things that I've done that I burn myself out upon, those things that I've got tired of, and those things I get frustrated about, and I'm mumbling in my breath, I'm going to do it because they asked me to do it, but I don't really want to do it.

[16 : 00] We don't want that, because that's not of the Lord. We need to know where it originates from. Because when it's a God-given ministry, then there's a God-given ability to endure.

Look at what it says. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy. Friend, listen to me. Any ministry assignment we have been given is a grand display of the mercy of God.

Have you ever thought about that? That it takes mercy to entrust to human beings of any worth and any ability anything for the kingdom of God. It is the very mercy of God that he would entrust any of his work to us.

I mean, if you're a parent, God has entrusted to you the ministry assignment of discipling your children. Now, if you're honest with yourself, you are probably the least qualified disciple of your children that you have ever met.

You say, oh, no, I'm pretty good. No, you know more about yourself than anybody does. I said, if we're honest. But in God's mercy, that's the ministry assignment he has given us.

[17 : 07] If you don't have children, then God has given you the ministry assignment of reaching out and establishing relationships with people around you. God has limited his work on the scope of earth into the people you touch.

And that's mercy. God has entrusted us with the good news, the gospel. He has entrusted us with the grandest news the world has ever heard.

God has given us the one thing that would change the eternal state of mankind. And it is mercy that he has given it to us. He has given us this assignment. He has given us something to do.

He has given it to us as a display of his mercy. He says, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. That is, whatever God has commanded us to do, whatever God has given us to do, in his mercy, he has empowered us to do it and he really thinks we can.

I mean, it blows my mind that God who knows me better than I know myself, he knows the very hairs on my head, he knows the number of my days. He knew me before the world knew me when I was being knit together in my mother's womb.

[18 : 15] God who ordained my days before the foundations of the world were laid. That God who knows me, as the psalmist cries out, says, Lord, help me to know my ways.

You have searched me out. Lord, you know how wicked I am. But God, yet you have entrusted me with something to do. It is the God who intimately knows us, who also expects us with great confidence to do the very things that he's given us.

God doesn't give us something we can't accomplish. We just don't give God all of ourselves in order to accomplish it. We get overwhelmed and overpowered.

But when the ministry assignment is originated from a holy God, we understand that he has given us something we can do. He has given us something we can accomplish. Because look at what it says in verse 6.

Verse 6 connects to this verse. For God who said, light shall shine out of darkness, is the one who is shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

[19 : 14] That is, you get your ministry assignment the moment you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The only reason you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is that the light of revelation has shone in your heart.

That is, all of a sudden you realize that the only way you can know holy God is through the person of Jesus Christ. You see the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ. You surrender to Christ and you've become adopted into the family.

Now you call out, Abba, Father, to holy God. But the God who said, let there be light, this is a reference to the book of Genesis, right? In the beginning, God said, let there be light, and what does it say? And there was light.

That's pretty awesome, right? The God who spoke light into existence is the same God who spoke revelation into your heart. It is the same God who said, let there be light, also looked at you and said, let him know or let her know Jesus Christ is my son.

It is the same God who spoke revelation to our heart. So this is something you need to understand because this is the, how we get our ministry. It is the origination of ministry.

[20 : 16] Stay with me on this. If you cannot speak light into existence, then you cannot speak revelation into your heart. That is, if you can't sit, let there be light, and there be light, then you neither, neither can you say, I think I'm going to believe in Jesus Christ and make yourself believe because the heart of all men is desperately wicked.

There are none who are righteous. No, not one. There are none who seek after God, not one. But it is the God who speaks the light into existence who speaks into your heart. It is originated from him.

We know who Jesus Christ is because God spoke that revelation into our heart. He called us to himself. Salvation and redemption is not something you choose nor accomplish nor do.

It is something that God looked at you and revealed himself to you. He called you unto himself and he has entrusted you with a ministry assignment. What a glorious thing. It is the origination of our ministry.

And the reason that theology is so important, now say with me, because I know people think, well, pastor, you're just splitting hairs. Well, some hairs are worth splitting, right? Some of them are worth plucking and some of them are worth splitting.

[21 : 24] That's just the way it is. You say, well, pastor, I don't, I think we're just splitting hairs. Why? Because your theology will always dictate your practice. That is, if you think you chose of your own accord, your salvation, and if salvation resulted in an act which you did, then you believe you get to choose what you do as a result of your salvation.

That is, if salvation begins and ends with you, then what you do afterwards begins and ends with you. But on the other hand, if you believe almighty God called you to himself and he chose you and ordained that you would accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that he's shown the revelation of Christ into your heart, all of a sudden God took the initiative.

Therefore, if God initiates it, God gets to dictate it, right? What God started, God gets to determine how it behaves. I don't care what the world says, that what God starts, God gets to determine. We say, the creator gets to determine how creation operates.

Man may distort that, but the creator is the determining factor on what creation has, has to be. So when he created them, he gets to dictate what they are and what they look like and how they operate.

That's just the way it is. Okay? So we understand that. If he is the originator of our salvation, then he is the originator of the work that comes from our salvation. And we receive mercy.

[22 : 46] Ministry is an overflow of mercy. So you have the ownership of the ministry. Therefore, since we have, you have the origination of the ministry. This is where it came from.

Now you have the obligation of the ministry. That is, so what? Look at the obligation of the ministry. Since we have this assignment that came from almighty, holy God, what then must we do?

Look at what it says. But we have renounced the hidden, the things hidden because of shame. The first thing is there are some things we must cast off. Here's the obligation.

There are some things we must lay aside. He says, we have announced the things hidden because of shame. Which means, the first thing we do is say, search me, oh God.

If there are matters hidden within my heart, within my mind, within my life, and they need to be cast off because of shame, then I need to renounce it. The word renounce, by the way, in its original language, that word renounce is an active tense of putting something out or off.

[23 : 48] It is to actively engage in removing something offensive from your life. That's what it means. Because I have been given a ministry, because I have been given that ministry not from another man, but from Almighty God, and since it has been given to me personally, there are some things that I must take care of.

Why? Because nothing must exist in our life which would cause offense or stumbling to the ministry we have been given. Nothing. There are some matters which will cause another individual to stumble because look what he says, we are entrusting ourselves to the conscience of all men.

Not just to the conscience of godly men or righteous men or some men, but of all men. We need to renounce the things that are shameful. We need to push them aside.

Here's the obligations. There are matters we need to take care of. He says, we renounce the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God. That is, we are obliged in the ministry assignment we have been given not to operate by trickery, not to operate by schemes, not to operate by well-planned out events, but we are to rightfully and accurately declare the truth.

We ought to manifest the truth of God. That's your whole assignment. That's what you are obliged to do. You are to declare and to manifest through your life and through your words the very truth of the gospel message.

[25 : 20] That is the obligation of the ministry. We're not to try to trick people into the heaven. We're not trying to kind of connive people into heaven.

I'm not here to even try to persuade people into heaven. I will plead with people, but it will be according to the truth. We ought to be manifestors of the truth.

You have to settle these matters in your own heart and you have to know this. I remember when I understood, I think I was at about year six or seven in the ministry that God had given me and I realized this was an assignment he'd been giving me.

I began to write these matters down. You need to settle them. How am I going to do it? How am I going to operate? How am I going to, some people who are present, there are very few who are present who knew me 18 years ago when I began to preach and pastor.

Back then I was a preacher. I hadn't really learned how to be a pastor yet. It took a number of years before I learned that and there are people who heard that and some of those sermons I would never let anybody else read nor hear again.

[26 : 23] Not that they were theologically wrong, they were just weak, okay? And I remember I came to this point where I had to write some things that I had to settle. What was I obligated to do in the ministry? What was I obligated because it settled this conviction.

People have asked me and you need to hear this. This is pastoral counsel but this is also practical counsel. I needed to know because I've had people ask me, Pastor, how do you preach? How do you preach? And when nobody responds, you never get frustrated because my obligation is not to convince nor to win.

My obligation is not to persuade or to pursue. My obligation is to declare. I am obligated to stand up and declare the truth. You therefore are obligated to receive the truth and to respond to it.

Your response is not my obligation. It weighs on my heart and it weighs on my mind but it's not my obligation. See, there will be people, we'll get into it in just a minute.

If you don't know your obligations in ministry, the ministry assignments you have been given, they may not, they will not be pastoral, they may not be missional but in your daily life, if you don't know the things you are obligated to do to manifest the truth, you will think everything is your responsibility and you will never endure.

[27 : 43] You need to know the things that are tied to you. You manifest the truth. You declare the truth. You live out the truth towards the conscience of all men and friend, leave it there.

Leave it there. Because salvation, last I read, John 3, 16, I love John 3, 16, but I also know Jesus told Nicodemus the spirit blows where it wants and no man knows where it will.

It's a spiritual matter. The redemption of man's hearts is a spiritual matter. You say, well I get frustrated because nobody's listening. Should that surprise you? Jesus said, they rejected me, they'll reject you.

Jesus says, broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go by through it, but narrow is the gate that leads to everlasting life and there are only a few who will find it. Why do we get frustrated when the multitude does what Jesus said they would do and only a few do?

It's because we think we're carrying more responsibility than we ought to. Know your obligations and ministry and stick to it. We like to say, stay in your lane, bro.

[28 : 49] Right? Know what your lane is. Stay in it. It's the only way we'll ever endure because we need to know there are matters I need to take care of so that I don't cause stumbling and these are the things I'm supposed to do.

These are my obligations and it will always be a clear, simple manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This is what I'm obliged to do.

If you're counting, number four. We see the opposition to ministry. Oh, this shouldn't surprise you. You've been given a ministry assignment from the courts of heaven.

Your ministry assignment that you have been given is one that causes you to look at yourself. It is yours and yours alone and you look at yourself and you're obliged to declare the truth. The moment you begin to walk in that ministry, you will face opposition.

Look at the opposition. And even if our gospel is veiled, oh, Paul endured. Do you know Paul suffered much and greatly at the hands of the people that he went to? Sure, he was, ended up costing him his own life, but he endured.

[30 : 01] How did he endure? And even if our gospel is veiled, that would be counted as a failure to a church planner, right? Paul went around planting churches and declaring the truth and declaring Jesus Christ to other people and there were people who did not see it, people who did not receive it, people who rejected it.

It was veiled. It says, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The gospel brings life and those who refuse it are perishing. Paul understood the weight of it.

How do you not get overwhelmed with the reality that in your ministry assignment there are ways, the balance of eternal matters. Those who accept the gospel are living life. Those who reject it are perishing.

How do we deal with that when we know the opposition is strong, that there are some who will never know. There are some who will never hear. There are some who will never see. Their minds are veiled.

It says, in whose case the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel, the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

[31 : 04] Here's the opposition. It is the great enemy of man's soul. The God of this world as he has defined has blinded their eyes just as God is actively revealing Jesus Christ into the hearts of individuals, so is Satan actively seeking to oppose the work of the ministry by blinding the mind of those who hear it.

We should not be surprised by the reality because we are clearly told over and over again in scripture that there is one who is seeking and oh friend, count how many ways the God of this world has, how many tools he has at his disposal to blind the minds of even the wisest of individuals.

Oh, it's innumerable the amount of ways he can blind them. People who refuse to stop and listen, people who refuse to hear, people who refuse the message you declare, it is not because those people are bad, it's because there is one who is blinding their mind.

They are not your enemy, they are not your opposition, but they're being opposed. Their minds are being blinded so that they will not perceive.

It is not their conscience, their conscience testifies. The conscience of every man resonates with the truth we manifest, but it is the mind that quite often rejects that truth because it is appalling to them.

[32 : 28] And the enemy of their souls and the enemy of our souls has innumerable tools at his disposal. There are a number of things that he can do to blind the minds to cause people not to respond, but we need to understand there is opposition to the ministry.

So we fight that battle not in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm. The reason you need to know the ministry assignment you've been given and the reason you need to know what you're obligated to do in that ministry assignment is so that we can pray fervently with you and for you and through you in that ministry because the opposition to your ministry is not found in front of you, it is found in the spiritual realms all around you.

We need Satan to destroy strongholds. We'll get to that in 2 Corinthians chapter 10. Tearing down every lofty thought that raises up its mind against the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We need strongholds to crumble.

We need them to be torn out of his way. We need Satan's strength to be made shameful in the sight of these individuals. We need this work. We need to know the opposition.

Finally, number five. Six verses, five points. I know. You have the ownership of the ministry. You have the origination of the ministry. You have the obligations of the ministry.

[33 : 41] You have the opposition to the ministry. Number five. What is the objective of the ministry? What are you seeking to do? Because this is important.

This determines if we endure or not is what we're seeking to do. Paul says, for we do not preach ourselves, for we do not preach ourselves.

That is, the ministry Paul was given was not for self-exaltation nor self-promotion. Paul says, I have not been given this assignment so that I may become known.

I have not been given this assignment so that people may be persuaded that I'm a good guy. I have not been given this ministry assignment so that people will be, my name will be a household name. I have not been given this assignment so that I would be popular and everywhere I go people would recognize me.

I have not been given this assignment because it's all about me. See, the reason we get burnt out so often in our ministry assignments is we think it's about us. If you don't believe me, go out in public and look around.

[34 : 44] I don't mean to be this, I don't mean to say this offensively, but I need you to hear the truth. When parents feel like the ministry assignment of their children is about the parents rather than about the children, we have a problem. It is not about us.

It's not about who we are or what we wanted to be or who we, you know, desired to be and now we're going to help our children to live the lives we never got to live. It's not about that. It really has nothing to do about us.

The work assignment we've been given, it's moving a little closer to home. It's not about us. It's not about how good we do our job, it's about how effective we do our work as unto the Lord, not unto man.

To glorify our heavenly Father who has given us the ability. You heard the prayer during the offertory prayer. Thank you God for the ability to work. Oh, how astounding that is.

How often have we said, God help me to get to the place where I don't have to work. Well, thank you God for the ability to work that we know that work brings you glory. The things we've been given are that we may glorify him who is our Father in heaven.

[35 : 53] It's not about us. For we do not preach ourselves. So I don't want a pastor ever to stand up and tell me about himself. We don't.

We don't want that. We don't desire that. Listen, you don't need more of me. I got a secret for you. I don't need more of you. I know that sounds offensive.

We need more of Christ in us. in us. We need to be who God has called us to be for his glory, not ours.

I need you and you need me as spiritual stones built up and connected one to another. but we need the redemption of Christ that would empower us to fulfill our ministry for the glory of God because if we're doing it for self-promotion or self-exaltation, friend, I promise you there will be a day in the ministry that someone doesn't give you credit for doing what God called you to do and if it's about you, you'll get upset.

You'll get mad and you'll want to throw your hands up and the reason I can promise you is because that temptation has been there for this guy as well. Forget it.

[37 : 12] If nobody cares and nobody acknowledges then what does it matter? You know what that is? That's self-focused ministry. He says, I'm an aroma of Christ unto God.

He says, I do not preach sales but here it is. Here is the objective. This is all we do but Christ Jesus as Lord. What do we do?

The ministry is about the truthfulness of Christ Jesus as Lord. He is both Lord and Savior. When Peter was called to Cornelius' house.

Acts chapter 10. We read it again in Acts chapter 11. Peter says the same thing that he said on the day of Pentecost. Acts chapter 2. This Jesus who has been crucified, God has made both Lord and Savior.

Right? It is the declaration of Jesus Christ as Lord. Jesus Messiah. Jesus Christ the Messiah as Lord. He is both Savior and Lord.

[38 : 17] It is exalting who he is not who we are and to further that point he goes a little further and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

Now this doesn't make us very popular but he says this is the objective of the ministry. The objective of the ministry is to so promote Jesus Christ as Lord that I have sold myself into slavery.

That's what bondservant means. I have sold myself into the slavery of his servant for other people. I'm going to give myself to others for Jesus' sake not for my sake or for their sake.

It's for Jesus' sake. This is the objective. It is to magnify and declare the message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior so that all may know.

Friend, I want to ask you how are you doing at enduring in the ministry? Because it's not a matter of if you have a ministry.

[39 : 18] If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you have been given one and how are you doing at enduring in it? Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for this day. Lord Jesus, I know there are seasons in each one of our lives in which we say I'm not doing so well.

God, we trust that you knew what you were doing when you called and appointed us to the positions that we have equally around the room for we are a chosen people.

We are a royal priesthood for your glory and yours alone. May you be magnified through our endurance and we ask it all in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[42 : 06] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[46 : 37] Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.