

## 2 Timothy 4:5 — What Is A Faithful Pastor? — Part 3

**May 30, 2021**

Take out your outlines. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4:5. For the last two weeks we have camped on the first five verses of 2 Timothy 4. This morning we will finish them. These verses are Paul's challenge to Timothy about what it would mean to be a faithful pastor when Paul was dead and gone. That was an appropriate challenge because shortly after Paul wrote this letter Nero chopped off Paul's head. The baton of leadership passed from Paul to Timothy in the early church.

As a leader in the early church who took Paul's place, Timothy carried a lot of responsibility. He was also leading the church in a difficult time. When the Bible was initially written, it was the Jews who were opposed to Jesus. When Timothy took on the mantle of leadership in the church, it was rapidly becoming Rome that opposed the church. Interestingly, the Romans despised Christians and considered them atheists because they didn't worship the emperor as God. They would worship only Jesus as God and not the emperor as God. This led to the Romans torturing and killing many Christians. Timothy was a top leader in the church at this time. It was a very difficult season. This made Paul's words to Timothy about what it means to be a faithful pastor all the way to the end of his life very timely.

Before we get into this morning's study, since we have only one verse to cover this morning, I thought we should begin by answering a more fundamental question. While we will finish our study this morning on 2 Timothy 4:5, which tells us how to be a faithful pastor to the end of life, let's begin with a more

fundamental question. How does one know if one is called by God to become a pastor in the first place? In Acts 9, Paul was called by God to be an apostle on the Damascus road. Jesus appear to him, blinded him with his brilliance and set Paul's life on a different trajectory. Timothy's call to the pastorate was also easy. Paul hand-picked him to be his successor. Paul personally trained him to follow in his footsteps. In many ways, it seems like the kinds of callings to ministry we see in the Bible are easier to see. How does one know if God is calling one to be a pastor today?

### **How do I know if God is calling me to be a pastor?**

Let's take a few minutes to learn how one is called to be a pastor today before we finish our study on how to be a faithful pastor to the end of life. Before I became a lead pastor, I served as a youth pastor for 10 years, six of those full time. In youth group, I used to talk to the kids about how to know if they were called to be a pastor or missionary. I am grateful two of the teenagers in my youth ministry are lead pastors today. Others went gone oversees as missionaries. Asking and answering this question is important. Knowing how to determine if God is calling you to be a pastor or missionary is a super important question to answer. My hope and prayer is that God puts his hand on the heart of some of our teenagers this morning and leads them into pastoring or another form of vocational ministry.

We must remember the gospel is only one generation away from extinction. We don't just need to pass the gospel to a younger generation so they know Christ but the church cannot always be pastored by fossils such as me. We

need to pray and work to raise up not just a new generation of Christians but a new generation of pastors and missionaries to reach people with Jesus.

**All Christians have a general call to ministry.**

I want to begin with this truth because I don't want any of us thinking that pastoral work is the only work in the church. When we trust in Jesus and are born again, in that moment God calls all of us to ministry and he equips us to serve.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

As Christians, all of us are called to be about the ministry of doing good works. Instead of causing trouble in this world, we are to love and encourage others in this world. As Christians, people in society should be blessed by our presence, they should be encouraged by our attitude. We are called to be about good works. God promises to give us plenty of opportunities to do them. That may be helping a neighbor with his lawn; that may be coaching a city baseball league; that may be helping lead a class at the YMCA; that may simply be caring about people going through hard times by texting them and praying for them. All of us are called to that. All of us are called to more than just good works.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

All of us are called to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus. We have a responsibility to speak about Jesus and to tell other people why we love Jesus. This past week, Cindy and I were watching a television program and during the program was an advertisement for an upcoming program on mental health and depression. I don't mean to oversimplify mental illness. Yes, there are issues of

chemical imbalance in the brain. Yes, there are times when medical intervention is needed for mental health. The truth is that most depression in the lives of Christians can be cured simply by a healthy dose of understanding what God has done for us through Jesus. Reflect on who you are in Jesus. We deserve hell, but we are given heaven through Jesus. We don't do any of the work other than receiving it all by faith. Jesus loves us so much he died for us. He loves you more than anyone else in this world, even your spouse. Jesus paid for all of our sin. We cannot sin more than Jesus has already paid for. Jesus separates our sin from us as far as the east is from the west so we do not need to be filled with shame. Jesus makes us into completely new people. The old people are dead and gone. No being in all the vast reaches of the universe is more exalted, honored, and delighted upon than you and I are through Jesus. This life is as bad as it gets. All of eternity is constantly improving and growing grace and love from God.

Folks, when you think about it, we are so blessed, how can we be depressed! Every one of us has a responsibility to tell others how grateful we are for Jesus. This is called the satisfied customer. If you love a restaurant, you can't help but tell your friends about the restaurant. If we love what Jesus has done for us, we will not be able to hold back telling others about Jesus. We are satisfied customers!

Every one of us is not called to be a preacher or teacher of God's Word, but every one of us is called to follow our motto at CrossWinds which is "Reaching people with Jesus." We do that by doing good works in the church and

community and by simply telling people how much we love Jesus because of what God has done for us through Jesus. It is word-of-mouth advertising. That is a general call to ministry all of us have.

### **God gives some Christians a specific call to ministry.**

Beyond a general call to ministry, God gives some a specific call to pastoral ministry. God uniquely calls some people to a life of publicly preaching and teaching the Word of God. God has always done this. We saw this when God chose Moses to be the leader of his people. God also chose Aaron to be the priest for his people. We also see God calling the prophet Jeremiah.

**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”** Jeremiah 1:5 (ESV)

We see God calling the prophet Ezekiel. In the New Testament, in Acts 9, Jesus called Paul to take the gospel to the Gentile world. God clearly calls some people beyond a general ministry of good works and proclaiming the excellencies of Jesus. Paul wrote about this.

**I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service...** 1 Timothy 1:12 (ESV)

**For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.** 1 Timothy 2:7 (ESV)

How does a man know he is called to pastoring?

These answers come from Charles Spurgeon’s book called Lectures to His Students. In that book, he has an excellent chapter on this subject. He details four ways someone can know God is calling him or her to pastoring and preaching.

**1. One knows he is called to pastoral ministry because he is internally compelled to preach the Word.**

Spurgeon said it this way.

“An irresistible overwhelming craving and raging thirst for telling others what God has done to our own souls...”

Paul spoke about this same feeling in his life this way.

...Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 1 Corinthians 9:16 (ESV)

Paul said he couldn't help but preach the gospel. Paul was compelled. He was driven by a force motivating him so he had to preach the gospel. He couldn't do anything else and be at peace. This wasn't ambition. This was compulsion. Ambition is about ego, drive, and self-fulfillment. Ambition comes from inside of oneself. It is wanting to have a successful business or career. Compulsion is different. It is a driving force that comes from outside of oneself. It comes from the Holy Spirit working in one's heart. Pastors must be driven by the Holy Spirit with an internal compulsion drives them to preach and teach the Word of God.

Let me tell you how this happened for me. In high school, I went on a mission trip. Before I went overseas, my team and other mission teams met in Merritt Island, Florida, for two weeks of boot camp. We learned how to make cement and how to lay bricks as well as other construction skills. Those skills were important because I was going on a summer construction trip in Switzerland that summer. There were also speakers during boot camp that challenged our faith. One speaker challenged us as youth adults to give the rest of our lives in



vocational service to building the kingdom of Christ. I came forward after that message because I felt God wanted me to use my life in some way for him. I had no idea what I would do. At first, I thought I might be a missionary aviation pilot and fly missionaries into the jungle, sort of an Indiana Jones for Jesus career. That quickly came to an end when I realized I get airsick in planes.

In college I pursued computer science as my college major and graduated with that degree but in the early 1990s. It was a difficult time to get a job in that field. After a summer of looking for a computer science job and not being able to find one, God gave me the idea of going to seminary for one semester so I could learn more about my faith. I had no money, but my grandmother was incredibly generous and agreed to pay for a semester of tuition. I enrolled in summer Greek and began my studies at Westminster Theological Seminary. Shortly after beginning classes, I drove back to college to visit a friend who was a used car dealer. While joining him at a car auction, I was studying my Greek. A man at the auction saw me studying Greek and told me that if I could read the Bible in Greek, I would learn that Jesus wasn't God. He gave me a pamphlet about why I shouldn't believe in the Trinity and why I shouldn't believe that Jesus is God.

After my first reading of the booklet, it sounded convincing, but it didn't feel right in my spirit. I read it again and again. I asked my professors about it. One professor offered to allow me to take my first J-term and use it to study this pamphlet and write a response paper to it. He would grade the response paper and call it my J-term class. That was a watershed moment in my life. The more I studied the pamphlet (which happened to be from the Jehovah's Witnesses), the

more I found deception and errors. Bible verses were quoted out of context; history was misrepresented; the logic was especially faulty. I finished that J-term and my heart was different. I now could clearly see that pamphlet and the Jehovah's Witnesses were teaching and believing a lie and leading people to hell. I knew from that point forward that God wanted me to give the rest of my life to putting my finger in the biblical text and teaching the truth about Jesus and pulling people away from lies and deceptions about Jesus. From that point forward I felt the Holy Spirit compelling me forward.

I look back on those days and can see God steering my life. First, I couldn't get a job in the computer science field even though I was qualified. God used that to open up time for a semester of seminary. Then God used the generosity of my grandmother to make seminary possible. Then God put a Jehovah's Witness in my path who tried to convert me, but thankfully I was at the right school with a great library so I could read and reason to get the answer I needed.

This matches what they told us in seminary.

Do not enter the ministry they said if you can help it. Only become a pastor if you can't help it.

Spurgeon said it this way in his book, Lectures to His Students.

If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor or a grocer or a farmer or a doctor or a lawyer or a senator or a king in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way, he is not the man in whom dwells the Spirit of God in its fullness, for a man so filled with God would utterly weary of any pursuit but that for which is in most soul pants... We must feel that woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel. The Word of God must be unto us as a fire in our bones, otherwise if we undertake the ministry we shall be unhappy in it, shall be unable to bear the self-denial incident to it and shall be of little service to those among whom we minister.



## 2. One knows if he is called if he has some innate gifts for pastoring and preaching.

Spurgeon said one should also take into consideration one's circumstances, opportunities, and innate giftedness for pastoring and preaching to see if God is calling him. The man who is compelled to preach will find circumstances on the outside will match his compulsion to preach on the inside. In other words, God will give a man some of the innate giftedness needed for pastoring and teaching. A man will have gifts of wisdom, study, good judgment, and courage. One will have love for God's people, leadership ability and the spiritual gift of preaching and teaching. God does not call people to the pastorate without giving them the abilities needed for the pastorate.

Think of it this way. I know God is not calling me to be a worship leader. I do not try and do Andy's job because God has not given me the innate gifts necessary to do Andy's job. Have you ever heard me sing a solo? I am terrible! If you heard me sing up front your response would be to shoot the animal and put it out of its misery. Since I don't have any of the innate gifts to lead worship, I know God is not calling me to lead worship. The same is true with the pastorate. If God is calling someone to the pastorate, he will equip that person with the innate gifts necessary for the pastorate. Incidentally, this doesn't mean everyone has to have the spiritual gifts and natural gifts for pastoring fully formed when God calls them but those gifts should at least be there in rudimentary form.

Let me loosely paraphrase Spurgeon on this one.

Does not nature itself teach you that if God called an animal to fly, He would give it wings? If God has called an animal for the water, God equips the animal with the feet and the body necessary for that task. In the same way, if God has called

a man to preaching and pastoring one way he can recognize the call is God has given him the gifts necessary for the task.

### **3. One knows if he is called when his church affirms the calling.**

The judgment of the church is crucial. Before one is called to ministry, his church should be able to see and affirm that call to ministry. There are people who possess the innate gifts for pastoring, who feel the desire for pastoring, but in the wisdom of the church are not ready for pastoring.

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul talked about the qualifications of elders. An elder must be above reproach. An elder is to be a one-woman man. An elder is to be hospitable. An elder must manage his household well. An elder must keep his children under control. An elder must have a good reputation with outsiders. These are all judgments a church makes about a potential elder's life before an he is affirmed as an elder. These qualifications are not spiritual gifts, they are the way someone has chosen to live.

These elder qualifications are not to just be true of elders. They are also to be true of pastors. A church should evaluate a potential pastor's life and be able to affirm him into ministry because they see the lifestyle of an elder to be true of his walk.

This means someone may feel called to the pastorate and may have the gifts for the pastorate, but he must also be affirmed by the leaders of the church to pursue the pastorate because the church provides the stamp of approval on one's life. If the church and the church's leaders have reservations about a person intending to pursue the pastorate, they have a responsibility to address those issues with the person and help him mature.

How does this work out in the practical life of the church? In the EFCA denomination, we have what is called an ordination process for a pastor to be given the official stamp of approval by the denomination. Ordination is an academic process that involves research, study, the writing of ordination papers and the defending of those papers before two ordination councils where beliefs are examined and challenged by other pastors in the denomination. This is a lengthy process that often takes at least three years. Why is it so long? The academic process of ordination could be complete in only three months. Why does the denomination slow-walk the process for three years?

An important part of the ordination process is the elders of the pastor's church must watch the life of the candidate for three years and affirm his lifestyle for ministry. This is exactly what Spurgeon described.

**4. One knows he is called to pastoral ministry when a church receives a man and it becomes effective under that man.**

I like the way Spurgeon said this:

**"If your call from the Lord be a real one, you will not long be silent. As surely as the man wants his hour, the hour wants its man."**

If God has called someone into ministry, there will be a church that is ready to receive him. Just as God has made each pastor unique and given them different gifts and passions, God has made his churches unique. God will match the shape of a pastor to the shape of the church that needs him. Some pastors will be a great fit for an inner city mega church while other pastors are shaped by God to serve a small, country, rural church. Thankfully, God has not made all of his pastors the same because God has not made all of his churches the same.

One pastor can be extremely ineffective in one church but extremely effective in another church.

If there are not churches open that match a pastor's unique personality and gifts, that means God is not calling and affirming a pastor to the pastoral ministry of a church at that time or for that season.

The job of a pastor is to serve the church. The job of a pastor is to be a gift to the church. Churches do not exist to serve pastors. Pastors exist to serve the church.

So how does one know if God is calling him to the pastorate?

1. God has placed a desire in a man's heart for pastoring and preaching that he just can't shake. He would rather do that than anything else.
2. God has given him the gifts necessary for the job. He has gifts of speaking, thinking, leading, and studying to enable him to pastor effectively.
3. The church has examined his life and lifestyle, then affirmed God's call upon his life.
4. God has opened a church for a pastor where the needs of the church and the gifts of the pastor match so the church becomes effective under that pastor's leadership.

That is a long, but it was an important, introduction. Let's get back to 2 Timothy 4. While we will only study verse 5, let's read the first five verses of 2 Timothy 4.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound

teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1–5 (ESV)

Remember these verses give us eight elements of what it takes to be a faithful preacher. The first four were covered in the first four verses. In verse 5, we find the remaining four, which are short statements we will briefly examine together.

### **A faithful pastor remains calm in the midst of a storm.**

*As for you, always be sober-minded... 2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV)*

In contrast to the flaky people who just want pastors to entertain them and give them what they want to hear, Timothy was to be sober-minded.

What does it mean to be sober-minded? Obviously it means to not be drunk. No getting sloshed for the pastor. It means much more than to avoid drinking too much. It means to be steady under pressure. It describes a person who is calm, cool, and collected under pressure so he makes the right decisions, not emotional decisions. This is a term Paul used to describe the qualification of an elder. Elders are to be people who don't freak out under pressure but instead remain calm, cool, and collected under pressure. These are people who don't become overly discouraged when the world is falling apart around them.

A good picture of a sober-minded person is a seasoned football quarterback playing in the Super Bowl. When the quarterback knows the game is on the line and thousands of fans are cheering for them, plus millions of fans watching them on television, he remains cool as ice. He remains focused. Under

pressure he does not get overly excitable. He actually performs his best under that kind of pressure, not his worst. That is a sober-minded type of person.

Another way to describe a sober-minded person is the voice of an airline pilot when you are in a plane and you end up flying into a storm. The pilot gets on the intercom and speaks in the calmest voice, "We have a little turbulence. I turned on the fasten seatbelts sign, but we will arrive on time and you will make your connecting flights." While the pilot is speaking calmly, the plane is bouncing around the sky in the turbulence and you are hitting your head on the overhead compartment as the storm shakes you around the sky.

A faithful pastor has to have that same kind of attitude of stability when under pressure or when in a storm. How can pastors have a sober-minded attitude in those difficult seasons? They must remember that the future is in God's hands. No matter what happens, we are loved by the God who holds the future. He has everything under control. Even if we do not understand God's plans we know he has a good plan. A pastor must remember Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt, not having any idea what he did to deserve being treated as a slave. Yet years later he realized God sent him to Egypt for the saving of many lives in a famine, even the saving of the brothers who sold him into slavery. You see, God had a good plan.

So a faithful preacher is not a trendy preacher. He is does not flip and flop depending on the whims of the church mob. A faithful preacher is calm, steady, holds to the truth. He isn't swayed by pressure or circumstances, no matter how tough they get.

## **A faithful preacher is willing to endure suffering.**

...endure suffering.... 2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV)

A faithful preacher must have a proper understanding of suffering. A faithful pastor must expect and accept suffering. Timothy needed to expect and accept suffering. Expecting and accepting suffering was a constant theme in this letter to Timothy.

Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:3 (ESV)

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted... 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

If you are a pastor, realize suffering is part of your job description. They will not write it into your job description, but it is on your job description.

Knowing that suffering is part of what it means to be a faithful pastor helps pastors not become bitter when hard times come their way. It helps pastors avoid quitting when they become discouraged.

I like the way Paul said this in a verse we will study next week.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7 (ESV)

Paul described ministry as fighting the good fight. When I went to seminary, nobody told me that as a pastor I was signing up for a good fight!

Yet, if you have been around church for any length of time you know that churches are full of people who do not always agree. Churches are full of saved people but not full of sinless people. As a pastor you learn people in the church can get angry with you over the smallest things and sometimes people will get angry at you no matter what you do.

When I was a youth pastor, one time we took the youth group to the beach in Michigan. That wasn't unusual because the church was only 2 miles away from the lake. Trying to be a good pastor, I stayed to the end to make sure everyone had a ride home. Somehow we ended up with three kids needing a ride back to the church plus me. The problem is the truck I drove at the time was a tiny truck with only one bench seat to hold three people. I was short a seat. The sun was going down. This was before cell phones. What was I supposed to do? Do I just leave the kid at the beach and drive away? What should I do? I decided to put the student in the bed of my pickup truck and drive 25 miles per hour the 2 or 3 miles back to the church. I even turned on the flashers on my vehicle to be extra safe. The roads were relatively abandoned. I felt things were as safe as I could make them. When I arrived at the church, the student's parents went completely berserk because I didn't have their son buckled up in a seatbelt. I tried to tell them I was a seat short. I only drove 25 mph. I had my flashers on my vehicle. I tried to tell them a large portion of people in our country ride in the bed of a pickup truck every day but they wouldn't hear it as they chewed me out in the church parking lot.

As Paul said, if you are a pastor, just get used to suffering. Sometimes there is nothing you can do to avoid it!

Pastors should expect to endure a lot of suffering in the church. None of us handle things perfectly and sometimes we don't handle things well, myself included. A pastor should expect physical suffering, relational abandonment, and to be stabbed in the back by those they love. They should expect demonic



warfare, financial instability, discouragement, doubt, parenting challenges, hurtful criticism, false accusations and more. Just get used to it. That is part of the pastorate. If you can't handle the suffering and hard times that come with pastoring, you will not make it to the end.

Too many pastors want to find a church where there is no pain in ministry. The only place where there is no pain in ministry is where there is nothing happening in ministry. If a church has any life to it there will always be some degree of conflict in that church.

You can evaluate a preacher on two things --- how faithful they are to the Word of God and how much pain they are willing to endure. Those are the criteria. The more effective a pastor is at preaching the Word, the more grief he should expect to hear from preaching the Word. You cannot have an effective ministry that is a painless ministry.

On those days when you feel like there is too much suffering as a pastor, turn to 2 Corinthians 11 and read about Paul's suffering and it will put your bad day into perspective. Paul was five times given 40 lashes minus one, three times beaten with rods. Once he was stoned and left for dead. That makes my bad day look like a cake walk compared to the apostle Paul.

Did Timothy handle suffering well? Did he endure suffering, because with the Roman government fighting the church, he would experience a lot of it?

Tucked away at the end of the book of Hebrews, we read these words about Timothy.

You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. Hebrews 13:23 (ESV)

Released from what? The Greek word for released is frequently used to describe someone being released from prison. Apparently Timothy was imprisoned for his faith. That tells us that suffering did come Timothy's direction. He was imprisoned for his faith but Timothy did not bend or compromise. We don't know anything about this imprisonment. We don't have any details other than it would have been for preaching.

Since Hebrews was written shortly after 2 Timothy, it is possible that Timothy was sent to jail while pastoring in Ephesus shortly after receiving this very letter from Paul.

Unfaithful pastors will not endure suffering. They will be quiet about Jesus if that keeps them out of trouble. They will change what they teach and believe about the Bible if that keeps them out of trouble. They will do whatever they must to gain popularity with people rather than being a faithful beacon of the truth in a culture that so desperately needs to hear it.

The measure of a man is how faithful he is to preaching the Word and how much pain he is willing to endure to faithfully preach that Word.

**A faithful pastor has the heart of an evangelist.**

...do the work of an evangelist... 2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV)

Timothy was in the role of the teaching pastor of the church in Ephesus. Even though he was in the role of teaching pastor in the church, he was to champion the evangelism of the church.

Timothy was not to just be teaching and maturing those who were already saved but he was to passionately present the gospel to those who needed to be saved. He was to have a heart for the unbelieving world that did not yet know

Christ. He was to not content himself with only having relationships with people inside the church but to pursue knowing people outside the church so he could tell them about Jesus and model for his people how evangelism was done.

My job is not just to feed the flock but to evangelize the lost and to model that for you. If I settle for just talking to other Christians, you will just talk to other Christians. That is why our motto is reaching people with Jesus. Your pastors must live out that motto in front of you.

Some people wondered why I became involved in CrossFit at the YMCA. The reason is simple. It is not because I like the pain. I want to meet more people who don't know Jesus so I can be a faithful pastor and tell them about Jesus and invite them to CrossWinds.

### **A faithful pastor continues to the end.**

**...fulfill your ministry... 2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV)**

What does it mean for someone to fulfill his ministry? Fulfill means to fill something to the top. Think of filling a jar to the top and leaving absolutely no air space. This is what Paul was challenging Timothy to do when it came to his pastoral ministry. Do all of it. Leave nothing left undone. Lean into every opportunity God gives you to be a good and faithful pastor. Do not pastor half-heartedly. It means to do the best you can, as long as you can as much as you can.

Paul talked about this.

**For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Colossians 1:29 (ESV)**

This is a challenge for us in our culture. We have the idea that when we get to a certain time in our life, we retire and disengage not just from work but from serving in the church. We stop serving the church. We stop reaching the lost. We just receive. We no longer give.

That isn't the future Paul pictured for Timothy. He told Timothy, "No matter your age and no matter your location, you serve Jesus with what you can and how you can as long as you can. You do everything you can to fill up whatever opportunity God has given you for ministry. As you get older you may need to down shift but you don't shift into neutral and start coasting."

Pastors that retire and do absolutely nothing for Christ and his kingdom do not make sense to me. They are too much of a resource. Their years of experience are too valuable to be wasted. This is why retired pastors are to downshift, not disengage.

My current pastoral heroes are retired pastors that downshifted well when they retired. They didn't disengage when they retired. That way they could fulfill all the opportunities God gave them for ministry. One retired pastor I admire serves as an interim pastor to churches going through pastoral changes. He uses his years of experience to provide wisdom and teaching necessary to help churches between pastors in their time of need. Another retired pastor I admire helps call up young pastors that are by themselves in small rural churches. He uses his years of experience to help young pastors succeed. These are retired pastors that are truly fulfilling their ministry. They are downshifting, not coasting.

The goal of downshifting and not just coasting so that we can fulfill all of our ministry is not just true for pastors but it is true for all of us as we age until the Lord takes us home.

## Conclusion

This morning we finished learning what a faithful pastor looks.

- A faithful pastor stays calm in the midst of chaos. He doesn't wilt under pressure.
- A faithful pastor is willing to endure suffering. Suffering is part of the job description. Expect it. Don't be surprised by it.
- A faithful pastor has a heart for evangelizing the lost, not just feeding the sheep.
- A faithful pastor must model for the church reaching and loving those who do not know Jesus around them.
- A faithful pastor fulfills his ministry and continues serving Jesus all the way to the end. It may be in a different role. It may be at a different pace, but he continues to serve until God takes him home.

How does this apply to us? While these are the goals of a faithful pastor, shouldn't they be the goals for each one of us in the church this week?



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