

The Character of the Leader (2)

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to turn back and take a look at Timothy together from to Timothy chapter 1 But before we do so, I'm going to pray again. So let's pray Lord we do ask that you will be present to us through your word this evening that it Your word will be alive to us. It will be interacting with our souls with our thoughts It will challenge us. It will provoke us. It will rebuke us. It will encourage us It will make us thankful and joyful and hopeful and We pray that as we look at the word of God that we will meet with the God of the word that you will Be here among us bless each person Lord we come from different circumstances different life situations different things on our minds tonight different worries problems and Things that we might be struggling to deal with may your your gospel be our bring us hope and Confidence this evening in Jesus name we pray for his glory. Amen Well, I've introduced the topic to you already and its leadership and tonight we're going to look at the character of the leader and what Paul says to Timothy about the character of the leader I don't know what you think of the church, but I'm not asking what you think of St. Columbus in particular this church, but just church in general Because of course most of the kind of mood music around church in culture now is really negative So all the vines we get from the media from colleagues perhaps from friends from Academics or lecturers at uni, you know, it's just that the Christian faith in the church is old-fashioned It's out of date. It's Sort of institution for narrow-minded and bigoted people and we you know, there's so much negativity And bad press about the church that sometimes people in the church begin to believe it and We let what other people say about the church Shape what we think of church Now rather than allowing that to happen. We have to really immerse ourselves in the Bible and And let what the Bible says about the church shape how we think about church Now the minute we do that, of course, we say that rather than the church being some tired old worn-out institution for narrow-minded people God tells us the church is something wonderful something that is full of hope and indeed that through the church He's carrying out his great purpose in history to bring salvation and life To a lost world so in in other words from God's perspective. There's nothing more precious in the world than the church And it's so precious to God that he sent Jesus to die in the cross and shed his blood for it And God tells us really that the church carries the mission and the message of hope so to God the church is precious and vital and God gives the church ultimate significance So don't take a low view of church take a very high view of church and Then the second thing I want to say off the back of that is that God takes his church church and he trusts it to you He takes what's most precious to him in this world and he puts it into our care and our hands here he rules over it he remains sovereign over it, but He entrusts us with the life and the work and the ministry and the service and the mission of the church has an amazing confidence and

Trust that God is showing in you personally if you're a believer that he takes his church and then trusts it into your care and So you've got to ask well What kind of people was God looking for to care for the church to lead the church to be active in the church and to take on all the different kinds of leadership roles that there are In the church and so there are lots of myths about that You know that church leaders or people who have leadership in the church have to be sort of a type outgoing personalities They've got to be cool. They've got to be entrepreneurial. They've got to have lots of amazing skills and You know be somebody quite outstanding and And That's sometimes what we think But it's certainly not what Paul is saying to Timothy What do we know about Timothy?

[5 : 22] Well several things first of all we know that in his own culture he was viewed as a young man So you're really going to need your Bible open tonight. So pick up your Bible right now and put it in your hands and First Timothy 4:12 We're told this don't let anyone look down on you because you are young so Somebody who was seen as a youth in his own culture a juvenile in his own culture Paul was still willing to trust him with great responsibility in the church and to Timothy So go over to 2nd Timothy now chapter 2 verse 22 Flee the evil desires of youth just another confirmation of his youth and then in first Timothy Chapter 5 so this the sermon is going to be like this. You're gonna have to flick about do do it It's good for you to just look at what the Bible is saying and verse 22:3 of chapter 5 stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses so he was physically frail rather than robust and then in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7 where we read together earlier. He says God is not giving us a spirit of timidity so in other words

He's one of the most important Leaders of the early church and Paul really puts a great deal of confidence in Timothy and yet he was young He was shy and he was physically frail and prone to frequent illness So, you know, he isn't the typical sort of robust charismatic Alpha male leader that sometimes we think God requires for the church. In fact, he's quite different from that and that's because what really counts in a leader is not the level of charisma although it can be helpful or How amazingly gifted they are although gifts do matter, but what counts way above all of that is the character of the leader and When the Bible is looking for leaders is looking for people of great Godly character and When you're being asked to take on any leadership role in the home in the workplace

In the life of this church at different aspects of the church's work, and you're taking on any kind of leadership in those functions You got asked well, what do I need to do this in a way that will really glorify God and the one thing that you need to be able to do this in a way that will glorify God is to cultivate a Godly character So that's where we're going with this sermon tonight. It's just to look at the issue of character and To say that character Really does matter. So if we want to see how much character counts, let's go to 1st Timothy chapter 3 and read there and what we've got there is just a list of what Paul thinks qualifies somebody for leadership in the church so look at the list this is for the ordained Eldership and deacons of the church the men who were going to take on that role What what is Paul looking for them and what you look at the list and as we read through the list what you'll see is that

Virtually everyone but not all of them have to do with character So read it with that view here is a trustworthy saying if anyone sets his heart and being an overseer That's an elder. He desires a noble task Now the overseer or elder must be above reproach the husband of but one wife temperate self-controlled Respectable hospitable able to teach not given to drunkenness not violent, but gentle not quarrelsome not a lover of money He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?

He must not be a recent convert or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil He must also have a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap Deacons likewise are to be men worthy of respect sincere not indulging in much wine not pursuing dishonest gain They must hold keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience They must first be tested that there's nothing against them let them serve Service deacons in the same way their wives are to be women worthy of respect not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy And everything a deacon must be the husband about one wife and must manage his children and household well Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus So as we go through that list we see so many of the traits that he's looking for Somebody who's above reproaching character temperate self-controlled respectable hospitable Sober not given to drunkenness gentle not quarrelsome or violent

[10 : 46] All to do with the character of the person In first Timothy chapter 4 just the next character on In verse 12 Paul tells Timothy's he's speaking to him about the kind of leader he's going to be He says set an example for the believers in speech in life and love and faith in Purity so again, it's it's so much to do with the purity and godliness of his own life So character really counts One of the stories I sometimes tell to demonstrate that is about an evangelical leader from the United States And he was a man of absolutely incredible charisma and power and talent and giftedness And he had a church of 14,000 people in Colorado Springs Here is head of the evangelical alliance in the United States 42 million people part of the evangelical alliance in the United States. So he you know obviously

Talented individual what happened to his ministry? Well, he was caught out taking drugs with a male prostitute that he was paying for and think of the devastation that causes and You see great gifting But his character How he let go of godly character?

And when you get somebody who's really gifted But doesn't have godly character Then that's a disaster waiting to happen Because they've got the gifts to lead to manipulate but not to produce spiritual fruit and so character counts And secondly, I want to say that leadership know that their priority is to disciple people so In other words, I'm saying that the character of the leader is a character that loves and cares for people and wants to see them grow in the truth So look at what Paul says to Timothy at the beginning of 2nd Timothy 2 turn to 2nd Timothy 2 and We're getting into the kind of priority that that the leader has in his heart The thing that's driving the leader on in their work You then my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses in

Trust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ so Those in leadership have a heart For raising up other people in the truth in the gospel So the picture here is of passing the baton. It's a really late race So I haven't done a really race since I was about 12 and we used to run around Scots and showgrounds in Glasgow for our school Sports and the blaze Running track and occasionally the PE teacher who was a renowned sadist We'd give up sort of the cross-country running and let us just jog around the track and do a bit of really racing So for people in the team one sets off with the baton Somebody's waiting for them. You have to have a smooth transition of the baton and keep moving on and then path it on to the next person And the next person now that's Paul's vision of how we function in the life of the church

As an apostle he's been entrusted with the great truth to the gospel But what's gonna happen? Once he's gone Second Timothy was written towards the end of Paul's life. He's in prison future is not Going to be long for him. So he's thinking what happens when I go Who's gonna carry on the work who's gonna teach these same great truths and make sure that the gospel is known and proclaimed So he says to Timothy I'm passing the baton to you the great truths of Christianity Now, what are you gonna do with the great truths that I've passed on to you?

[15 : 03] Well, he says what you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses and trust to reliable men So you're gonna trust it to all the other guys other men and then they're going to also be able to teach others Paul says so There's this sequence this kind of virus like you know It's like sneezing and all the virus germs come out and then somebody else picks them up and sneezes and it and You know, it's spreading like a virus from one person transmitted to another to another to another but it's healthy It's good. It's life-giving. It's transforming and And that's how you should view Your your kind of ministry your leadership whether it's with young people or children or Women or others in the church What are you wanting for them? You're wanting to really entrust the gospel into their lives so that they will then pass it on to others You've got this great heart this great motivation

To let others know what the gospel is Third thing I want to say is that leaders are reliable and loyal Now if you ask a minister or somebody who's in church leadership, who do you value most in the life of the church?

They're probably always going to say it's the people I can depend on to show up and to help because that's just you know What we need when we're when we're entrusted with leadership. We need people we can depend on so Paul depended on Timothy he speaks in first in the first chapter of second Timothy about people who had let them down so verse 15 Think about what this was like for Paul you know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me including Fajilis and Hermogenus personal betrayal is one of the costs of leadership and painful cost Why did Paul love Timothy so much because he was so loyal and so dependable and when he's telling Timothy to look for people to

Pass the gospel on to what kind of people is he saying to Timothy pass the gospel on he's saying and Trust it to reliable men People you can really depend on people who will turn up when they need to turn up and when they say they'll turn up People you can depend on to be at your side fighting with you And in the work of the gospel So that's a challenge. I think because a lot of us are not very reliable in life. I'm not very dependable I had there was a guy who visited the church here last summer from Toronto But he grew up in Glasgow and I speak to him his name's Gordon or Gordon Fleming He lives in Vancouver now, and he runs a church planting network there But I was speaking to him about his views in Christian leadership He said when I'm making elders he says I say that the elder is the guy who's got to be willing to take a bullet for the pastor He's like the Secret Service agent who runs along beside the president's limousine

And if anybody's going to try and harm the president then the the Secret Service Agent puts his body in the way of harm and an elder in the church is has got that sense of loyalty That he will put himself in the way of harm that he'll protect and support his leader his pastor his minister And those are the kind of leaders we're looking for in our church As we minister in this church what we're looking for. We're looking for future leaders for this congregation We're looking for future leaders for the church in Scotland Guys who will take up the challenge of re-evangelizing this nation We're looking for People who will be Christian leaders in this city in their work in their profession and in social and cultural life And I'm asking where are those leaders?

[19 : 25] Who are the people that we can totally depend on for the future? to stand up for Jesus and Take the heat and be there where it counts Are you the reliable man?

That Derek can depend on or I can depend on that Christ can depend on for the work of the gospel Mark Driscoll not everybody's cup of tea not particularly my cup of tea always but he talked about bams now I come from Glasgow Okay, and a bam as a word I've used to describe many people in my life and It's short for Bampot and A Bampot is a sort of Idiotic and awkward objectionable sort of difficult person, you know, they like to make life difficult for others that that's not what Mark Driscoll meant by a bam though. He's not that well educated. He doesn't know Glasgow idioms What but he would he why I was talking about was what he calls delayed ad or sort of not delayed adolescence, but sort of Boys who don't grow up essentially and He said these boy men. He called them bams boy man because a lot because a lot of young men are taking a lot longer to to really

Take on responsibility in life, you know They want to sit into their mid 20s and late 20s still playing computer games all the time and sort of You know pretending they're still kids and I Just want to say if that's you you're wasting your life God has given you one life to live for his glory I'm just pleading don't fritter it away God wants you to be somebody of great character and godly character Who's passion is for his glory and who wants you to go and win a world for him and pursue lost people Because they're going to die and go to hell without the gospel and so For me for Derek for anybody who's looking for the next generation of leaders coming up We just don't want to see you frittering your life away We just want to see you instead with people who have a great heart

To pass on the gospel to others who are reliable and who are loyal They know the message they want to share verse 8 don't be ashamed to testify about our Lord this is chapter 1 of Chant of 2 Timothy don't be ashamed to testify about our Lord are ashamed of me his prisoner I'm gonna just finish with two or three bullet points really first of all you need great dedication Absolutely amazing dedication if you're going to exercise leadership in Christ church Jesus praise or Ask says it says in Matthew 9 verse 38 the fields are white to harvest There's plenty of work to be done. So pray To the Lord the harvest for workers What we need are workers for the gospel in this church and in this country So we're praying for workers

But what we want are workers people who will really labor hard for the gospel It is hard work. So in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 5 He compares it to being like an athlete now. I'm not an athlete But you know I've watched athletes trained What dedication?

[23 : 25] My dad was a skinny little boy When he was 14 or 15 with chest problems and bronchitis and so on and he was told to start exercising and he decided he wanted to be a champion at throwing the hammer The 12 pound hammer or whatever it was every night He would stand for at least half an hour against a wall just flicking his wrists off the wall so that he developed great strength in his wrists for What you need to do truck hammers about as close, but you see just that amazing dedication to a task Working hard to do it as well as you possibly can do it The hard-working farmer were told in verse 6 should be first to receive a share of the spoils Be diligent we're told in First Timothy chapter 4 turn at first Timothy 4 just for one minute Okay

Versa let's go to verse 8. What does he say physical training is of some value? So he's taken up the picture of athletic training or physical training But godliness is value in all things you've got to train yourself into a godly life And verse 9 He says this is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance and for this what we labor and strive We're working hard. We're striving for something. We're putting our energy and our effort in verse 13 until I come Devote yourself commit yourself give everything to the public reading of scripture verse 15 be diligent Just work away at it give yourself to it verse 16 persevere in these things Chapter 6 verse 12. What does he say fight the good fight of faith?

Second time he said that in letter. He says it in chapter 1 verse 18 fight the good fight So fighting striving devoted committed Laboring those are the ideas working hard giving everything You know, you'll probably work hard for some things in your life But are you working hard for what counts above everything else?

And that leads us to what are you willing to give up for Christ? Because he says that you need to be ready to endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ I was reading somebody listening something I'm ready for the other day guys talking about the Roman army and I think you joined up You couldn't join till you're 20 and you had to sign up for 20 years. You weren't allowed to be married You would travel all over the world in fact. I Think it was a child. I know that was giving me all this information as well that they had to do 17 miles of marching every day With an the equivalent weight of an eight-year-old boy on their back and they had to run marathons at certain times a year huge commitment to being a soldier huge self sacrifice Greater sacrifices required What are you giving up in terms of your mission?

What are you giving up in terms of your money your time your popularity your prestige? Last thing is this though none of this is achievable for you On your own i'm not just sort of laying out a sort of eight things a great leader is these are the things you have to be kind of thing Because what this is is ultimately a work of god in your life And to serve god in any capacity you need to be resting in the holy spirit That's why In verses six and seven of two timothy one he says for this reason I remind you to fan into the flame the gift of god which is in you through the laying on of my hands God did not give us a spirit of timidity But a spirit of power love and self control or self discipline

[27 : 35] What we need god to be living in is in the power of the spirit So that as we serve we serve not in our strength or power but in his power And that's the only way spiritual fruit will come from what we do Secondly we're serving not out of simple duty But out of loving obedience a spirit of love we love christ he's given everything for us and now We give our life back as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him and say jesus you are worth everything to me And i'm giving you everything And then a spirit of self control the holy spirit teaches us to say no to ungodliness No to temptation no to sin No to lust no to greed no to anger And to say yes To prayer to read in the bible To say yes to purity Yes to learning good doctrine and good theology So that we've got truth to pass on to others And so we need to be filled with a holy spirit

How can you be this godly character Only as god's spirit fills you and takes hold of your life And shapes you for his glory But you need to be a willing participant in that process I'm going to finish there say a quick word of prayer and then we'll move on Lord jesus we want to say thank you to you this evening For timothy that somebody who was completely unremarkable from a human perspective Is somebody that you used in amazing ways for your glory And lord we are not remarkable people But we have a remarkable god And you fill us with the holy spirit So that we can live for you and serve you well in this world May we give everything for jesus who has given everything for us Amen