

## A Profile of A Pastor

### II Timothy 4:1-8

Dan Doriani

Tonight we are going to look at II Timothy 4: 1-8, which I kind of promised this morning, because it seemed apt to look at this part of God's Word that describes what we should expect out of a Pastor -- if I may, we can not only look forward, I mean, to some extent you can call me to account for the next year, but I'm not preaching about myself. What I really want you to do is think about who you're praying for, who your next pastor will be and what to expect. And, I think this passage enables us to look back on all the pastors, dozens of pastors this church has had over the years, but especially Pastors Barker and Reeder, who blessedly fulfilled what this passage says, not perfectly, of course. There's no one perfect this side of eternity, but a real picture we've had here for 65 years of godly leadership. And then what to expect of everybody else who serves here in ministry. Some extent of a profile of, elders and deacons, Sunday school teachers as well. And I have a little outline. I don't usually use alliteration, but it kind of works. And so it's going to go like this. We've got eight verses. The first and last parts of the passage describe the fact that a pastor is aware that he lives in the presence of God. That's the first word, presence. We live in the presence of God. And then the next one is that a pastor preaches and teaches, preaches, and they preach all kinds of ways. They preach exhorting and appealing and declaring, and they persevere. And that's verses three and four when people aren't listening, don't want what they have to say. I like the word undaunted. They're undaunted by a poor reception, by things not going their way. So, it starts off with presence and preaching, then perseverance in the middle. Then it goes back very briefly to the preaching and the ministry of the word, and then back to presence again. I'm going to ask you if you would follow with me as I read II Timothy 4:1-8 and you'll see it for yourself.

*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: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound<sup>(a)</sup> teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. <sup>5</sup> As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. <sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

I'm going to pray for VBS. I'm going to pray for the mission team. Let's pray that we'd also know what to expect of pastors and the way they minister among us, and be shaped by that as well. Let's pray for a moment.

Lord, we thank you for a church that is full of life in so many ways. You think of 600 children and several hundred volunteers, close to a thousand people in the building this week, just training children to take care of them. We're so grateful for that. And we're thankful for the preaching. Not exactly preaching, certainly teaching. And there will be a need for perseverance because first graders and third graders don't always want to listen and don't always seem like they're paying attention. And we pray that everybody will have the grace to persevere. Lord, we pray for the teenagers and their adult leaders as well, that they would be ready to share the gospel well and persevere when things are hard, when they can't sleep, when the place is different, when it's hot, when people don't seem to be connecting. We pray for them. We pray for us. Lord, help us to find in it the ability to reflect on all the good pastors we've had over the years here, and the look and to pray for what is to come and to know what to expect of our leaders even now, and to be shaped by our leaders as well.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

There's a man named Dave, that's his real name. And Dave is a pastor of a mid-sized church, 300 people or so in Minnesota. Guess what? It's not really Minnesota, but it's up there somewhere. He's a pastor of a mid-sized church way up in the northern parts of America, and he's been a missionary for a number of years. And so he does things for our PCA mission or agency called mission to the world. And so he travels, as well as caring for his church. And when he travels after his trip is over, he's often tired and likes to sleep. It tends to fly on Southwest Airlines, which, as you may know, is the airline where you get to choose your own serious tall man, about six foot four. I'd say something like that. And, he goes to the back of the plane and stretches out and goes to sleep. And one day he was about ready to go to sleep, collapsed, tired. And a man came wandering down the aisle of the plane looking at people. And Dave had a feeling, and this feeling was fulfilled when that man plopped down beside him and said, I scanned the whole plane, and I think you're the best candidate to listen to me. Because my father is dying. And for 2.5 hours, Dave, who was totally exhausted, shared the word of God and words of encouragement with a man he'd never met before because that man had enough ability to tell a face. It looked like a friendly listening face. That's Dave, that's the kind of day man Dave is now. He wasn't preaching the gospel, he was teaching, but he was certainly doing so out of season.

We're supposed to share the word in season, out of season. That was out of season. So our passage tells us that pastors are preachers and they're men who are shaped by all their life in the presence of God. Now, the context, which comes a little bit earlier in chapter three of Second Timothy, tells us how Timothy himself was shaped. It says that Timothy himself had a godly mother and a godly grandmother, and so he learned a lot from them. He had known God's Word, and then he traveled with Paul for years and heard Paul preach and teach in public.

And he also knew Paul says that Paul's private life aligned with his public life. They were one and the same, and so he was shaped by the gospel.

Now, he says, I stand in the presence of God, my judge, my king. I'm going to appear before him one day and render an account for my life. So that's what he says. He says, I charge you. Paul is speaking to Timothy, and Paul is in his late 60s and he's in jail, and he knows that he is shortly going to be put to death. And he says to Timothy, I am ready to lay down my mantle, and I charge you, and I charge you not with my words, but I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus. That is to say, he doesn't say the Holy Spirit here, but in the presence of the Triune God, I what I'm telling you is this the Lord Jesus is going to return one day, and when he returns, all people are going to be arrayed before him.

And you need to remember that your work in gospel ministry, Timothy, and anybody who ministers today, you're working gospel ministry is not something you fulfilled because it's your job or because you fell into it. You do it because Christ is watching and he's the judge. We are servants of Christ. He's watching what we're doing. He's going to call us to account.

He's also mindful. Paul is mindful that Christ is going to judge the living and the dead. Everyone will appear before him. That's why part two Timothy has to preach the word, preach the word. He says, preach the word. Now there are different words for preaching in the Bible. One word. And I brought my Greek New Testament here. If anybody wants to check it out, I can show it to you. The most common word is **euangelion**, from which we get the word evangelism or evangelize. That's to preach the good news. That's not the word he uses here, uses the word *Caruso*, which means to proclaim, to herald, to make a proclamation, you need to stand up and declare the truth. And you do that maybe in a church, but you might do it like Paul on, Mars Hill at the aerial business in Athens, you proclaim what God's truth, what God's Word is. That's what you do now when it says declare. That doesn't mean you simply declare stuff and just make declarations all day long. If you look carefully at the way Paul preached, you will notice that his sermons or his letters often have what we call suppressed dialog. I might invite you to turn to Romans chapter six in your Bibles just for a minute, to get a tiny glimpse of this in Romans chapter six.

Paul has just declared the gospel of justification by faith and spelled it out somewhat. And I know many of you know the book of Romans very well. And so he says at the end of chapter five, verse 21, *as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness, leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. And right before that he says something that made people wonder perhaps -- he said, *now the law came to increase trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*. Now, he says. Now, of course Christ overcame that. But he says, let me go back and just make sure nobody misunderstood anything. If you're listening to me and you hear the words of verse 20, where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. Some of you might say, and that's chapter six, verse one. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, that grace may abound? That's a misunderstanding. When you hear me say,

when sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Somebody may be tempted to say, oh, well, then I should sin more and more, because grace is about more and more.

And Paul says, I know what you're thinking. He says, by no means. That's an absurd question. How can we, who died to sin still live in it, though? Paul does that kind of thing a number of times. He says, I know what you're thinking. So when he says, make a proclamation, he's not saying you stand it, just declare fact.

You also think, what are these people thinking? What's on their mind? What is the question that they're wrestling with? And I'll address that. So sermons often feel a little bit like dialogs. James did the same thing he said worked sin without sorry. faith without works is dead. And somebody said, wait a second, wait a second. Isn't there some value in in knowing good theology by itself? If you've got practice it. And James says, well, you know, demons are pretty good theologians. They know God is one. They know he's going to judge, doesn't do him any good. Got to put faith and works together. He's saying the same thing. I know what you're thinking, and I'm going to dress what you're thinking. So we make a proclamation. Doesn't mean you just monologue your monologue, but you also try to read people's minds, faces, read the culture, preach the word, preach the word in season or out of season. Preach the word. But it's timely when it's untimely. Preach the Word on Christmas and Easter when you feel fantastic and preach the word the other Sundays, when you have a cold and you have a fever of 103, preach the word. In season and out of season. Preach it when you're ready and when you're not ready. Most of the sermons in the book of acts were preached out of season. Suddenly no preparation kind of cost. Peter, you have something to say about this? No preparation. Just stands up and preaches. Call to go preach to Cornelius. Why am I here? Well, you already preach a sermon. People are ready for you. You didn't have any time to prepare. Too bad. Your whole life has been one of preparation in season and out of season.

When I was finishing up my graduate training, I was in an evening church service like this. Not as many people, but like this. And at about 6:15, somebody tapped me on the shoulder and said, our pastor is downstairs throwing up. Can you preach in about ten minutes? I said, can you give me 15? Maybe an extra hymn? Okay, fine.

One time I was in Hungary speaking of mission trips, and I gave a lecture for an hour to a seminary that had 24 professors, of which three were Bible believing and the other 21 were liberal or ultra-liberal or atheists, several atheists on the staff at a seminary. And I was invited to give a lecture by one of the three evangelicals, and after it was over one hour of lecturing done, he said to me, can you keep going? And I knew what he meant. He meant, you and I are aligning and the students need to know I'm not alone on this. They need to hear from somebody else who believes in Christ as I do. And the inspiration of the Bible. It's our authority. Can you keep going? I said, well, yes, I can keep going. How much longer? He said, how about two hours? That's what he said. Actually, what he said was one more hour, and in the one more hour he said, how about another hour? But the result was the same.

Another time I was, invited to speak in the Bahamas, and there were two Christian groups are kind of not getting along well at all. And the group that invited me was at odds with the group that owned the Christian radio station, and they invited me to come on for an interview and, and just before I started, before I went into the radio station, the man who had invited me said, by the way, don't be surprised if he tries to do something to make you look bad. I said, okay, I don't know what that means. And then at the end of the interview, he said, it's been lovely to have you, Doctor Dorian and everybody don't, don't leave during the commercial break because Doctor Dorian is going to be preaching a sermon on Hebrews chapter 12. I said, how long's a commercial break? He said, 90 seconds. You've got to be ready.

A good pastor is ready. Good pastors soaked in the word. A good pastor always has something to say. I guarantee you that your pastors, over the years have been ready to speak at the last moment, because they've always got the Word of God in their minds in season and out of season. And when they do, they do three things. And we have the verses up there. They preach in season, out of season, and they reprove and rebuke and exhort. Now you may say, let's just three words, but they're actually three different words. They mean three different things to reprove. The first word is to give evidence of things that are wrong, or to tell people when something is wrong in their minds or in the thinking. It doesn't mean sharp correction necessarily. It means let's reason together. It's when you have a friend and that friend is wandering off. Maybe that friend is on the edge of despair and having very dark thoughts. Or maybe they've read some secular literature and it's really thrown them. And you come alongside and you say, no, no, don't despair, don't believe what you just read. Don't let that that voice, that persuasive voice shape you. Let me tell you what the Bible says. That's what reprove means. It means we're coming alongside someone when they're in in trouble or having doubts.

The next word, rebuke, is the word that means to point out sin. And so a preacher and a teacher, a gospel preacher, and a gospel teacher needs to be able to say, this is a sin, even if it's acceptable in our society, like cohabitation, for example, something like 70% of all people cohabit before marriage. And because everybody does it, it seems normal. And what's normal eventually comes to seem right. And why are you cohabiting? Don't you know that you should try it out beforehand? Even people who grew up in church are influenced by that. And Paul says, reprove it. This is God's plan for marriage. But if someone is cohabiting, you rebuke it also. But that's not all. You also exhort and exhort means to say to somebody, come on, let's go. Let's grow together. You know better than this. God has a better way for you. That's the positive side of it.

So one person said, it's not my idea. If you look at those three words, you see that a preacher appeals to the three parts of human nature. When you reprove, you appeal to the mind. Bad ideas. Correct those bad ideas. When you rebuke, you appeal to the conscience. You know better than to do this. And then when you exhort, you appeal to the emotions. Which, by the way, is why preachers sometimes tell stories. Sometimes people ask me, why do you tell so many stories? Other times they say, why don't you tell more stories? Everybody has an opinion.

But when people say, why do you have so many stories? I say, you know, you ever hear of a guy named Jesus? Because he tells a lot of stories. We call them parables, but they're stories. And stories appeal to our emotions and we connect. So a preacher does these three things reprove, mentally, rebuke the conscience, ethics, and exhort. And we do it with patience and teaching. Teaching means we teach pastors, preachers, leaders teach. They have content. That's now when they when the Bible says teach, it means you teach. But it's not like teaching math. You teach math in the Bible. This sounds weird, but it's true. You teach **the teaching**. So the teaching is the body of what the apostles and the prophets have said over the years. The Bible calls that the teaching a number of times. And you also teach. You teach the teaching, not teaching math or geography. You teach the teaching of Christian theology, what the whole Bible has to say, and you do so patiently. Some people learn fast, some people learn slowly, and you're always trying to take them along with you. You teach and you teach verses three, four and five, whether people are listening or not. Verses three, four and five tell us that the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching and they have itching ears and they accumulate teaching. They accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions. I want to find somebody who says what I want them to say. That's a Paul's describing. Now, the way Paul says it is actually kind of poetic and ironic, the way it literally runs in the original language, which, if I may say so, you want a pastor who works in the original languages because there are things there that don't show up in all the English translations. Not lots of things. Not like some secret code. You know, you're in the dark, but there are there are emphases that show up. And so he emphasizes, Paul emphasizes certain things. He says sound teaching, and he says it. It's like Yoda in Star Wars sound teaching. They will not tolerate. It's the sound teaching that they won't tolerate.

And to suit their passions. The heap up teachers, it says from the truth. They wonder. That's interesting. It says, first of all, some people prefer effective teaching. You know that some people go from church to church until they find a preacher or a teacher who says what they want the preacher teacher to say. You know that, don't you? And when the Bible is out of step with society on things like sexual ethics or gender or identity, and people are won over by secular views, some people leave a church because they say that church is old fashioned. What they mean is that church says things that put me in the minority in my culture, and I don't want to be in the minority. I want to be in the majority. And I'm going to find someone who's willing to compromise. Real pastors don't compromise. They understand that there is a kind of teacher that tickles people's ears, and lots of stories and things that happened in the newspaper, and I'm not against stories or things that happened. The newspaper, but the newspaper and the stories and with trends of what's happening now and movies about this and novels about that are front and center, they're not illustrative. They're almost the core. I once heard a sermon on Sophie's Choice. The entire sermon. I wandered into the wrong church on vacation. I thought it was a PCA church but it was a PC-USA church, and the whole sermon was about a novel. The whole sermon. Not a word about Scripture, the whole sermon, but of course, because it fulfilled certain cultural trends.

As John Calvin said, every time you rightly apply the Bible, it includes the words follow me. The Word of God always puts a demand on people. It always says, you need to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. And a lot of popular religious teaching has very little heft, very little weight. People accumulate their handpicked teachers that say what they want to hear are please buy it now. This has been going on for a long time. I don't want you to think this is new. In fact, it's about 3000 years old. Isaiah heard the same thing in Isaiah chapter 30. It says that rebellious Israelites told Isaiah, do not prophesy to us what is right. Speak to us smooth things. Say no more. Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel. We don't want to hear about God's holiness. We don't want to hear about holiness. We're tired of that. Isaiah, you're a great speaker. You should change your message a little and you'd be more popular. Just be a little smoother. Don't trouble people so much. Then we'll like you more. We won't treat you poorly. That's so people say. Paul says that people wander off in the myths. It's an interesting phrase. It doesn't say that they turn to myths or adopt myths or believe myths says they wander off into myths. That's because myths are so wispy and insubstantial.

Were you up early this morning? Did you notice there was the tiniest, tiniest little bit of just the lightest mist falling a little bit this morning? Did you notice that? Is that mist. Is there precipitation or not? It's so thin. Myths are thin like that, there's kind of nothing to them. The gods come to earth, they wander around, they have a bowl of soup. They plant a tree, and there are no demands. There's no theology. The myths, the Greco-Roman are just stories. They don't demand anything intellectually or morally. They don't call for sacrifice. They're just stories. People wander off into it because it makes no demands on them of any kind.

Paul says today, of course, you may know this. People call the Bible a myth. Did you know that it's a man named Friedrich Schleiermacher. If you want to spray on your friends, say Friedrich Schleiermacher. Let's say it together. Friedrich Schleiermacher. Friedrich Schleiermacher said the Bible has one goal, and that is to make us feel our need for God by. So it sounds kind of good, but if that's all there is to the Bible, that the Bible wants to give us a sense that we depend on God, that's a pretty thin message, isn't it? We depend on God.

There's a man named Jordan Peterson. He sold millions of books. He presents himself in some circles as a Christian, at least a Christian moralist. But he believes the Bible is full of instructive myths. If you've read his multimillion dollar selling, multimillion copy selling book, 12 Rules for Life, and there's a lot of wisdom in it, he reads the Bible very seriously. He's a very gifted person. He likes biblical ethics, but he doesn't like the core message of the Bible. He says, for example, when we look at the death of Jesus, what we have to understand is his teaching us not about atonement for sin. Rather, what it's saying is there's a tragic reality. One person may do something wrong and other people may suffer for it. That's a true statement. That's true. And Jesus did suffer because people did things wrong, because they were fearful and jealous. They killed Jesus. That's a true statement. But it's about the least important truth about Jesus suffering. There's a whole lot that's much deeper than that. Then Peterson says. Let's just keep it the myth level. And this is what people want.

They're itching years. Have you noticed? Have you noticed I've asked questions about this. Do people at this church smoke cigars? I get different answers. Some of you can give me the report, but, you know, about 10 or 15 years ago, if you are really a cool Reformed Presbyterian person and a male, you smoked cigars. And then the word got out that cigars can give you cancer too. And now cigars are horrible. And then there was a period of time around the same time I call them the Cigar and Whiskey group that people said, you know, whiskey. I mean, there's just this much and it tastes so horrible you can't really get drunk on it or anything. And so it's cool to be a reformed Christian and know your true Christian liberty to drink whiskey. And now everybody's saying, well, you know, I'm stepping away from alcohol. I was drinking now. No more alcohol. And then and then there's people that have a diet where you eat meat and meat and meat and meat and broccoli and cherries and a few other things. And then then four years later, somebody says, you know, eat too much meat, I'll give you cancer. You got to get away from it. And so people flit from one topic to another, from one little way to live well to another. And it's insubstantial. I'm not against eating well. I'm certainly not going to advocate people going out and getting drunk. What I'm saying is as gospel preacher let's not get into these little side issues, these little myths, these little conversations about what might or might not be good at this moment. There's a willingness to stick to the truth.

And we see this when Paul gets back to the gospel ministry and there's a little phrase it's really easy to overlook. I'm going to ask you to notice it in verse five. It's three words. As for you, as for you, mister. Well, that's not a very important phrase. It's actually very important. He says. People are floating away from myths. They're wandering off in the mist. They're not listening to truth anymore. But as for you, you're different. By the way, this is where it applies to you, not just your future pastor. You're not running after frivolous things. As for you, you are sober minded. You endure suffering. And now, especially for Timothy, you do the work of an evangelist and fulfill your ministry or service.

There's Cindy right there, Cindy Reeder I mean, we had a little conversation after church today about how pastors are sometimes asked to get out of bed at two or 3 or 4 in the morning and go to the hospital or answer a phone call, including, strangely enough, both Harry and I have been called out of bed at three in the morning or thereabouts, more or less three in the morning, because a friend of ours in our church was having evangelistic conversation when they should have been in bed, but they weren't three in the morning and the Christian ran out of answers for the non-Christian and said, I'll call my pastor.

Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry, serve that person. By the way, I'm not I am not advising you to call your pastor at three in the morning. If God is working this person's life, they can take the answer the next day and the Holy Spirit will apply it to the next day. But if the call comes in at three in the morning, a pastor should take the call if they left their phone on, which they probably didn't anymore.

Do the work of an evangelist. That doesn't mean you have to call somebody who is an evangelist. Everybody can give a reason for the faith that's in us, in every pastor should love



evangelism, even if not even if they're not technically an evangelist. Preach. Undeterred. As for you.

And then the next verse, verse six, another little comment. I am being poured out as a drink offering you. You stay sober because I'm leaving. I'm dying soon being poured out as a drink offering, as a reference to the Old Testament where there were libations or sacrifices, blood poured on the altar. And Paul says, A little metaphor.

I'm giving up my life even as even as animals gave up their lives as offerings, because the time of my departure has come. The word he uses for departure is a word that's used when you untie a knot. I'm being untied from this life. It's a word that shoes. When an anchor is pulled up and a ship is carried along by the wind up being carried along by the wind of the spirit.

From this life to life with God forever. My time has come. And as I look back on in my life and all the difficulties in it, I can look back and say, and these are all, can I say it? They're perfect tense, which means. Which means I have done it and it's done. It's finished. There's no more that I can do than what I've done.

I have fought the good fight. He's going to die in 90 days, 100 days, 120 days, 70 days. We don't know. Soon, he says, I fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I kept the faith. Those are three, three metaphors for the Christian life. The Christian life is a battle. It's not a physical battle. Jesus did not come on a war horse.

He came on a donkey. David fought with a sword because there were people invading. But there's no Christian nation in the sense that the people of Israel were distinctively God's nation. We're of course, we're always praying for our nation to be, as Christians, possible. But there's only one nation that was God's people in one place. Christians now scattered throughout the world are battles, not with flesh and blood.

It's spiritual, he says. I fought the fight. I did it best I could. I finished the race. I had a race marked out for me. Did you notice that up here the youth, you notice this? The youth had various sizes. Did you notice that I was I was, noticing, you know, there was there was, there were six, four and there were five two. Right. They weren't all the same size. And I was standing behind some, some young men and one of them was just really skinny and, and, and very lean. And he might have been very strong, but he didn't have big muscles. But the guy that was right in front of me, like he had enormous calves, like, what do you do? Squats all day? I mean, he had big calf muscles and I looked up. He was right in front of me and my, his he was V-shaped, just like Mr. Muscle. And then there's another guy right next to it was kind of skinny. And that's we have different paths marked out for some person. Some people have big bodies and they can't fit on the airplanes, and other people have small bodies and they can't lift fine things out of the tall closet. And that's just your path in life. You wish you were taller. You wish you were shorter, you wish you didn't have a chronic disease. You wish you were more energetic. You wish, you wish, you wish you have a race marked for you by God. Don't wish you were six four. If you're five seven, be happier. Five seven God chose to make you five seven and if you need a lot

of sleep, don't lament how much sleep you need. Enjoy your sleep. That's the path God marked for you. Paul had a path. Much more sophisticated than how much sleep he needed. And he also said I kept the faith. I held on to it until the end. You. You need to look for pastors who know how to persevere, undaunted by hardship. But criticism, but things not going the way they would like.

When you search for a pastor's, you pray for a pastor. Pray for somebody who has already begun to demonstrate, who's begun already, to demonstrate that they know how to handle adversity, that they're not thwarted. They're not crushed. They know how to finish a race. They know how to hold on to the faith. And then one more time, Paul says, I'm doing all this in God's presence. You see what he says. Would you look at the text with me in the last verse, verse eight? He says, now as I look to the end of my life, he says, henceforth I, I know there's laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day. And by the way, not only to me, but to all who have loved his appearing. That means for you too.

Now, when I was a new Christian, I heard talks about crowns and crowns of righteousness, crowns of life. And I heard somebody say, well, I want the crown of life. And somebody else said, I want the crown of righteousness and so forth. But here's, here's what we need to know is that the crown of life is life. It's the crown that consists of life. That means that everybody who's a Christian has the gift of eternal life, and you are crowned with life itself. The crown of righteousness means you're clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and every believer receives that crown. Everyone receives it from the righteous judge who declares it to be right in the sight of God by the blood of Christ. And he will award it to me, he says, but also to everyone who's loved his appearing. If you're a believer today, you have loved Christ appearing. Now you may, you know, you may be getting ready to get married and you don't want to see the Lord come right now to get married. You may be waiting for a child and you have two girls, and now you're going to have a boy, and you'd rather have a little boy, and you don't want the Lord to come to you. Hold your little boy. I get that, I get that. But there's a sense in which all of us love the appearing of Christ, and as we love his appearing, we will be crowned with righteousness and life and every other crown the Lord gives us that comes to all of us, because we've lived out our life in the presence of the Lord, and by his grace we have longed for him.

And that, of course, is what we seek as well. Let's say one more thing. I love to read biographies of the saints, and I'll try not to talk about John Calvin too much, but, he was a man who loved to preach, and he preached four sermons, most weeks, and some weeks he preached five. He was a really good preacher, and he connected the Word of God to the life of piety. And I just brought a book just for the sake of it. I don't know, I didn't bring a whole lot of books with me when I moved down, because you have library's in Birmingham. this is a book called Systematic Theology. It's 1200 pages, written by a man named John Frame. And one reason why I brought this book is because you can tell as you read this book, he loves a God.

You can read this book devotional. He if anybody's read John Piper, you have the feeling that he believes what he says and he loves God or in seminaries these days, people read a man named Herman Bob and all the time. And one reason is because as you read it, you have the sense that he loves what he's saying. He loves to talk about God. He loves to talk about his Savior. So these are books that have the truth, but they also speak of love. And John Calvin wanted so much to love his people. As he preached the he decided that he was a little bit too arrogant, died too learned, and so he tried to think about the ways he could rein it in so he wouldn't lose people. And he said, I think the best way to do it is to preach without notes. I'm going to use no notes. I'm not even going to read from for him, the French Bible. I'm going to read from the Greek. In the Hebrew, I'm just going to look at the text of the Bible. And as I look at the text and I don't have all my quotations, I'm going to connect with my people more because all I'm doing is looking at Greek and Hebrew, and I'm looking at people. And as I look at them, I'm going to connect with them more. He wanted to do that. He wanted to connect with his people. He wanted to connect with his people for the sake of what he preached, which is Christ. He knew he lived this life out of the presence of Christ.

Even as he was dying, he was writing. He was trying to finish a book. Somebody said to him, John, you're dying. Why are you still writing a book? He said, what? And my Lord, find me idle when he comes for me. He wants to live his life on the presence of God. So that's a pastor that you look for.

Blessed be you people of Briarwood Presbyterian Church because you've had to lead pastors and many, many associate pastors who follow these standards. And I want to just make sure I remind you what they are. Live out your life in the presence of God. First and last presence of God, presence of God. Preach the word. Number two and at the end of another little, little sad section, the perseverance section. People have itching ears. They don't want to follow. He says, yeah, and do the work of an evangelist. So presence of God, presence of God, preach, preach in the middle. Persevere. May it be so. And may you all be shaped by the leaders you have.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, we thank you for this part of your word. Well, Lord, you know, I've loved studying it and I hope that there would be love of this word not because it's teaching or because it's, detailed passage, because it does lead you to live our lives in your presence, undeterred, undaunted by hardship.

And so, Lord, we pray that you be good to us and good to this church and lead us to a pastor and many pastors and many leaders, many teachers who have these traits and maybe have them in us also more and more, by your grace.

So we pray in Jesus name, Amen.