

I Timothy 4, Sermon #3

I Timothy 4:

Last week we began a series entitled: A Good Pastor

We said that:

- A good pastor reminds the people – he recalls the Truth – vs. 6
- Secondly, a good pastor refutes false teaching – vs. 7
- Thirdly, a good pastor is to communicate with authority – vs. 11
- Fourthly, a good pastor is a student of Scripture – vs. 6 – nourished up in the words of faith.

Four qualities of a good pastor – we will add to that list today

I've entitled today's message "A Good Pastor, Part 2"

I Timothy 4:6

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 4:6-11

Let us pray

You may be seated

A Good Pastor

Fifthly, a good pastor exercises himself unto Godliness.

Let me give you the background to that word “exercise” in vs. 7 & 8.

It is a Greek word “Goom Nad Zo”; we get our English word “gymnasium” – translated “exercise” in vs. 7

The word speaks of the rigorous, strenuous, self-sacrificing training of a true athlete – Olympic kind of athlete.

So, Timothy was to rigorously, train himself in Godliness – a careful observance of His Word due to reverence and love of God. Holiness – having the character and the conduct of a Christian. “Be ye holy,” God said, “As I am holy.”

Paul took this analogy, that term right out of Greek athletics!

It was the Greeks who invented the gym as we know it today.

- They built large buildings with circular tracks, weight rooms, steam baths, wrestling mats.
- The gym was a big part of Greek life.

The Romans then took the Greeks over, and in time, the gym made its way into the Jewish life.

It was a corrupter for young Jewish men.

The Jewish elders tried to keep their youth out of the gyms because the gyms were a hotbed for all kinds of immorality.

There was a gym in Ephesus.

- Paul spent about three years in Ephesus where there was a great coliseum in which the Olympic Games were held at times.
- The coliseum seated 100,000 people.

As it brings to mind the whole picture of gymnastics in that city, God says, “Timothy, you exercise, but do this in reference to Godliness – work out with God – spiritual exercise – build up your life spiritually.”

Let me ask a question – Have we exercised with God this week?

- Have we worked out in the Word? Studied the Word, Been in the Word, Memorized the Word?
- Have we persevered in prayer? Jesus taught us to pray. He agonized in prayer. Have we sought God in prayer this week?
- Have we assembled with the assembly?
- Have we brought our bodies under submission? Have we watched the intake of our soul and mind and heart?

How many of you folks this week on purpose – you exercised physically?

Americans are engulfed by exercise programs, diet, machines, info-commercials. There is a great emphasis on bodily exercise.

In vs. 8 it says – there is an admission in that statement that bodily exercise has some profit to it

There are those who believe that Paul is downgrading physical exercise. I do not believe that to be the case. I believe God is comparing for us physical exercise vs. Godly exercise and if we are going to spend our time somewhere, spend it in Godly exercise..

God is showing that physical exercise is limited.

There are two arguments for why spiritual exercise is better than physical exercise.

First, in vs. 8 – Godliness is profitable for all things.

It has profit for every quest of life. It helps in relationships, work, finances, child raising. It even helps us in our competitions – it's called sportsmanship. There are a lot of fit people, strong healthy people but their relationships are a mess. No work ethics – finances – debt. Don't know how to raise kids.

Godliness is profitable for all things.

Secondly, in terms of duration, it is long lasting the Bible says as – having promise – vs. 8b – of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Godliness endures.

Say that you ran cross country for the entire season. When you stop running, how long does it take for you to lose your endurance? Not long. But Godliness is for a lifetime and even for eternity.

Life expectancy in Moses' day was three score and ten – that was 1500 years before Christ. 70 years of age

Today, the life expectancy is 76 – and Moses said maybe by reason of strength – four score. 80 years. (Ps. 90:10)

With all our medical technology, health foods, etc. – and still life expectancy numbers are in the 70s.

There is some profit in physical exercise, but the comparative value of that is minimal in comparison to exercising spiritually.

One is not worthy to be compared to the other – one hour of prayer vs. one hour of running; one hour of serving God vs. one hour of working out in the gym.

Your Godliness will help you wherever – it is profitable for all things.

What we do in this life will have some consequence even after we die.

It has promise for the life to come – something beyond salvation.

So this truth of verse 8, God calls in vs. 9, a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

Believers are to be disciplining themselves for Godliness because of its temporal and eternal value.

Godliness, not fame, popularity or wealth, is the pursuit of the good pastor – good Christian.

Exercising unto Godliness is priority – give ourselves to this.

- A good pastor spends time exercising himself unto Godliness.
- A good pastor is to pursue Godliness.

There is no effective spiritual ministry apart from personal Godliness for the good pastor.

The lack of spiritual discipline is the primary reason so many spiritual leaders fall in to sin.

The Bible's emphasis on Godliness rather than on physical exercise is because the Ephesians were a people given over to games, athletics, and that whole realm.

We are also that kind of a nation.

- Many believers put more emphasis on athletics than they do on the things of God.
- There are church people who spend more time during the summer in the ball parks than they spend in prayer meetings the whole year.

God is not saying bodily exercise is wrong.

He is saying, "Let's hold things in proper perspective."

God challenged Timothy to be as devoted to Godliness as an athlete is to his sport.

There are spiritual exercises that I ought to be doing.

Are we exercising ourselves daily for God? Are we lifting, running, training ourselves for God?

See, it shows up on the field.

A Christian who wants to excel must really work at it. He must apply himself.

But exercising himself in Godly living is not only profitable for Timothy; it is also profitable for his congregation. They receive the fruits of his work.

Pastor Timothy is the leader. He exercises himself unto Godliness so that he can be an example to the flock –
vs. 12.

Sixthly – A good pastor is committed to hard work – vs. 10

The ministry demands hard work.

This word “Labor” means “to work to the point of weariness and exhaustion,” “to engage in a struggle.”

In 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, God gave two reasons such hard work is necessary:

1. Believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (v. 10), “Wherefore we labor that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Bema – judges at – crowning or disqualification
2. Unbelievers will face God’s eternal judgment (v.11). We know the terror of the Lord that awaits those who do not trust in God. Let us work while we can.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote concerning the pastor, "If he is unwilling to pay the price of fatigue for his leadership, it will always be mediocre . . . True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man, and the more effective the leadership is, the higher the price to be paid."

Folks, we labor because we trust in the living God.

Vs. 10c

God is the Savior of all men, especially of believers, this has been much disputed.

Some, wanting to eliminate the Scriptural teaching of an eternal hell, argue that God here teaches universalism, that all people will be saved.

The Bible never contradicts itself.

It will never teach something in one passage that violates what it teaches elsewhere.

The Bible clearly teaches that those who reject God will be sentenced to hell.

Matthew 25:41, *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

And Matthew 25:46, *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."*

The Bible states that the duration of that punishment will be eternal.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 says that those who do not know God and refuse to obey the Gospel will suffer eternal punishment away from God's presence.

Jesus repeatedly spoke of the danger of hell.

I John 2:2, *“And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

It is faith that saves one’s soul (Eph. 2:8-10). Since God “will have all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4), and since Christ “gave Himself a ransom for all” (2:6), then any lost sinner can trust Christ and be saved. God is Savior of all men but not all men are saved. Are you saved? Are you sure?

So, the good pastor labors for the Lord but he also suffers for the Savior.

I Timothy 4:10 – struggle – it’s not easy! That’s why it is called exercise.

Here’s something we can count on.

- If we stand for Jesus Christ today it will cost us something. – We both labor and suffer reproach.

The good pastor willingly suffers for the Savior. There will be a cost to the individual who trains, who labors.

There is no question about that.

A Good Pastor

Let us stand for closing invitation.

God is the Savior of all people.

He is the only Savior

There is no salvation outside of God. God loved us and sent His Son Jesus, who died for us, for our sins.

He will save us from our sin.

Exercise – do we have an exercise plan – routine with God?

How are we training ourselves – growing ourselves in the Faith?

This church offers all kinds of ways to help a person exercise:

Service

Discipleship

Mentoring

God's Greatest Gift

Prayer time

Bible study

Many Christian people will go to the gym or “Y” or their exercise stations at home – 3-5 times a week, but struggle to exercise with God.

The Christian is to work hard.

He is to labor for the Lord.