

1 Timothy 3 (Part 2):8-16 • The Privilege and Blessing of Serving

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We are in 1 Timothy. So open your Bible there, please. In fact, we're going to finish out 1 Timothy chapter 3 today. And we're going to talk about deacons and some other things. So 1 Timothy chapter 3, we're picking it up in verse 8. Let's read down through the end of the chapter goes like this,

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. ¹⁶ Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”
(ESV)

Let's pray. Father, open our hearts now as we dig into the scriptures. We believe that these have been given to us to fill us with spiritual nourishment and insight to prepare us, Lord God, for the days ahead and to equip us for all good things. And so we pray that You would open our hearts to hear your voice, that you would help us to apply the scriptures to those areas of our life where they need application, and we pray that You would challenge us to live for you. We ask in Jesus name, amen. Amen.

Last week, after having, well, we covered it last week, but after the Apostle Paul covered the qualities and qualifications of the pastor, elder, overseer, he now moves on to discuss the role and the qualities of the deacon.

And in the New Testament, a deacon is one who serves. And it carries kind of, well, it's a fundamentally different kind of service than is performed by the pastor, elder, overseer. And it's probably best seen or I should say the distinctions between those, the spiritual ministry of the pastor, elder, overseer versus that of the deacon or probably best seen in a passage in the book of Acts, where a particular issue came up and what was happening in that section is that there were women widows who were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

And they were, interestingly enough, they were women, they were Jewish women, but they came from a Grecian background. They had kind of a Grecian, more of a Grecian upbringing. The women who came and had a Jewish upbringing, now remember they're all Jews, but they lived in different cultures. And the women who had a Jewish background were not being overlooked.

The women who had a Grecian background were being overlooked and this issue came up in the church and they had to figure out how they were going to solve it. And this is where we really begin to see, emerging this ministry of the deacon. Let's put it up on the screen for you so we can read it together. It says,

Acts 6:1-6 (ESV)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number (in other words, the church was growing), a complaint by the Hellenists (and that's another name for Grecians, those with a Grecian background) arose against the Hebrews (or the Hebraic or Hebrew culture individuals) because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said (now I want you to pay attention to what they said), " It is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."
Now, they go on, and it goes on to say,

Acts 6:1-6 (ESV)

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Well, first of all, I want to just tell you that their solution to the problem was brilliant. Because the people themselves were complaining, some of them were complaining that their widows were being overlooked because the church felt the responsibility to take care of widows and orphans. And so they would, there would be a daily distribution of food and so forth to these individuals.

But because the Hellenists or Grecian Jews said that their widows were being overlooked, the apostles very brilliantly said, “Well, then let's get together and let's choose men to take care of this and to see that this doesn't happen.” And they gave them some qualifications for them and the people then selected.

And it's interesting that if you look at the names, they're all Grecian which is wonderful. They basically put guys in charge who had more of a Grecian background. They had Grecian names anyway, but these men were fair minded. They were full of the Spirit and there was the confidence that there would not be any kind of partisanship among them. So anyway, it was a wonderful solution to the problem, and it took care of things.

But what we're really wanting to see from this passage, and you can see it if you look at it, is that the roles of those who are in spiritual leadership, in this case, we have the apostles, but of course, that's good, that's passed along to the pastor, elder, overseer is very different from that of the deacon. You'll notice here that the pastor/elder model is tasked with the role of a spiritual oversight. In other words, spiritually caring for the flock through prayer and the ministry of the Word and that sort of thing, whereas the deacons on the other hand have a primary role of meeting the physical needs of the flock taking care of things, serving, and that's where we see the difference even in the Greek word that we translate Deacon it is the Greek word " diakonos" and it just simply means servant now.

You need to understand that there are lots of words in the Greek that we translate servant. When you go through and just do a study in your bible and see where the word "servant" appears, there's several Greek words that we just simply—that's all we say is servant, but they have very different meanings. This Greek word simply just means to serve, one who serves. There's really not a whole lot to it. And yet, these men were chosen up to serve. But did you also

notice that there were some names in here that you might recognize from elsewhere in the book of Acts?

Did you notice that Stephen is mentioned? And of course he went on to become, you know, the first Christian martyr. He was the first one killed for his faith in the Lord Jesus. And you'll notice that Philip was also one of the original deacons. What's interesting about that is that later on, we're going to find Philip going to Samaria and sharing the gospel and people are getting saved in huge numbers. Philip was later referred to as Philip the evangelist.

So what does that tell you about the men who were chosen to serve? It means you're not locked into some lifelong position that you could never move out of. Like you're once a servant, always a servant in the specific kind of physical things that deacons would do. Not at all. Not at all. Stephen was a man who had incredible faith. And again, we see that Philip was an evangelist. So this is what these men were chosen to do in this particular area, but they also moved beyond that as well.

Now as we go through the verses where Paul gives the qualities of the deacon, we're going to see that many of these qualities are repeated from the pastor, elder, overseer model that we dealt with last week.

And if you look in verse 8, beginning with me, he says, "*Deacons, likewise must be dignified.*." Your Bible may say, "*worthy of respect*" and I think we all know what that means. They must be respectable individuals. Next he says, "*...not double-tongued...*" And that's not something we don't use that phrase much, but we might say double faced or two faced. In other words, the deacon must not be the kind of an individual who says one thing to one person but says something else to another. He must be consistent in his speech and that sort of thing. "*...Not addicted to much wine...*" is the next quality. And we dealt with this, it was the same thing that he said concerning the pastor, elder, overseer's drinking wine, as we've made the point that it was a common thing in those days due to the lack of good drinking water.

And there's a lot of people that really struggle with the whole appearance of the word "wine" in the Bible. And I've talked to people, they will insist it was not fermented, it was grape juice. Yeah. And which is really interesting that the apostle would say, here's the qualification for elders and deacons, they can't drink too much grape juice. That doesn't make a lick of sense, right? No, it was fermented, okay? But it was a common daily beverage. But again, it was because of a lack of good drinking water. And so they were not to be addicted and they were not to drink it much. And because, you know, everybody

understood that someone who did was not going to think clearly. And that's common.

Next, he says, “...*not greedy for dishonest gain.*” And that, of course, simply means that the deacon must be a man of integrity and honesty when it comes to money and possessions. Sometimes deacons are involved in the distribution of money like we see here or possessions or goods in Acts chapter 6 that we saw. So they can't be greedy or dishonest in any way, shape, or form. They have to be very fair.

Verse 9: “*They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.*” Isn't that interesting? When Paul refers to the “mystery” he's really just talking about the whole revelation about the gospel of the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ. That's the mystery of the faith. And he's simply saying here that a deacon, although they aren't required to teach, he does not give a requirement here of a deacon related to teaching. He does say though, that they must hold to the gospel message, the message of redemption in Christ without any problems, without any concerns about it, without any doubts. A deacon must be a man in this case, who is secure and stable in his salvation because that's going to affect the way he treats other people and the way he serves other people.

In verse 10, it goes on, and this is particularly interesting, he says, “*And let them also be tested first (and then he says); then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.*” So there's to be a time of testing for a deacon.

Now, let me just be careful and tell you that first of all, blameless does not mean perfect. We use that word today in our language to mean perfect. He's blameless. Hey, listen, man, I'm not blameless. Okay. Yeah. But in the Bible, that's not what it meant. The whole idea of blameless literally means that he must not, first of all, as Paul has been listing the qualities of the deacon, he must not have fallen short of any of these qualities, and he must not be a man who could be blamed. So hence the word blameless. But you're not going to know if the man is blameless unless he's been tested first. And that's really the point of what Paul is saying here, and he's saying the deacons must demonstrate their fitness to serve by proving their conduct over time.

And that's an important thing to remember because you know, anybody can appear spiritual for a while, right? I mean you can appear to be just walking with the Lord doing great until life kind of crowds in on you, and you start seeing somebody's real colors. Personally, I like to see a man handle personal accusations. I like to see how a man handles when somebody gets in his face and calls him, you know, every dirty, rotten name in the book. I like to see how

a man responds. That's a challenging one for anybody, and there's no doubt about it. But how does the man respond when he's opposed? When somebody walks up to him and says, "That's not true. What you just said isn't true." How does the man respond? Is he gentle? Or does he come out swinging?

You know, these are the kinds of things that we see in someone's life over a period of time. And so he says, "Let them be tested first. Let them come to a place where they are tested, related to these things. Prior to functioning in the role as a deacon."

Verse 11 goes on, and now Paul takes a moment to speak of the wives. He says, "*Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers* (in other words, they're not given to gossip and wild slander), *but* (they must be) *sober minded* (able to think clearly, and then) *faithful in all things.*"

Now, I'll just tell you right now, we're not exactly sure whether Paul is talking about the wives of the deacons or whether he's talking about deaconesses here, in other words, women who are deacons. Because the Greek sentence structure can go either way, it could be either one. So, you know, we're not totally sure. What we do know is that there—we do have a biblical reference to a woman who was a servant who actually had that particular title. Let me show it to you from Romans chapter 16, verse 1, Paul, at the very end of that letter says,

Romans 16:1 (ESV)

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,

"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (and that is diakonos, same word that is used here, that we translate deacon, right) *of the church at Cenchreae."*

So, and by the way, Cenchreae was an area near Corinth, but Paul is writing here and saying, I commend you to our sister, who is a diakonos, a servant. So we know that title was applied to women, whether it was applied necessarily, well, you know, there's difference of opinion, whether it's supposed to be always used as a noun or a verb. But either way, it is used of a woman there, and that's really what we know. And I don't believe Phoebe was the only woman, you know, in the New Testament church that was referred to as a servant in that way. I'm sure there were many more like her, even though she is the only one mentioned in the scriptures that way.

Paul now returns to speaking of the men in verse 12, when he says, "*Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their*

own household well.” And this is another quality that is similar to that of the pastor, elder, overseer. The deacon is to be a one-woman man. Remember we talked about that. That's what it means to be the husband of one wife. And he also must manage his home well because he's going to be given tasks of management in the church. So, if his home is a mess and he hasn't managed his own finances and his own family, he's probably not going to do very well managing the things that belong to the body of Christ. And so this is to be looked into and to see that a man has managed these things well.

And then the apostle goes on and gives a promise connected to the deacon who serves well. I want you to notice this in verse 13 because this is interesting, he says, *“For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also (he says) great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”*

So I want you to notice there what Paul says for the man who serves well, he mentions two benefits for that individual. The first is a good standing for themselves, and that just refers to the respect and appreciation of other people. So a man who serves well is going to be respected and appreciated in the body of Christ. But secondly, and I think more importantly, he speaks here of an individual who serves well as getting a great confidence in the faith. Did you catch that? He receives great confidence in the faith. What does he mean by that? Have you ever read that and kind of wondered what is he talking about? Well, this was kind of a popular thing for Paul to say regarding those who serve, that they become confident in their faith.

And he's literally saying that a deacon who serves well will receive a greater assurance of their salvation. Isn't that interesting? A deacon who serves well will receive a greater assurance of their salvation. And you might kind of think to yourself, well, what does one have to do with the other? And didn't you just say, Pastor Paul, during communion, that salvation is not about works or what we do.

So how is what a deacon does applicable to the assurance of his salvation? Well, I'll tell you why it is. It's because the ministry of the deacon is fundamentally contrary to a man's human flesh. Because you see, we don't naturally serve others. You know, the world exalts people who are served. Even Jesus said that, He said, which is greater, the one who is seated at the table or the one who serves the person seated at the table? He says, is not the person seated at the table, the greater? (Luke 22:27) And He's talking about how the world perceives greatness. Yeah, the one who is being served is greater. So the one who serves is the lesser in that sense, right?

So isn't it interesting that we call these people to serve, in fact their ministry is to serve and the whole focus is to serve. And when you do, you find out pretty quickly whether or not you're being prompted by the Spirit or by the flesh. Because you see, the flesh isn't going to put up with it for very long, because it's not fun, because sometimes deacons are like cleaning toilets and cleaning up a mess in the bathroom or taking care of sweeping floors or emptying garbage or something like that, just whatever needs to be done, whatever dirty, rotten job needs to be done.

And sometimes they're not dirty, rotten jobs, but they're always related to serving others. And you know, you can only serve people so long in the flesh before your flesh gets tired of it. And it's like, I'm tired of it. And you, and it's interesting. I've actually seen this happen where somebody will begin to serve and pretty soon they just get, they've had it.

And you know how it usually comes out? They usually begin to talk about the fact that they haven't received enough appreciation. That's what I hear. You know, I served at this one church for five years and they'll talk about what they did. Never once did somebody ever come up to me and say, thank you for what you do.

And I think to myself, so is that why you were doing it? Were you doing it for appreciation? From people? Were you not satisfied just in knowing, this is what God's given me to do, and I'm here to please Him. I'm here to please the Lord. I'm going to do what He wants me to do. And if no one ever comes up and expresses any human appreciation, I don't care. Because I'm not—I'm serving the Lord ultimately. Yeah, that service comes out toward people, but I'm serving Jesus, His body. You know, when that is a work of the Spirit, when the Lord is empowering through His Spirit and energizing the person and giving them that vision to serve, it's a delight. It doesn't matter if anybody ever comes up and says anything or not. They're just delighted to serve God.

And so it's interesting that when a person begins to walk out that kind of humbling service and as Paul says, he has served well, he becomes confident in the genuineness of his faith in Christ, because he sees that the Lord is working through his efforts. And you know, when you see the Lord working through you, it's one of the coolest things in the world and it gives you confidence, assurance of your salvation.

I got to tell you something, that's the way it is with serving God. If you're one of those people, and I've come to understand that there are many in the body of Christ who struggle with assurance, the assurance of your salvation, I can

suggest to you nothing better than to serve other people. Because when you do, you will discover a strength and an ability that you know you don't have in and of yourself. It comes from the Lord. I feel kind of like I'm hogging it all sometimes because every time I get up to teach, I have a sense of the Lord's direction. Sue and I call it riding the wave.

And it's really kind of like that, you know, because you guys come on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday night and you come with hearts to receive, you have faith in God that you're going to receive something. And that faith plays into what the Lord then does in my life and my heart, and I begin to teach the Word of God, and you receive, and I can sense that wave. I can sense it. It's like I'm riding the wave. This is not Paul. This is Jesus. This is the Spirit who is moving and touching and transforming people's lives. Do you understand? It's one of the coolest things in the world. I get done teaching on a Sunday and I'm jazzed. I'm usually exhausted, but I'm jazzed.

You know why? One simple thing. God used me. Me? I know what kind of an idiot I am. I know what a weak man I am, and yet God used me. Right? What a trip! What a trip! We become vessels through whom God pours His Spirit when we serve others. So, you're one of those people who struggles with assurance? Start serving. Start giving your life away. And you just tell Jesus, I want to be a vessel. I want to be a vessel through whom your spirit moves to touch other people. And you watch and see what the Lord does. And then watch and see if your own personal assurance doesn't increase as time goes by as you begin to ride the wave of His Spirit. It's just, it's one of the coolest things in the world.

Alright, Paul then goes on to give kind of a personal note to Timothy and verses 14 and 15. He says, *"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God..."* So he's giving him directions for raising up of elders and deacons and so forth. And then, he goes on to speak of the household of God.

And you'll notice that he gives us these various descriptions of the church, and I don't know if you've ever really kind of just taken the time to look at these. Let me put them on the screen for you,

- The household of God
- The church of the living God
- The pillar and buttress of the truth

Because he talks about the church as the household of God. He talks about it as the church of the living God, and he talks about it as the pillar and buttress of

the truth. And each one of those has a very interesting and rather unique meaning as it relates to who we are as the body of Christ.

The first thing he calls us is the household of God. We are the household of God. People, this is not, this (stomps feet on the church floor), is not the house of God, okay? When I was a little boy, they used to tell us, don't run in the house of the Lord. It's not the house of the Lord. It's a building. And we've told you many times, this is just a big fancy onion shed. And you, we are the household of God, the church, meaning the people, is the household of God. But what that means is, this is where God dwells, this is where His presence is manifested. It's not in this building, there's nothing holy about this building. We could be literally in a barn. We could be outdoors. We could be anywhere. We come together. We see the manifest presence of God's Spirit among us. Why? Because we are the household of God as we come together.

You know, sometimes, okay, I have to be careful how I say this, I don't want to offend. I mean, I don't want to overly offend. When we're worshiping, God is here, His presence is here. You know what I mean? Sometimes I pop out to use the bathroom quick before I start teaching during worship, and I see some people out there just talking, and I'm kind of thinking to myself, Jesus is in there. Did you know that? He's in there. He's in there with us, and we're lifting up His name, His presence.

We don't think about that very often. His presence is among us. If some dignitary showed up on a Sunday morning, you bet people would get their attention. I mean, if somebody, like famous, popped into Calvary Chapel, Ontario for some random reason. I mean, really, truly, like, an internationally famous person came in and we all knew who it was and plopped themselves down. Boy, people would be talking. You're kidding. He's in there? I'm going to go get a look, right? People would be coming in and staring. And yet, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is here, and we treat Him like He's just another visitor. We are the household of God, where He manifests His presence. And it's an honor for Him to be among us. It is an honor.

The next thing he refers to the church as, is the church of the living God. And you have to remember, in the ancient Greek, when we think of the word church, we have a connotation. But in the ancient Greek, a church, or yeah, the word "church," "ekklesia" was applied to any group of people who were gathering for a specific purpose. It doesn't matter whether they were, it was a religious purpose or a secular purpose. They were an ekklesia, okay? So it's not a religious word. It's not a churchy word just to say church. It was just a gathering of people.

And what Paul is saying here when he says, “We are the church of the living God,” he's saying we are the gathering of the living God. And guess what? We have a purpose in our gathering as well. We are gathered here today. Sounds like the beginning of a wedding, doesn't it? Beloved, we are gathered here today. No, we are gathered as the Church to encourage one another, to build up one another, right? To pray for one another, to love one another, to exhort one another. We're here to receive. We have a purpose to our gathering. It is the purposeful gathering of the living God. We have a great purpose in coming together to do this thing that we call Church.

And it's not just to sit around and, well, let's see what we can get out of it today. We have a purpose. And our purpose is to do all those things so that when we leave this place, we are better equipped to go out and be the salt and the light that this dark, depressed, demoralized world needs. They need you and you to get so encouraged that you go out there and you spill over on them the encouragement that you have in Jesus. That's why we're here. That's our purpose. It's the purpose. The purposeful gathering of the living, the people of the living God.

And then finally he refers to the church, you'll notice, as the pillar and buttress of truth. And I like this description. It doesn't mean that the church is the foundation of the truth. It means that we hold up the truth and the truth is Jesus. Isn't He the one who said, “*I am the truth.*” (John 14:16) Right? So we're lifting him up for all to see. And it's a big responsibility because you see, we have to lift up Jesus as He is, not as we try to recreate Him.

The reason I say that is that over the years, the Christian church has failed sometimes to lift up the real biblical Jesus, the real living Jesus. We've come up with our own descriptions. We've come up with our own understanding of who Jesus is. And when we do that, we not only don't give an accurate picture of Jesus, we're not giving an accurate picture of truth.

Because you see, we are the pillar of truth. The church is the pillar of truth, and we must hold it up. And it's a huge responsibility that we have to hold up the truth without compromise, right? Without compromise. We're not going to soft pedal it. We're not going to make it palatable because the truth is rarely so, we're just going to say, this is the truth. And you're responsible to do with it what you will, but as a church, we're going to, we're going to maintain that truth accurately.

And then Paul ends the chapter in verse 16, if you look with me there, he says, “*Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness..*” And when, again, when

he refers to it a second time, he's referred to mystery here. Now he refers to the mystery of godliness. He's talking about the mystery that produces real godliness or real Christ likeness in the lives of believers. And what is that mystery? He's already been talking about how we're the pillar of truth. The church is the pillar of truth.

And then he begins to outline some of those elements of truth that we are to uphold such as, he says, "*He was manifested in the flesh.*" Don't I have these up? Yeah, let's put up the list. You can see them all together.

He was ...

- manifested in the flesh,
- vindicated by the Spirit,
- seen by angels,
- proclaimed among the nations,
- believed on in the world,
- taken up in glory.

Those are all very important elements of the truth that we maintain related to the person of Jesus Christ: "...*manifested in the flesh...*" It's what we call the incarnation. We celebrate it every Christmas. We celebrate the incarnation. That's what Christmas is. The celebration of the incarnation. Did you— was Jesus born on December 25th? I seriously doubt it. I don't care. We'll, I don't care if you want to celebrate it on August 1st, we'll do it then. What we're doing is we're celebrating the incarnation. Doesn't have to be his birthday, right? This is the powerful truth that Jesus, God was manifested in the flesh. God became a man, right? The implications of that are enormous. God became a man.

Next, he says, "...*vindicated by the spirit...*" And this speaks of the resurrection. You know, the Bible talks about how through the power of the spirit, Jesus was raised incorruptible with that glorified body. And we see that through the spirit, Jesus was vindicated and that his sacrifice on the cross was accepted. So that's a powerful element related to the work of Jesus.

He says, "...*seen by angels...*?" And this is an interesting statement that all by itself, you might kind of struggle to figure out what it means, but it's really just a statement of superiority related to Jesus and angels. Let me show you from Hebrews. We went through this recently in Hebrews where it talked about,

Hebrews 1:3-4 (ESV)

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

And that's what that scene by angels really is kind of all about.

Back to the list, it says, “He was *proclaimed among the nations...*” and that was Paul's ministry. Philip started it by bringing the gospel to the Samaritans.

And then it went on to the Gentiles from there: “...*believed on in the world...*” meaning the Gentiles put their faith in Him when they heard the message.

And “...*taken up in glory.*” And that of course speaks of the ascension of Jesus to heaven in glory.

By the way, some people think that this list was an early hymn in the church, and it's possible, I suppose, that this is something they sang, you know. Either way, Paul gives it to us in the Word, and those are important points, and they are. They speak of the unchanging truths that we, the church, are given to protect and to proclaim without apology, without compromise, so that people might hear and be saved. Because it is through the message of the gospel that people are saved for eternity. Not by being good people. Not by living a righteous life. It's by accepting the righteous one, who did the work himself, that we might receive His righteousness by faith, amen.

Let's stand together. We'll get into chapter 4. There's a lot of fascinating stuff in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Prophetic insights related to the last days. We're going to have some people up front here to pray for you, with you, if you need prayer.

Father God, thank you so much for Your grace. Thank you for Your Word. Thank you for Your Spirit. Lord, continue to teach us from the Word, continue to open our hearts to the ministry of your grace and truth and wisdom. Continue to nourish us. We thank you, Father. We bless your name. In the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen.