

April 10

Scriptures: Read 1 Timothy 4

Key Verse: “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” (1 Timothy 4:16)

Overview

As stated in the introduction, these letters were written by Paul to Timothy when Timothy was less than twenty-five years old and pastoring the church in Ephesus. Being young in the ministry, then as now, could be a problem. There were lots of older “saints” in the congregation who thought they knew more than “the kid in the pulpit”. This is why Paul says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young” (v.12- NIV). Then he goes on to give this young pastor some good fatherly advice.

It’s a pretty tall order. Paul tells Timothy to “set an example” in what he says — in lifestyle, in seeking the best for others, in faith, and in morality (v.12b). Self-discipline, consistency and faithfulness are to characterize this youthful religious leader. He’s to be someone no one can fault and everyone can emulate. The question is, how?

Perhaps the answer is singleness of purpose. Timothy is instructed to focus on his gift (v.14) and expend his energies on “public reading of Scripture”, and “preaching and teaching” (v.13). He is to give himself “wholly to them” (v.15) in a visible and accountable way. That way he’ll stay on track.

Singleness of purpose, follow-through, and accountability — these are the key ingredients, for both young and old, to make one’s life count for God. It’s the old story of practising what you preach.

Prayer

Father, as we look at our Lord Jesus’ ministry on earth, we see the perfect example of “practising what you preach”. Today we grasp hold of the promise Your Word holds out to us — if we ourselves take heed to the doctrine and “be not just hearers of the Word but doers also”, we will experience all the benefits of salvation, and so will those who hear and watch us.