

Be Earnest

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Date: 23 September 2012

[0:00] There are some things that we should be earnest about.

Earnest about. Hebrews 2 verse 1 it says, Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. Our Lord warns us here of the danger of hearing God's word and then of letting his words slip by.

In contrast with the lukewarm, sloppy, slippery slope Christianity today, this message is a plea for earnest Christianity.

For earnest Christianity. Will we be a casual, careless, coasting kind of Christian? Or will we be those who will give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard?

[1:07] Being in earnest, it speaks to the heart. It speaks of having a heart for spiritual things. The word of God uses this word earnest many times.

And we see, for example, firstly, prayer. Prayer is one of the things that we ought to be in earnest about. Our Lord took prayer seriously.

We see in Luke 22 when he was in the garden. He prayed in earnest. He prayed in earnest. It was not some casual kind of prayer. Not by rote or by ritual.

Prayer was something real. It was something intense. It was something with devotion. It was something real. In Luke 22 verse 4 it says, And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.

And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly. And his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Prayer was something that our Lord and Saviour counted very important.

[2:16] It was engaging earth with heaven. It was entering into the cosmic conflict for the salvation of mankind. As our Lord prayed there in the garden, it was you he prayed for.

It was me he prayed for. His sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. We ought to be in earnest prayer. Be earnest in prayer.

As we see of James, it reads too. In James 5 verse 16, James exhorts, Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

It doesn't say the effectual casual prayer. It says the effectual fervent prayer. And then it goes on to read verse 17 of Elijah. He was a man subject to like passions as we are.

[3:18] And he prayed earnestly. Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Elijah, he was a man of like passions, just like we are. He was just skin, bones and flesh and blood, just like you and me. He was a real human being.

He was of like passions. He has the same struggles that we have as human beings. And he prayed earnestly. And God moved. God worked wonders in answer to believing.

Earnest prayer. And the Lord commenced Epaphras when Paul writes of Epaphras in Colossians 4 verse 12. Epaphras was one who sets an example too of that fervency of prayer.

Of that earnestness in prayer. We read of Epaphras in Colossians 4 verse 12. Epaphras who is one of you. A servant of Christ salutes with you. All those labouring fervently, fervently for you in prayers.

[4:25] That you stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Epaphras, one who labours in prayer, fervently for you in prayer.

How can we pray earnestly? Brothers and sisters, how can we learn to have that fervency, to have that earnestness in prayer? Some points we could suggest is set time aside for prayer.

Set time for prayer. Develop a prayer life. Have a list of people that you can pray for. A list of things that you can pray for.

We know there's many missionaries. Write down the missionaries' names. Write down the names of the folk in the church. Of people in need. People in hospital. People who are not well. People looking for work.

Have a list of people that you pray for. That you bring before the Lord in prayer. Ask others around you if they have any prayer needs. Sometimes there could be prayer needs that people haven't voiced.

[5:25] But if you go to your brother, your sister, and say, is there something I can pray for you about? Is there something you'd like me to pray about for you? You can find out there's lots of prayer needs, even here this morning, amongst people.

Unspoken needs that people have. Be always conscious of something that you can pray about. As you go about your day by day. You don't have to have a special place or a special posture or a special time.

You can pray without ceasing. You can pray always. Be continual in prayer. Make it your habit. Make it your attitude. Make it that spirit of prayer that you would have.

That's an earnestness in prayer. Prayer. It's one of those things that we ought to give the more earnest heed to. The things which we have heard.

Last at any time we should let them slip. Pray. Earnestly pray. Pray fervently. Pray in earnest. Another second thing we can think about that the word tells us to be earnest about.

[6:28] Is to be earnest about spiritual service. To be earnest about spiritual service. It says in 1 Corinthians 12 31. But covet earnestly the best gifts.

And yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Paul says covet earnestly the best gifts. The context there is of spiritual gifts.

We ought to be in earnest about spiritual gifts. Not that we can brag or show off. But because we want to use those gifts and abilities. Those equipings that God has given to us.

To bless others around us. To serve others. Have that desire. Have that desire. Brother. Have that desire. Sister. To be one who will have your spiritual gifts exercised.

Have that desire to be used of God. Have that desire to find and to be where you can serve him. We need God's spirit. We need God's spirit. We need to be filled with God's spirit.

[7:30] So we ought to long and yearn earnestly for that which God would have us to be doing. That God can be at work within us.

Through us. Despite us. And using us. It seems apparent today that the Holy Spirit is missing. The Holy Spirit is missing. I think he's especially absent from churches that talk a lot about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is lacking in the church of God in many quarters today. We read of God's spirit. The names of God's spirit. He's called the spirit of holiness.

The spirit of Christ. The spirit of truth. The spirit of truth. We read of the spirit of grace. The spirit of glory.

Of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The spirit of meekness. The spirit of faith. The spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

[8:33] The Holy Spirit is contrasted with the spirit of the world. And we see. We ought to have that earnestness about the Holy Spirit.

About spiritual service. One of the biggest problems in the church of God today is that we are not in earnest. We've lost our urgency. There is much that saps our energy and takes away that earnestness that we ought to have.

We ought to seek God to regain that sense of reliance upon the Lord. To be mindful of that tendency to slip and to guard against that.

Let us look out for those signs of slackness that sometimes come our way. Those signs of slackness. Of leek warmness. Of a lack of love. Of a lack of spiritual power.

In 1 Corinthians 14.12 it says, Even so ye, for as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

[9:43] For as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts. We ought to be zealous. We ought to be zealous of spiritual gifts. We ought to seek to excel.

To cover earnestly the best gifts. Why? So we can edify and build up one another. That's the whole point of 1 Corinthians 12 through 14. Of edifying.

Of building up one another in the holy fame. To be a useful Christian. And so we ought to earnestly cover the best gifts. Be zealous of spiritual gifts.

Seek that endowment with power from on high. That we can be his witnesses. To yearn for that power for service. God's spirit and his working is tied in with love.

It's interesting isn't it? That in between 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14 is 1 Corinthians 13. You know, if you do your maths that's how it works.

[10:43] 12, 13, 14. God's spirit is tied with love. The love chapter. One of the most apparent signs of spiritual life is love.

Spiritual life is evidenced by our love. Love of the brethren. Love of the word. Love for souls. Love for our Saviour. And we see that love is linked with that spiritual service.

And we see, for example, the spirit of Christ at work in Titus. In the life of Titus. Paul writes of him in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 16. He says,!

God puts his earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. Paul says that God put the same earnest care in the heart of Titus for you.

God puts his earnest love, his earnest care into our hearts. And the Holy Spirit works through human vessels such as we. He puts his earnest care in our heart for others.

[11:50] He gives us that brotherly love in our hearts for one another. And he sheds his love abroad in our hearts. So let us love one another fervently, earnestly.

In 1 Peter 4, 8 it says, And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves. 1 Peter 1, 22 it says, Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfaint love.

In other words, real love of the brethren. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. The Holy Spirit gives us a love that empowers us for his service.

In Romans 12, 11 it says, Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He gives us a fervency in spirit so we can serve him.

Fervent in spirit. It's got the sense of being burning, boiling aglow on fire, being willing, being eager to serve. So we ought to have that earnestness about spiritual service to seek to be a spiritual sacrifice, to seek his face, to seek his will.

[13:06] 1 Corinthians 14, 26 it says, How is it then brethren, when you come together? Every one of you have a psalm, have a doctrine, have a tongue, have a revelation, have an interpretation.

Let all things be done unto edifying. It's God's bottom line is that which he wants for his church. Let all things be done unto edifying. Find something you can do as God enables you, equips you, empowers you by his Holy Spirit, that you can edify one another.

Be sensitive to his promptings. Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Be sensitive to his leaning through his word. Surrender to his way. Employ your spiritual gifts.

And be diligent to find ways to serve him, to love others, and edify the church, to build up others. So we see, amongst those things that we ought to give the more earnest heed to, those things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

We should pray, earnestly pray. Pray fervently. Pray earnestly, as our Lord did. Have that earnestness about the Holy Spirit and serving him of spiritual service.

[14:25] A third earnestness is to earnestly contend for the faith. Earnestly contend for the faith. We see that in Jude 1 verse 3. There's a call to an earnest heed to God's word.

To give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. The word of God. We ought to give the more earnest heed to God's word. Not let it slip by us.

There's a lot of slip sliding going on. Of rebellion against God's holy word. A coldness and indifference and apathy that saps the life out of Christian churches today.

Because they've let things slip away. In Jude 1 it says, verse 3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

The faith once delivered unto the saints. It's got the sense of one time for all time. God delivered the faith unto the church. He gave the faith unto the saints.

[15:45] The most holy faith. The faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. And the faith is that body of doctrine. It's New Testament Christianity.

It's biblical Christianity. The faith once delivered. It's the faith, the doctrine which we are to believe. It was delivered to the church. One time. For all time.

It speaks to us of the sufficiency of scripture. Of sound doctrine. Of a love for the truth. And how we ought to have an earnestness to contend earnestly for the faith.

That faith once delivered to the saints. To have that love of the truth. A thirsting for it. A desire for it. A craving for it. And I believe today the wrath of God is against much of modern day so called Christianity today.

The wrath of God. God's displeasure is against it. Against the spirit of error. Against the strange fire in terms of worldly methodologies and fleshly methods.

[16:49] The widespread compromise amongst Christianity today. And there is a needful warning that we ought to be exhorted. As the word urges us in many places.

For example of wolves in sheep's clothing. Of being not conformed to the world. These are serious commands in God's word that we ought not to let us slip by.

But we ought to take the more earnest heed to. When the bridge is out. When the bridge is out down the track. We need to put the warning signs up.

The warning sign is needful when the bridge is out. It's not unloving to sound the warning. It's not unloving to sound an alarm when a house is on fire.

It's needful that we ought to contend earnestly for the faith. There's a time when we need discernment. When we need diligence. When we need vigilance.

[17:49] And if ever there was such a time. That time is now. When we ought to contend earnestly for the faith. Do you believe that this morning? Do you believe that this is the day and the hour when we ought to contend earnestly for the faith?

Once delivered unto the saints. It is that time now. It is that time. In Psalm 96 verse 9 it says, I worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Fear before him all the earth. God is infinitely holy. Infinitely holy. It's false doctrine to let things slip by. To neglect the truth of God.

To settle for less than God's best. Bible standards are not legalism. Bible standards are God's truth. That we ought to contend earnestly for. We ought not to accommodate error. We ought to sound the alarm.

[18:54] The gospel is under attack today. Where we see some cheap imitation. Some copy of the real.

That misses some vital truths. The gospel is under attack today. We see people moved away, slipping away from the centrality of the cross.

We see people slipping away from the fundamentals of the faith. We see people slipping away from that call to repent. We see people slipping away from the claims of Christ over our lives.

As if we can settle for some second best of that. We see today the Bible being undermined. The rejection of the inspiration of the inerrancy of Scripture.

Slipping away. Slipping away. Slipping away. Slipping away. We ought to give the more earnest heed. So the things which we have heard. Lest at any time. We should let them slip.

[19:57] How do we stop slipping? How do we stop from slipping brother? We need our feet firmly planted. On solid ground. We need to be in earnest about the word of God.

Let it be our daily diet. Let it be our delight. Develop an appetite for the word of God. Soak in the scriptures. Develop an appetite.

An appetite. That I love the word more than my daily food. That I will search out good Bible teaching materials.

That I will invest in a good library of good Christian reading material. Don't be afraid to spend some money buying some books. That will benefit your soul.

Do some formal courses to help you to grow. There are some you can do for free. But we recommend this material we can virtually give away to you.

[20:55] Get some good godly grounding. Find godly literature. Hide it in your heart. I know there is someone who was seeking God recently. She is wanting to find someone to study the Bible with.

That is a good thing to do. Amen. We need some more people like that. Who want to find someone that they can partner with. To read the Bible together. To study the Bible together with. Maybe you as an older Christian.

By now you ought to be teachers. It is about time for some of you. By now you ought to be teachers. You know sometimes we just want to sit back and get fat.

And in the spiritual sense. And just feed and feed and feed. And never give out. And it is time we ought to be teachers. I exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith.

Which was once delivered unto the saints. We ought to be in earnest. In earnest about prayer. In earnest about the Holy Spirit. And serving God. In earnest about contending for the faith.

[21:56] For the faith. And lastly. To be in earnest about souls. To be in earnest about souls. To be like Paul.

Paul had this heart. In Romans 10 verse 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God. For Israel is that they might be saved. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God.

For Israel is that they might be saved. They might be saved. He had a heart's desire. He had a prayer. That put feet into action. When your heart is in tune with the Lord's heart.

You will want to see people getting saved. You'll want to see people coming to Christ. In Colossians 1 verse 29. Paul says, Where unto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

He had a passion. He had a devotion. God striving, working in him mightily. Colossians 4 verse 12. Again of Epaphras. What does it say?

[23:02] What does it say? Epaphras, who is one of you. A servant of Christ. Salutes with you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers. That you stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you. And then that are in Laodicea. And then in Heropolis. He had a great zeal. Not only had he a labouring fervently in prayer.

But he had a great zeal for the people. He had a great zeal for prayer. And he had a great zeal for people. To see people growing in faith.

To see souls trusting and following the Saviour. Will we be in earnest about souls? About souls? Will we be sensitive to the heart of our Lord?

In 2 Corinthians 5 verse 14. For the love of Christ constraineth us. There's an intensity to that word.

[24:08] Constraineth us. It gets a hold of you. And shakes you. And pushes you. And propels you. And compels you. The love of Christ constraineth us.

That's why we've got people who will leave everything. And go to the mission front. It can happen here. In this mission field. The love of Christ can constrain you.

But you can't shut up about Jesus Christ. It's going to constrain you. It's going to compel you. It's going to take you out of your comfort zone.

And 2 Corinthians 5 verse 11. The context tells of the. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord. We persuade man. Knowing the terror of the Lord.

We persuade man. Are we in earnest. About souls. Will we care.

[25:09] Do we have that gripping sense. Of the terror. Of the Lord. That there will be a judgment day. There will be a hell fire.

That's real. And everlasting. Will we care. Such. That we will be constrained. The serious nature of God's judgment.

Of that impending doom. For the godless. For the Christ rejecters. The terror. Of the Lord. Awakes some. It's just. Holding back.

That door hasn't opened yet. But one day it will. One day it will. It will be poured out. It will be poured out. Friends. If you're not. Hiding in the refuge. Who is Christ today. You're in great. Great danger. Of the terror. Of the Lord. It should shake you. In your boots. It should make you squirm. And shiver. And shake. Friends.

[26:11] There's no hope for you. Outside of Christ. Outside of his covering wings. Outside of his. Welcoming embrace. There's no hope for you. Outside of that refuge. Today.

Today. Knowing therefore. The terror. We persuade man. We want people to trust him. Because. Of his great grace. That still. Avails today.

And 2 Corinthians 5.20. It says. When we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you. By us. We pray you.

In Christ's stead. Be ye reconciled. To God. Now then. Are we ambassadors. For Christ. That's you. Ye. Plural.

Ye. Are ambassadors. For Christ. We. Are ambassadors. For Christ. It's. Time. To get. Earnest.

[27:06] About souls. In earnest. About souls. Like an ambassador. Representing the king of glory.

Extending terms. Of peace. To a world. At war. With God. There have been times. I've reflected. And thought. That perhaps.

If I had been better educated. Or I'd worked harder. Perhaps. That maybe one day. I could have been. An ambassador. An ambassador. What a privilege. To be an ambassador.

What a privilege. To represent. Our sovereign. And our kingdom. In lands distant. To be an outpost. To be an outpost. Of our nation. And have that honour. And privilege.

Of being that public. Figure. Of that representative. Of that key person. In that other land. Who represents the nation. That we. Belong to.

[28:03] What an honour. What a privilege. It would be. To be an ambassador. Such as that. A sought after. Cushy kind of job. Really. A very pleasant. Kind of job. But mind you.

Being an ambassador today. In some countries. In some countries. Seems to be a very.

Dangerous. Occupation. Doesn't it? To be an ambassador today. In some countries.

Is a very dangerous. Occupation. What. A greater privilege. Can we find. Than. To be an ambassador. For the king. Of kings. And the lord.

Of lords. What a greater privilege. Can you find brother. There's none greater. There is none greater. There is none greater. To represent the kingdom of God. To be a messenger. Extending. That invitation. To welcome. Everyone. Who is a refugee. Fleeing. From the harsh regime. Of the world's. Ultimate dictator. You ought to be a refugee. From the world's. Harshest dictator.

[28:59] Today. And we. That are ambassadors. For the kingdom of God. What an honour. That we can be able. To point refugees. Of his grace. What a greater. For you. To be an ambassador.

Of the greatest. Of the greatest. Of the greatest. Of the better. Country. To be a refugee. And be able to appoint refugees fleeing from the wrath to come.

To find safe harbour in the shelter of his grace. What a great privilege for you to be an ambassador of the greatest kingdom. Of the greatest country.

Of the better country. Of that better city. What a joy to see refugees escaping from the dominion of the darkest regime. That ever dominated the souls and hearts of men.

So that they could find the ultimate refuge. Who is our Lord. In the safety of his mercy. There's nothing greater than that.

[30:00] There's nothing greater than that. To see that joy of refugees as it were. And we all were refugees. We all were refugees. We came to the king.

And we herald him still. We herald that coming king of kings. And we play some small part now. In urging people to put up the white flag. And surrender to his majesty.

While they have opportunity. What a privilege. To be an ambassador. In a hostile land. And see souls rescued from servitude and bondage.

To the wicked despot. Who holds them captive in heavy chains. And it's a bit dangerous. It's a bit dangerous to be an ambassador.

Maybe not so dangerous in Australia. But some of our brothers and sisters in lands distant. It's dangerous for them. To be a witness for Christ. To be an ambassador.

[30:59] What a privilege. What a glory. That we who ourselves have been rescued. Can beckon others to be asylum seekers. And leave their misery.

To find absolute freedom. And peace in him. What a message you have. Shouldn't that message be on your lips. Shouldn't that love of Christ constrain you. Shouldn't it propel you.

Shouldn't it compel you. That you can't but help. Being his ambassador. Because of the terror of the Lord. Because of the refuge that still avails today.

What a blessing that we can see others. Find this new citizenship. In a better country. To find this gracious sovereign. Who rules with love.

And reigns with righteousness. We were once refugees. Colossians 1.13. It says of our Lord. Who hath delivered us.

[31:56] From the power of darkness. And hath translated us. Into the kingdom. Of his dear son. And he shall reign. Forever and ever.

It takes your breath away. Doesn't it? He shall reign. Forever and ever. And ever. And ever. And you are part of his kingdom. You are an ambassador.

Called to this. Incredible. Wonderful. Wonderful. Responsibility. And so. We ought to earnestly. Consider souls today. We ought to earnestly.

Consider. Such things. Friends. Hebrews 2.1. We ought to. Give the more earnest. Heed. To the things. Which we have heard. Lest at any time.

We should let them. Slip. Are we letting things slip? Yes. Are we letting them slip by? Are we satisfied. With less than God's best? Or are we burning.

[32:56] Ever brighter. Are we labouring. Ever more fervently. Ever. More earnestly. Be in earnest. Be in earnest. In earnest. About prayer.

When there's time to pray. Pray. Pray without ceasing. Pray with your family. Pray. Pray. In your workplace. Pray. In your home place. Pray.

And keep on praying. Find reasons to pray. Make lists. To pray about. Have a prayer journal. That you can write things down. And tick things off.

When you see answers to prayer. Be earnest. In prayer. Be earnest. In spiritual service. Cover. Earnestly. The best gifts. Be zealous. For spiritual gifts.

Let God use you. Employ you. Apply you. Empower you. Endue you. With power from on high.

[33:52] But you can be used of him. Be in earnest. About contending earnestly. For the faith. Don't slip. And slide away. Don't be blown around.

With the latest fatty. Kind of winds of doctrine. That want to. Blow you all over the place. Be earnestly.

Contending. For the faith. Stand rock solid. On the word of God. And be earnest. For souls. Be earnest. For souls. As an ambassador. Persuading men.

Because of the terror. Of the Lord. With that message. Be ye reconciled. To God. Even though.

We are in a hostile country. We're strangers. And pilgrims. This isn't our country. No. There's one to come. A better country. A better country. But yet. We want to invite people.

[34:47] As an ambassador. We don't have some. Stop the refugees policy. We have. Come. Come into the refuge. Come into the refuge. Come into the refuge.

Who is Christ. Your only hope. Your only help. Your only answer. Come into the refuge. Come into the refuge. Let that be our message.

Let us have as tight as that same earnest care for others. Let us as Paul have our hearts desire and prayer to God. As that souls will be one. And let us be a part of seeing it happen.

By God's using us for his glory. Let us give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.