

God's Wisdom: True Gospel Apostles

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[0:00] So we're 1 Corinthians chapter 4, and just a brief sort of review. Remember that the Corinthians are marrying the gospel to the Greek philosophy and rhetoric.

For them, the way you come to know something is because of how it makes you feel when you hear it and understand it, like it's the impact on you. It's this idea that we started off with you, Paul, but we've graduated from you.

We don't need what you have to say anymore. We've gone on to greater, higher things. As a matter of fact, there's a word, the word's called eschaton, eschaton.

It's a word that theologians use to describe the end time, not all the events of the end time, but the very last final place.

So in other words, when we are in heaven with the Lord and we have our new bodies and everything, we will be in the eschaton. Okay?

[1:04] So it's once everything's happened and it's just the final end. Well, many of these Corinthians believed that they were living in the eschaton themselves.

They believed and they were being taught that the resurrection had already happened. And so they thought themselves to be super spiritual.

So they thought that they could do all kinds of things and certain things didn't matter. Many of the women were becoming very much so thinking they were super spiritual. So they were divorcing their husbands because Jesus said that in the age to come, we will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

So they were like, well, let's divorce. You know, I'm in the eschaton. I don't need this anymore. They thought themselves super spiritual because they had certain spiritual gifts that they thought.

And so you just have this massive messed up church. And one of the ways that it began to show up is the divisions that they were having where some were saying, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas.

[2:10] And he's been hitting that thought and the foundation under that thought. And here's his last little sort of foray into that.

And he's going to deal with the issue directly about apostles because they're thinking, I'm more spiritual because Apollos is my father.

I come from him. And so Paul's going to say, let's talk about apostles. Let's just talk about apostles and let's see if we can make some headway here into this. Now, I have to tell you this before we get going, because after last night, I didn't give everybody warning.

And so it's a little strange. I'm just going to tell you, sometimes you're reading through the Bible and you come across a chapter and you read the chapter and you get through reading the chapter and you kind of go like, what?

But this chapter is that way. This is not an easy chapter. It's got some really strange things in it. And when we seek to try to make application of this chapter, it's going to be weird.

[3:18] It's not going to roll out the way you think. So if we're going through this and you find yourself going like, what? You can stop me and ask me questions, but also just know it's weird.

It's difficult. It's not you. It's Paul. Okay. So. So. Yeah.

So eschatology for everyone else is the study of end times. It's like biology, right? Eschatology. Esca or eschaton means last. And so it's the study of last things.

So anyway. All right. So. So what chapter four does basically is he's he's got three big points that he's trying to make to the Corinthians about apostles.

And so let's read the first five verses and we'll talk about that. And then we'll read a section at a time and just talk about it that way. So beginning in verse one, he says this, this is how one should

regard us.

[4 : 22] He's talking about the apostles as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

But with me, it's a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself for I'm not aware of anything against myself, but I'm not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time before the Lord comes who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Then each one will receive his commendation from God. Okay. So he's talking about apostles here. And one of the things we need to talk about is we need to talk about the difference between apostles of Christ and apostles of the church.

[5 : 27] The term apostle is actually the Greek term is apostolos. Okay. So they've just taken the Greek and turned it into an English word for us.

And it means sent one. Okay. So an apostle is somebody who is sent. An apostle of Christ. There were only 13 of them.

Right. It's Peter, James, John, Matthew, Bartholomew, and then eventually Matthias is added to them to replace Judas and Paul.

And Paul even calls himself one untimely born in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. These men were witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

They were with Jesus through the ministry that he had. They were directly there with him, learning from him. Paul's a little different. And that's okay.

[6 : 26] It's just messy. That's just the way it is. Okay. But they received revelation from God and wrote it down. So when we think about the apostles teaching or the apostles doctrine, the scriptures are the same thing, right?

Apostles of the church, those were other men in the New Testament that were sent by churches to go be missionaries, such as Barnabas or Philip.

You will see in certain places that you can almost say, oh, look, this is an apostle. Apostle, Apollos was sometimes considered an apostle, but he was not an apostle of Christ.

He was an apostle of the church. We don't have apostles of Christ anymore, but we do have apostles of the church and they are missionaries. So, for example, John and Karen Hines are serving as apostles of this church and of several churches because they've been sent out to go be missionaries.

So, this passage is talking about apostles of Christ, not just missionaries. But he calls them this. He calls them servants and stewards.

[7 : 49] Now, do you know what a steward is? Anybody know what a steward is? Anybody know what a steward is? Yeah, exactly.

And this particular kind of steward that Paul is talking about is one who, he's a slave of a master and typically he would oversee the children and usually the boys because they needed it.

And this steward would follow the boy around. He would follow him to school, follow him to the marketplace. And the boy might get mad at him and say, go away. But the steward was not responsible to listen to the boy.

The steward was responsible to listen to the master. And so, basically, Paul is saying we're stewards of the mysteries of God. So, the mysteries of God would be kind of like the boy and they have to listen to God and they have to take and they have to do what they need to do to oversee these mysteries of God.

Now, what would be the mysteries of God? What do you think the mysteries of God might be?

Okay.

[9 : 19] Okay. So, I think that's a pretty common way to think about it because the word mystery kind of pushes you that direction.

And that's unfortunate because the meaning of it is really something completely opposite. Right?

So, you'll think when you see mysteries, you're going to think exactly that. I would, you know.

But it's the gospel. Right? It's because Paul uses the term mystery throughout the New Testament to talk about something that was kind of like what you're talking about, Jack, in the Old Testament. It was kind of mysterious, unknown, not really clear, kind of vague. But now that Christ has come, it's been fully disclosed.

So, think of, I've talked about this before. Think of this room completely in the dark with one little candle. So, you can see things about it, but you can't see everything.

[10:27] Right? But over time, if that candle grows or if it gets bigger, then you get to see more and more. Well, the mysteries are the things in the shadows that we can't see with just the one candle.

But if we flip on the light switch, now we see those mysteries. So, every time you see mysteries in the New Testament, you need to think of it as something that's not hidden, but something revealed. And it's very opposite of the word, and so it can get confusing sometimes. So, he's saying, as stewards, the apostles are stewards of this mystery, of the gospel, of the truths of the gospel, and who God is, and Christ is, and this kind of a thing.

So, that's who they are. They're holding these things. And we understand that because we have those mysteries here. They're revealed to us. But he gives them one command.

He gives them one command in these five verses, and it comes in verse 5. And what does he tell them to do? Don't make judgments.

[11:32] That's right. Do not pronounce judgment before the time. Now, who do you think they're making a judgment about that he's talking about? He's not talking about just anybody.

He's talking about apostles. They've been making judgments about Paul, and about Apollos, and about all these guys, and the ministry that they're doing. And they're trying to decide and say, you know, Paul is not enough.

We've moved past Paul. So, they're casting judgment on Paul and his ministry. And what Paul is saying is, don't judge before the time.

So, in other words, delay your judgment. But he does, so because they're delaying judgment, there is a time that they should judge. When is that time that they should judge?

When the Lord comes. Let's talk about that for a second. And we're going to talk about this again Sunday morning because it's important. When, what is, what is it when the Lord comes?

[12:39] There is a teaching out there that says that from where we stand today, there are going to be two comings of Jesus. There's going to be one that is secret and kind of hidden that nobody gets to see, but we get to feel the effects of because when he does, he's taking all Christians off the planet.

And then, later sometime, he's going to come back in full display and put an end to everything. Now, there's a teaching out there that says that, and you're probably pretty familiar with it because it's the left behind books and this kind of a thing.

I do not believe that the Bible teaches that there are two comings from here forward. I believe the Bible teaches that there's one coming here forward.

And the idea of getting all the Christians together and then putting an end to things all happens in the one coming of Christ. As a matter of fact, all through Paul's writings, when you see the Lord coming or when the Lord comes or at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's all the second coming of Christ.

So, he's basically saying, don't judge me now, but wait until the second coming. I think that's hilarious because it's like you're never going to have an opportunity in this life to judge me.

[14:00] Well, so, he says, do not pronounce judgment before the time.

So, it's logically possible, let's just start there, to say, well then, at the right time, you can judge. So, the question we'd have to ask is that that's a good inference.

Is it a necessary inference? That's what we have to have. And so, I think that it's both a good and necessary inference. What I'm saying there about good and necessary inference is something like this.

So, if I read a passage that says David is the king, and then I read another passage that says Solomon was the son of David, then I can logically deduce Solomon is the son of the king.

And that's just as much scripture as what's written. If I can make a good and necessary inference from truths of the scripture, then that is also true.

[15:05] For instance, there's one God, and there's three persons, and we know that the Father is a person, that the Son is a person, and the Holy Spirit is a person. All three are called Yahweh, or the Lord, or God in several places.

All three are worshipped, prayed to, and adored. So, the doctrine of the Trinity is a good and necessary inference. So, I would say that it's a good and necessary inference that he's saying that

their judgment would be then.

However, I also think a part of this is sarcastic in the sense that you want to judge me. Well, let's wait until the end times and then judge me.

Because they think they're in the end times, and they have all these issues. So, I'm not sure that they will actually have an opportunity to judge as much as it is he's kind of slapping them around. Does that make sense? So, I think it's a good and necessary inference that they're to hold their judgment until then and then judge. But the practical result of waiting until the end is, well, what are you going to say now?

[16:09] I mean, it's the end. You know what I'm saying? Does that make sense? So, practically, I get to the same place that you're saying. But I think that it's still good and necessary to say the full thought that they would be understanding as he's writing to them.

But, yeah, it's a good question. That's right.

So, it would be basically like God is going to display things. And once he displays it, then you can make up your mind whether this is good or not. And, of course, I mean, obviously God is going to. And exactly. That's right. That's exactly right. And what's interesting is that he's telling them not to pronounce this judgment before the time.

But the judgment is going to be on two things. We just saw one. That is, that which is dark and disclosed, he's going to disclose the purposes of the heart. Now, this is not of each person.

[17:14] I believe this is. I think there's other passages that speak about judgment for all. But I think this judgment is about the apostles of Christ. That their ministry is going to be commended by God in the end because he's going to disclose the things that we never got to see.

I don't know how many times I've heard people say, what was Paul thinking? And why was Paul being so, I mean, it's not right for Paul to be so, just fill in the blank. There's so many times I've heard people say these things.

Because we'll read the scriptures and then we'll cast judgment against Paul. And it's kind of like, you know, you don't understand all that's going on here. You don't understand what he was going through.

But he's writing for us to listen to him. So we need to listen to him and not cast judgment. God is going to disclose these things. But back in verse 2, it says, stewards must be found faithful.

So not only must these apostles as stewards of the mysteries, not only must their purposes be right and good, but they need to be faithful to the ministry that God has given them to do.

[18:24] And then Paul looks at all human judgment and basically says all human judgment is trash, right? He says, verse 3, it's a very small thing that I should be judged by you. I don't care what you say.

That's pretty much what he's saying, right? And then he goes on to say, or by any human court. And then he goes, even myself. Like even if I thought I could judge myself, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't hold up. It's insufficient. No human judgment is ever going to work. The only judgment that matters is God's. And so he's telling them, listen, don't make a final decision here.

Wait for God. And then when God shows you everything, then you can go ahead. Well, of course, they're going to agree with God, right? So this is really strange.

It's really strange because now that we've looked at this, we need to say, okay, what does this mean for us today? Because these apostles, they don't exist anymore. And I've heard a lot of people take and say, well, we don't have apostles of Christ, but we have these missionaries or we have pastors or we something like that.

[19:35] But I think that that misses the mark of the application. Because I think that the quickest application is we still have the apostles influence with us in the scriptures.

And there's a lot of Christians who try to stand in judgment over God's word. So everything is about interpretation, really.

So as you read a passage, we're trying to interpret it. We're trying to understand what Paul said.

But sometimes people will read something that can tell you exactly what it says, but then they'll tell you, but I don't like that.

You know, you go to 1 Timothy chapter 3. Okay, 1 Timothy chapter 3. Paul wrote the book of Timothy. He told Timothy in chapter 3, he says, I've written these things to you so that you will know how to behave in the household of God.

Okay, so I've written so you'll know how the church ought to act and live and behave. And in chapter 3 in verse 1, he says, if any man aspires to the office of overseer, he's got the word man there.

[20 : 44] And then he gives qualifications for this man. And he says, he must be the husband of one wife. Well, here's the thing. We could, in good conscience, have two people that look at that passage.

One's going to interpret it and say, listen, he says man and he says husband. These are male terms. So only men can be elders. Another person would come along and their attitude could be very submissive to the word and saying, but does Paul mean to keep that at just men or can women also be?

But in order to say a woman, then you've got to say, so when he says man and when he says husband, he means that interchangeably with woman and wife. But the problem is, is that there's no scriptural proof for that, right?

There's just a sense that maybe that could be there. And there's a lot of people who will go that direction. But then there's some who will go that direction who they kind of look at Paul and they will say, see, he says man there and he says husband.

He's being a sexist. And because of that, we know that God is love. We're not going to be sexist that way. Does that make sense? Because there's a difference between somebody who has an attitude looking at the scriptures and they just come to a different conclusion than me, but they're still trying to live under the scriptures.

[22 : 06] And then there's somebody who wants to stand over the scriptures and say, oh no, that can't be right. Even though I would disagree with someone who would say, no, a woman could be a pastor.

I would disagree with him vehemently. And there's more than just that passage. If they're trying to live under the scriptures, then I can at least appreciate that they're trying to understand what the scriptures say and they're not casting a judgment upon it.

Does that make sense? Because there's a lot of judgment that goes into and against the word of God in our culture. That's just one example.

Another example is if you take and look at the idea of the creation, we have six and one, right? Six and one.

We got six days of creation, one day of rest. That's at creation. That's not under any law, right? But then when you get to the old covenant, you get the Sabbath. And the Sabbath becomes a token of the covenant.

[23 : 07] So God's taken this thing that was already in existence, uses it for something. Then when you come to Jesus, you see that he doesn't abrogate that one in six.

He doesn't say, he doesn't say, don't do this. But he does say, you're doing it wrong. And then when he rises from the dead, every time he appears to his disciples, he appears on Sunday, the first day of the week, not Saturday.

And so we have this sort of flip into now we have the Lord's day, which is a one in seven pattern. So you see this all over the Bible.

But for someone to say, God doesn't care what I do on Sunday, is to say, you're standing in judgment over the word.

That's right. Right. So there's just so many ways that we could stand in judgment over this.

[24 : 13] Yeah, I mean, it's the same thing that happened in the garden, right? It's the lie of Satan that says, God didn't say, did he? Or did God say? Or, but you won't really die.

That skepticism that says, God doesn't really get this. I mean, if I were to live this out, it would totally change my life. It's like, no, he does get it. And it would totally change your life.

That's what he wants. You know, to, I mean, just think about the idea of if anyone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other cheek. Right? In other words, if somebody is being ugly to you and they're doing things to harm you, we're to live in forgiveness to that person, not retribution.

Right? That's the whole point of that. Well, that's really hard for most people to swallow because it's like, but you don't know how horrible that thing was that that person did to me. And it's like, I like, was it any worse than what they did to Jesus?

Right? Like it, and he says, Father, forgive them. So, so we're, yeah, we got to have this attitude. Easy? No, no. Naturally occurring? No, no, no.

[25 : 22] All by the power of the Holy Spirit. Anyway. Anyway. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. by the heaven forgiving and the Lord's work.

Yeah. That's right. That's right. Well, so that's the first point. The apostles are not accountable to us. They're accountable to God. That's really what that is all about.

And so we just got to make sure that we are taking advantage of who they are. The second thing is that they're despised by the world. And this is a pretty fascinating section.

Starting in verse six, he says, I've applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

For who sees anything different in you? Now, let me just pause right there. That very first line in verse seven is a very difficult Greek sentence to translate.

[26 : 31] So how many of you have something different from what I just read? I read, for who sees anything different in you? Okay.

Okay. Okay. Anything else?

Ms. Jill, does yours have anything different? Okay. We'll come back to that, but I just wanted to point out to you that one of the things, if you read a bunch of different English translations and you see that they're all kind of different, what does it mean to be different?

What does it mean to be superior? We got those two things. That's very different. So that tells you that's kind of hard to translate. And so we won't always get there, but we'll come back to that.

He says, For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? Already you have all you want.

[27 : 30] Already you have become rich. Without us you've become kings. And would that you did reign so that we might share the rule with you. For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour, we hunger and thirst.

We're poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless. When persecuted, we endure. When slandered, we entreat.

We have become and are still like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. So you can kind of begin to see why Paul is doing this because they're going like, I am super spiritual compared to you, Jack, because my father in the faith is Apollos.

And Paul's going like, and who is Apollos? If you're built on Apollos, then who is he really? Right? It says in verse nine that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all.

[28 : 57] The historical reference that he's making is to the Roman army. They would go out to another nation to conquer this other nation, this army, and they would win.

And so as they would come back in, they would come back in by rank, your highest rank first or the lowest rank, and they'd be carrying the spoils and everything. And the last group to come in were all the prisoners of war that they had chained and bind that they were bringing in in order to execute in front of all the people, making a spectacle of them.

You know, so everybody knew the last group to come in and start throwing tomatoes at them and all this kind of stuff, right? So what Paul is saying is God has put us at the end of the train to be exhibited, brought in as the prisoners of war.

So he begins right there, beginning to kind of downplay who the apostles are. And listen to some of these things he says. They're last of all, sentenced to death, spectacle to the world, to angels, to men, in disrepute, hungry and thirsty, poorly dressed, buffeted, homeless, reviled, persecuted, slandered, like scum, like refuse.

If you are truly spiritual people, then wouldn't you be like those that you say are your spiritual fathers?

[30 : 27] Wouldn't you also be people who are low? But he says very sarcastically. Now, you don't know this is sarcastic without a lot of study and a lot of help from a lot of scholars, but verse 8, already you have all you want.

That's sarcastic. Already you've become rich. Without us, you have become kings. I mean, think about what the promise of being in heaven with the Lord is, right?

Sons of God, sons of the king. Royalty, right? Streets of gold. I mean, there's all kinds of things that we know that are coming for us.

And he's basically saying, you think you've already arrived? You think you've gotten there? And when you go back to that verse 7, he starts off with this, that for who sees anything different in you? The scholar Gordon Fee, his commentary on this, as I was reading this, trying to understand, because I translated it, and I don't get it, but he's got all this stuff he deals with.

And he said, here's the best. He says, I can't 100% say this is the right thing, but this is the best I got for you. It's almost like Paul is saying, who do you think you are?

[31 : 39] Who do you think you are? Pastor, how is this in life today? You have charismatic tactics.

Well, so the way that I would make application of this passage is just like what we did.

That, okay, so the apostles were the ones who were despised. So anyone downstream of the apostles are also going to be despised as well.

And it's going to start with his word, right? And so the world hates the word of God because they hate Christ. I mean, there is no way you can get away from this truth that those who are not Christians, they hate Christ.

And I know that a lot of people don't like to think about that, but let me hasten to say, most of them do not have a conscious hate for God.

[32 : 46] But if God were to get into their stuff and really push them, it would come out, right?

They're just not, they're not being pressed upon in order for that hatred to come out.

And they're not conscious of it, okay? I don't believe, I believe that there are some people who are very conscious of it. But I think a lot of people are not conscious of it. And it's a hatred to God because it's this sort of Hebrew comparison of, you know, if you don't hate your father, mother, sister, brother, you cannot be my disciple, does he mean for you to hate them?

He means for God to have the highest priority in your life, right? So people who are God haters, it's not that, it's not that they have a malice and an angry sort of view of God, it's that they don't love him as they should, and therefore it is hate.

And so, but they don't like to be confronted with their sin. They love the darkness, he tells us in John chapter three. So because of that, and because the world is not at all putting God and Christ first, then they're certainly not going to listen to the apostles, they're not going to listen to the apostles' teaching, and if we try to order our lives by this word, they're not going to like us either.

And so when you think about the charismatics, and you think about these prosperity gospel preachers particularly, you have them oftentimes giving to lost people truths that they already want in order to build and line their own pockets.

[34 : 29] And so they will say whatever they need to say in order to accomplish that goal. And the thing that we've got to remember is that if the world hates this so much, if the world doesn't want to hear this message, it puts us in a difficult place.

Like how are we going to survive and live? It's the whole thing that what if all of a sudden in our culture, you know, everybody was required to make a trip to Washington, D.C.

every year, and you were required to bow before a statue of the president and genuflect or do something to show honor to this statue.

Would you do it? Well, no, we wouldn't do it. And then, all of a sudden, you're at odds with the world. So, you don't attend a so-called same-sex wedding.

I mean, you're castigated. You're called hateful. You're called all kinds of names. There's a story of this kid, and I can't find where he was, but he was in the United States.

[35 : 44] His youth group, and this is all senior high students, they went to a pride parade in order to share the gospel. Now, first of all, I'm not sure that's a really good use of their time because I just think you're asking for conflict.

And I know those people need it, but I'm just not sure that in that moment is a good time to do that. But I'm not going to say that they were wrong, but I'm just going to say I wouldn't do that.

But they're on the sidewalk on public property, and this kid, who's like a junior, senior in high school, starts reading out loud from the Bible, 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9 through 11, that speaks about all of these different sins and saying, such were some of you.

And one of the sins is men who are homosexuals, right? And so he was arrested. He was arrested. Now, I mean, they solved everything, but just the not wanting the word of God to have any influence.

I remember when Bernie Sanders did some sort of interview of somebody who was wanting to be like a judge or something under the Trump administration, and he basically said, you're a Christian, and your Christian views affect kind of how you think and do things, and I just don't think you should bring that into the government.

[37 : 12] And I'm going like, then don't bring your atheistic view into government. Like, you know what I'm saying? There's no such thing as neutrality, but the world wants it. Well, I remember being at another church some time ago, and they were having a, I think that somebody's life is a particular celebrity pastor that's my person in the United States.

He was a Christian and he reminds me that he was about you. Like, that's right. You have all your trust in this particular pastor. Yeah.

In the Bible, we're going to be true. That's right. That's right. Well, let's move on to the last section. The apostles are not only accountable to God and are despised by the world, but they were also shepherds of God's people.

Verse 14, he says, I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you then be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child of the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach them everywhere in every church.

[38 : 36] Now, some are arrogant as though I were not coming to you, but I will come to you soon if the Lord wills and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people, but their power.

For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in power. What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Now, here's the thing. Paul, we've got a couple of things. One, he seeks this congregation out as children, right?

He calls them children, calls Timothy his child, calls himself their father. Paul does not use the term disciple hardly ever.

Jesus used the term disciple a lot. If anyone wishes to be my disciple, let him, you know, take up his cross and follow me. Well, Peter uses the term child or children to think about the same concept.

[39 : 40] And that is, I've had the opportunity to share the gospel with this person. This person has become a Christian. Now, I have a responsibility to help them grow in their faith, help them learn how to read the Bible, help them learn how to pray, help them learn how to submit, help them know things they don't know, help them get through difficult times.

I'm to be a father to this child in the faith and help them grow. And that's what Paul sees them as his children. He has this love for them and he wants to see them grow.

He wants to help them to move along. That's why he says, I'm not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you. I want to warn you.

I want to give you the things you need so that you can grow. And in that, he sends them both Timothy and he writes this letter to them.

I mean, he's, he's spare. Timothy is his beloved child in the faith and he's letting Timothy go to go to them, to go talk to them, to go share with them.

[40 : 49] He cares for them so much that he's, he's written two letters to them. The only other church he's written two letters to is the church at Thessalonica all the other churches.

You just get the one letter, but he loves this church so much that he sends Timothy. He writes them letters. He's doing all that he can to help them to grow in their faith because the apostles were acting as shepherds of God's people.

He wants them to grow. And part of that growth is that he's planning to confront them and to confront them face to face with the things that they're doing that are wrong.

And it's interesting to me that the confrontation, he says, I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. That word talk is the Greek word that they use to describe their Greek philosophy.

So I'm not coming to hear the content of your philosophy but their power, their dunamis. In other words, I'm coming to see how effective your brand of Christianity is in helping you be like Christ.

[42 : 03] I don't want to listen to your arguments. I don't want to listen to your truth. I want to examine your life and say, well, is it working for you? You know, is that working for you to live that way under the Greek philosophy?

Are you really pleasing to the Lord, living in harmony with His word? Is it helping you through trials and tribulations and suffering or instead, maybe you're not doing things the right way?

So do you want me to come with a rod and spank you or do you want me to come in a spirit of gentleness? So write back, tell me because I'm ready. You know, you know, and even though we don't have these apostles today, we do still have what they've provided for us and they've provided for us two things.

They have provided for us these writings and I want to read a passage to you from Peter, from 2 Peter that I think is so fascinating.

This is, this is his second letter and he says this, he says, therefore, I intend always to remind you of these qualities though you know them and are established in the truth you have.

[43 : 22] I think it right as long as I'm in this body to stir you up by way of reminder since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon as the Lord made clear to me.

Okay, so he knows he's going to die soon. Okay, that's what he's saying. And then he says this, and I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

He knows he's going to die so he's writing to them to remind them of these things so that when he's gone they have something they can go back to and that at any time to recall these things.

The apostles knew they were going to die so they wrote everything down that we needed so at any time we could go back and we could recall what we need to know.

And think about this, we live in an age where you've got a computer in your hand and you can have 20 different Bibles pulled up on this little computer in front of your face and you can do this as you drive okay, as you ride don't do it while you drive you can do this at a ball game you can do this in your home you can do this at a park access to the Bible has never been more ubiquitous than right now in our lives and there's never been a time that we've had more biblical illiteracy than we do right now as well.

[45 : 17] But the apostles think about this they were shepherding even all the way back there us today and they provided the word of God and in the word of God they provide us the second thing pastors and teachers pastors and teachers the word of God sets up the whole office of pastor if the Bible didn't talk about in Ephesians chapter 4 where Paul says well I'm just going to turn there because I can't quote it all of a sudden my mind goes blank it's Ephesians chapter 4 verse 10 11 verse 11 he says and he gave the apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ in other words Paul is saying God has gifted the church with these offices for the church for the sake of the church if that wasn't there and there were no qualifications for a pastor at all then there would be no reason whatsoever for me to exist in this position but this is a gift from the Lord he's given us people who devote their lives to understanding the scriptures so that we as the church can understand them because

I mean this chapter 4 it's kind of strange you know I mean we've gotten some good meat out of it and everything but like there's still so much that we could look at that even I am kind of going like what and so the apostles were shepherding even us way back then by the word of God and everything has to go back to the word of God even these pastors that he's lining out they don't get to I don't get to speak what I want I don't get to tell you what I think in terms of just out of my own experience and how I want to live no no no no I have to I have to follow the word and Paul says in this passage he says imitate me which I think is something that even as pastors I have to be able to say imitate me that's a part of what a pastor is to do is to set an example right that's what he tells Timothy he says set an example for the believers so really where this gets to then as a kind of a final sort of application is we have got to have the word of God so central in our lives our lives as individuals our lives as a church we need to do everything that the word of

God commands us to do are there certain things that we get to make choices on sure absolutely the word of God doesn't say anything about a building what color should the walls be what about the floors should we have air conditioning or not air conditioning should we own land or not own land if we didn't own any land whatsoever we would still be a church because the building doesn't make us a church what makes us a church is the word of God and our commitment to be together that's what makes us a church you know and I think it's important for us to say okay let's go back to the word what does the word say how do we need to be shaped in before him all right questions as Thank you.