

Moses and the Ministry Lesson

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 00] I would like you to begin by turning in your Bible to a passage that we are going to study! together this morning in Numbers chapter 27. Before we actually go to the passage, there are! a couple practical things that I want to draw to your attention. First of all, I want you to know that if you are inclined to text Caleb and Charity, Caleb and Charity are preaching this morning, not here, but they are in the process of raising money for missions and for the work that they're going to be doing in Jamaica. And so, if you want to text them right now, you'll find out whether Caleb's phone is on because he's in church, and you go ahead and his phone will go off and it'll be a lesson, won't it? And I was like, but you go ahead and let him know you're praying for him because you're praying for me and I know you're doing that, and I'm heavily dependent on that, and I know Caleb is as well. He is preaching at the church where his father is a pastor, and don't...

I trust at least that he gets about 15, 20 texts that say, hey, Caleb, Charity, we're praying for you. We trust that God helps you in your ministry there and that you're encouraged by the opportunity you have of being there at that church. Second thing I want you to know is that we are going to have a business meeting on May 18th, May 18th, to look at the job description that is in your bulletin.

And we want you to pay careful attention to all that follows in relationship to that, so you keep this matter in prayer. Now, I ask you to turn, if you would, to that passage in numbers, and before we actually look at the passage, I want us to take some time in prayer and then let me give you a little bit of background because I think it is very important. So let's pray together.

Father, this morning as I listened to the special music in particular, I thought about the reminder that we cannot do anything without your help, God, that our strength is in you, and that we, frail, insufficient in ourselves, can rely upon your Spirit to lift up the name of Jesus, strengthen us for the tasks that we have, cause us to grow in our affection for Christ and for one another, and have a genuine passion for a world that needs Christ. So help us this morning that we would listen carefully, that the sufficiency and the authority of the Scriptures would mark our path, and that we would be pleasing to you. And I pray this in your precious name. Amen.

Generally, when I come to the pulpit, I mean, you pretty well know what I'm going to say. I mean, I'm going to be in Ephesians. I'll say, let's turn to Ephesians such and such, and you have a fairly good idea of where we're going to go from there.

[3 : 23] I will be taking a different track this morning, and for you who are here for the baptismal service, I'm thankful that you are here, and we will get to that part. But this is a little different than a normal Sunday for us, not in the singing, because we love to blow the roof off. We think that when people gather together that know Jesus, they ought not sit there looking like they're grumpy.

Do you follow what I'm saying? I mean, we ought to have fun saying, Jesus, we love you, and we're pretty excited to sing about it. And we are going to be a people that in our fellowship together are going to be governed by this book. And probably one of the things you'll notice is that there are a lot of people running around here that are there with a Bible. They have a Bible in their hand, and there's a reason for that. One of the things that has characterized this fellowship over the years is our commitment to the Scriptures.

We believe that the Scriptures are really God's Word to us, and that they provide all that we need for life and godliness. That's what Peter said when he wrote to the church. He said, hey, listen, the Bible is what we have that gives us all that we need for life and godliness.

And our commitment here in this fellowship to the Scriptures is seen in so many little different ways. For one, I already reflected on the fact that most of you here are carrying a copy of your Bible, either in hard copy or electronically. And when I say, turn in your Bible, you can go there, and you can, you know, and I am still looking for someone to write that app, that when you hit that electronic

little note, it goes, you know, so that I, a little older than some of you others, take small comfort in the fact that I heard you turn, okay? But you have your Bibles with you. Our songs are rooted in Scripture, and one of the things that I was doing as I was sitting down there and just having a great time singing, I was multitasking. I was thinking about the words of the song, and a couple of them, I don't know those words, but anyway, following along and still trying to connect, what does the Bible say about that? Our dealings with one another are governed by the Word. In the end, really, the things that we decide can be really tracked back to what the Scriptures have to say. And it's no accident that our fellowship has been blessed by a history of open and honest communication. An illustration of this would be that if you were to walk out in the lobby after the morning service, you can see a record of our monthly giving and really every single expense that we've had in this month. There it is tracked out for you. The only thing that is not there for your public consideration is how the money that you have given to the deacons fund is dispersed.

[6 : 13] And there's a reason for that. We don't think it's appropriate to know where some of the particular needs are that we have responded to as a deacon, but as deacons and pastors. But apart from that, everything is up there. Furthermore, after every monthly deacons meeting where the pastor and deacons meet together on Saturday, what follows that is that you will have your watch care deacon on Wednesday sit down with you and go over the outcome of that meeting. And there's a paper that you receive.

How many of you know the name of that paper? What is it called? It's called a 2020. How many of you know where the term 2020 came from? Raise your hand and wave at me if you know. It came from Acts chapter 20, verse 20. Strange thing about that, isn't that? You know, we're a Bible people, and so even when it comes down to naming some of our documents, they're rooted in the Scriptures. Acts 2020, here's what it says. And at the top of the header on the 2020 that you will receive this this coming Wednesday will be the little statement, I kept back nothing from you that was profitable.

And as a result of our commitment to follow the counsel of Scripture, we have made it part of our fellowship that we are open and forthright, and we let you know where we are and what's going on and why we're doing it. In addition to that, every time we have made a move, whether it has involved changing our music style a little bit, or whether it's being a decision with church discipline, or the matter of moving towards small groups, prior to our involving the congregation in that has been that I have come to the pulpit as a pastor, and I have opened up the Word of God and said, here is what the Scriptures have to say, and here is how we're going to apply it.

And this morning is no exception. Today, as in every other day, we want to be a people that depend upon the Word. And so, before we actually go to our passage, let me ask that you turn to the paper that was put in your bulletin. Now, I'm curious, just out of curiosity, how many of you actually have read your bulletin now and know what is in it on this piece of paper? Raise your hand and wave at me.

It's great. What that tells me is I don't have to give announcements in the future because you're a very well-informed congregation. But allow me, if I may, to read the first part.

[8 : 56] It is the recommendation of your leadership that our fellowship approve the search for a man to serve as Pastor Saul Green's replacement and as the potential successor to Pastor Knoyer on his future retirement.

Second, our thinking reflects, first, the heart of leadership that looks to make a profitable transition to our future by adequate preparation and prayer. Second, three years that we have spent in prayerful deliberation and research in transition or succession planning. Third, a desire to follow the model of Scripture of discipling a man who would eventually, Lord willing, lead in our fellowship. Fourth, a respect for the time that proper discipleship for leadership requires. Now, how's that for a way to start a sermon? Because now you know pretty much what I'm going to say, don't you? But in keeping with the character of this pulpit and our desire that the Word of God is preeminent and clear, I start out by telling you what we're going to do, and I want to explain its premise on the structure of the Scripture and allow you as a people to pray and consider carefully, and then ultimately when we come together on May 18th, you have an opportunity to respond according to your prayerful consideration.

So, I want you to recognize that as with every other week, when I come to the pulpit, my intention is this, is to explain what the Word of God has to say and ultimately put you on the spot of saying yes

or no to God. And I trust that in the days to follow, when you reflect back on our study of the text this morning and our application of that text to our fellowship, that what you will say is, I understand what God is looking for us to do, and I desire to follow Him. The first and most important part of preaching is to make the issue clear of what God has said. What does God have to say?

And so, when a man stands in this pulpit, regardless of who it is, at the end of the day, what you should walk away knowing is, I heard God's Word, and I understand what He wants from us.

Secondly, the second part of preaching is helping people see the connection between what God has said already and what He wants from us as His people. So, we could say that preaching aims to be clear about what God wants as well. With that in mind, I want you to now turn in your Bible to Numbers chapter 27, and we are looking at a passage where we are looking into the life of Moses at the very end of his life. Let me give you a little background so you understand where we're coming from on this. You remember Moses had been born as a little baby and hidden and eventually taken into the wife of the Pharaoh or the daughter of the Pharaoh, and he was cared for there, grew up in Egypt, enjoyed all the blessings of that wonderful education and preeminence, and yet God intended for him to have a different path than to be one of significance, an individual of significance in the court of Pharaoh. He was taken out into the wilderness, and he spent another 40 years preparing.

[12:40] He came back, and God gave him the responsibility of being the leader of His people. One of the things that stands out in my thinking about Moses is that Moses, it would seem in his early life, was a man who was rather full of himself and pretty persuaded that he could pull off whatever he thought and do it on his own. After following sheep for 40 years and tapping them out the backside and moving them around, he came back with a completely different attitude. In fact, when God says, hey, I'm sending you to be the mouthpiece and to be the one who takes care of my people, his attitude was, not me, Lord, find somebody else. But God made it clear, Moses, you're the one I'm going to leave, I'm going to use.

And for 40 years, his ministry to the nation of Israel was one that was marked by profound humility and by tenderness and care. And all you have to do is read your way through the book of Exodus in particular, and you'll find out over and over again, here was a man who had a heart for God's people.

He cared for them. Did he get angry at them? Yes, he did. And I will tell you frankly, one of the things that marks our history together, one of the most significant moments in my life as an adult was when we closed the Christian school here. It was a very hard decision. It was one that was traumatic to me and traumatic to many people that I had loved very closely and had a close relationship with. And in the midst of that, as the barbs and stones began to follow, how many of you understand that sometimes not everybody is happy with all that you do, right? Do you understand that?

I found myself in my flesh beginning to want to be a little bit like James and John, the sons of thunder. Do you remember the sons of thunder? They wanted to call down fire from heaven, and I actually, if I'd had that privilege, you know, there may have been some toasty posties out there, and I was... And then you know what? The Spirit of God reminded me, Tim, Moses paid a very serious price for losing his temper with God's people. I never forgot that.

Moses lost his temper, and God said, you're not going into the promised land. And where we are in our passage here in Numbers 27 is God says to Moses, they're right up against the promised land, and God says to Moses, all right, you get a peak, and then you're done.

[15:26] You get a peak, and then you're done. And so, I want you to think with me about what Moses teaches us about the future. And as you look at this passage, one of the things that I want you to notice is that as soon as God says to Moses, you're going to die, Moses doesn't go into apoplexy about it, and, oh, Lord, you know, whining and carrying on, it's all right. And the next thing out of his mouth is indicative of the heart that he had. Jim Berg, in his book about progressive sanctification, he says this, you really can't blame hot water for the taste of the tea. I think it's a nice little statement because what it's saying is this, is that pressure brings out what's inside. Wouldn't you agree with that? I've had people say, I didn't mean to say that, or I just let my anger get the best of me. And the truth of the matter is, is, yeah, all those things may be true, but the fact of the matter is it had to be inside in order to come outside.

And here is Moses under that duress where he has received the notification of his execution at the hand of God, I'm taking you home. And look at verse 15.

Moses spoke to the Lord saying, let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd. That was Moses' heart. Do you follow that? Here he was receiving the announcement of the fact that he was going to die at the hand of God because of the sin that he had committed. And what does Moses say?

He said, listen, I want you to be careful. Father, creator of all, I want you to provide for your people. [17:47] And I want you to understand that those who serve as shepherds of God's people care about people and their future. Do you follow that?

Those who serve as shepherds of God's people care about people and their future. Moses recognized that God's people would benefit from a godly, humble leader that was willing to do what was necessary for the children of Israel. And by the way, just in case you don't remember, how had the children of Israel followed Moses? Does anybody have an idea? Huh? I mean, they were always giving him high fives and attaboys in the hallway. It's like, go for it, Moses. We love you. You're the best, you know. Moses was catching it all the time. Do you understand that? But his love for God translated into his love for people. And so when the time came for Moses to leave, he says, hey, what I want is for you to provide for your people an adequate leader.

I want you to recognize that this characteristic in Moses is not unique to Moses. And that if you were to track your way through the Scriptures, you are going to find that one of the characteristics of those who have been appointed by God and are submissive to the leadership of God in their life to be servants of the bride of Christ or of the people of God, a characteristic of them is that they're interested in the well-being of others.

I think for a moment about a passage that has always stood in my mind as very significant to pastoral ministry where Paul writes about Timothy in Philippians, and he says this, I have no man who is like-minded who will naturally care for your estate. He says, I can't think of anybody else that just kind of loves you flat out.

[19:53] Everybody else is interested in their own agenda, their own outcome, their own advantage. I got to tell you, as a sidebar every now and then, I've been at ministry now for going over 30 years, and one of the things that periodically I bump into is a younger man who will say to me, oh, I have an opportunity to go to thus-and-so church, and standard question to me is, why are you going? I got to tell you, it always really makes my hair go on end when I hear a person say, well, it's a promotion for me. I think I have some advantages there. Now listen, I'm here because God assigned me here, and when I came here, I came because God appointed me to be a shepherd in this flock, and you have very graciously and tenderly allowed me to continue doing that, and I serve at your pleasure, but also God's appointment. And one of the things that God called me to do was to come here and love you and care for you and hold up the Scriptures and teach. I want you to see this model of other leaders in particular interested in the well-being of God's people, and so I want you to turn your Bible, if you would, now to Acts chapter 20. I referred to Paul's remark regarding Timothy, but we are going to look now at Acts chapter 20 where we find the apostle. He had spent a number of years actually teaching in the church at Ephesus, and you'll remember that eventually it ended up that he was going to go to Rome, and he was going to appeal the judgment that had been brought against him by false accusers, particularly by the Judaizers, and in making that appeal to go to Rome and to go to

Caesar, he had to leave the church there at Ephesus, and so he stops by and talks with them, and he meets with them there to break bread and to talk with them before he leaves, and we see the scene in Acts chapter 20, picking up there in verse 28 through 36. Let me just kind of touch on a couple highlights.

What Paul does, first of all, earlier in the passage is he explains the characteristic of the ministry that he had had among God's people. He refers to the care and to the pattern that he had set, but then he speaks very particularly to those who would someday in his absence care for the flock that God had raised up, and so look with me, if you will, in verse 28. It says, pay careful attention to yourself and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God, which he's obtained with his own blood.

You know what Paul was saying? Hey, guys, you need to pay attention to your own walk with Christ. First, you need to pay attention to your own walk with Christ. At the end of the day, spiritual leadership is never any better than their private personal walk with Christ. Does that make sense?

You can't be anything other than what you are. You can play the game on the surface for a short period of time, but I think it was Abraham Lincoln that said you can fool most of the people most of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time. So who you are, you eventually display. And Paul said this, you who are going to be leaders in the bride of Christ, shepherds to the flock of God, you have to pay attention to your own walk. Interestingly, later in 2 Timothy, 1 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 16, when Paul writes to Timothy, he writes two different books to help Timothy at his pastoral ministry. Timothy didn't get it first time. He has 2 Timothy as well.

[23 : 53] 1 Timothy chapter 4, it says this, Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine. Bear with me on King James here. That's the way I learned it, but you know, take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine, for in doing so thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee. Pay attention to your walk. And here is the apostle saying to those he has gathered that are going to serve as shepherds of the bride of Christ. He says, listen, you need to pay attention to your walk before God. And then in verse 32, listen to what it says, And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. As Paul thinks about his conclusion and his eventual departure, he says to the church, hey, listen, I want those who are leaders and I want to remind them of their responsibility because they are the ones that are going to care for the flock of

God. And their responsibility is going to be to handle the word of God and live it in such a fashion that God's people can follow. It's interesting, and I referred to this earlier, that actually 1 and 2 Timothy were written to Timothy to counsel him in his future ministry.

And there is a sense in which 1 Timothy is an overview of congregational relations and issues, okay? Do you know what 2 Timothy is all about? It is very personal counsel to a guy who had been given the responsibility but wasn't getting all the pieces connected.

Here it goes. I'm going to give you a free rendition just off the top of my head. Paul starts out and he says, don't be a wuss. It's really amazing how God uses all different kinds of personalities to call men into ministry. There's no one template.

And so here is the Spirit of God writing to Timothy and he says, God has not given to us a spirit of fear. Now, why would Paul write that to Timothy?

[26 : 19] Because Timothy probably had a little bit of anxiety about not making everybody happy all the time. And can I tell you something? You can't do that. And so Paul says, Tim, don't be a wuss.

And then he says this, 2 Timothy chapter 2, he says, Thou therefore as a good soldier of Christ endure hardness. Endure hardness.

Don't ever kid yourself. Being a shepherd for God's people is not easy. And that's not said with rancor or ill spirit. It's just a fact.

And if you're going to be a shepherd for God's people, you better suck it up and handle the objections and the ill spirit and the frailty of other men and women and do so with loving gentleness. We find then that Paul says to Timothy, you stay focused on the Word. And then thunder, chapter 4.

[27 : 34] Paul says this, he says, I charge you before the living and the dead that you are to preach the Word in season and out of season. Do you follow that? I got to tell you, we live in a day when in the days to come, it will be harder and harder to preach the Word.

I think about young men who are going into ministry today. And I think about the battles that they are dealing with now.

That when I was a young man in seminary, I didn't think would ever hit the fan. I never imagined that a fair percentage of the individuals that we contacted as we sought out a man to serve as a shepherd in this fellowship would actually be disqualified because of their moral purity.

And they were actively involved in ministry in places. I never imagined. I never imagined.

I never imagined that I would minister with a congregation, truthfully, that really viewed the Lord's Day as something that was kind of an add-on.

[28 : 59] I mean, maybe I'll go, maybe I won't. It all depends on whether my kids have a game. I was talking with a pastor over in Dayton, and we were talking about ministry, and I just asked him a question about corporate prayer, and, you know, we gave that up ten years ago.

Why? Two things. Work and sports. I never imagined that.

I want you to understand when Paul says to Timothy, you are to preach the word in season and out of season because the day is coming when people will no longer endure sound doctrine.

He was saying to Tim, you do your job. Well, Moses, Paul, but the best example is guess who? Jesus.

I mean, that makes sense, doesn't it? And so I want you to understand that when you think about planning for the future and loving on God's people, the clearest and undeniable illustration is that Jesus poured His life into twelve men that would be the future leaders of His church.

[30 : 09] The majority of His time was really not spent preaching to the crowds or healing the vast group of people that gathered around Him or feeding the 5,000.

The majority of His time was spent caring for those twelve that He would leave the rest to. And so, in practical summary, from our study of what Moses was concerned about and what we see in the life of Paul and what we see in the life of Christ, we understand that those who love God's people are interested in helping them in transitions.

And so I trust that you understand the Bible logic of me and every one of the pastors and deacons coming to you with humility and thoughtfulness and prayer to say, we want you to think about the next man we call being considered as the potential senior pastor for this congregation.

So let's apply what the Scriptures have dealt with and let's kind of think it through a little bit more.

Okay? And so, you probably have recognized already that today is a little bit different.

Any of you that have been long-standing members here know that this is really the first time that we have put a job description in your bulletin. Am I right? The standard thing is, hey, we're going to have a meeting and our Constitution stipulates that before... By the way, did you know that we are congregationally governed and you're the ones who are deciders?

[32 : 08] We're recommenders. Now, by the way, you put us in the situation of being recommenders. And so we walk to you and we say, hey, listen, we've been praying and studying about this and thinking about this for quite a while and now we want you to think about it.

And this is the first time we put it in your bulletin. Normally, it's out there on the table. Please go out there and grab one. And, you know, what happens is we have a business meeting and we talk about it.

In this case, we put it in your bulletin because we want you to be well aware of the significance to you as a congregation of what we are recommending.

I want you to notice that there are parts of the job description that are pretty standard fare for us. Let me see if I can find my copy of it here.

Where did it go? I've got one. Believe me, I have one. Here it is. If you look at the job description, there's a part of it that if you've been here for any amount of time, you know that it's just standard qualifications.

[33 : 22] You could go back to when this congregation called me. Now, that was in the old days when we used mimeographs, I think. I know some of you are thinking about spirit stuff on your fingers or something.

Now, we actually had copiers back in those days and light bulbs too, but this is, you know, the same, same. It was all there. You know, we said, hey, we're looking for someone who meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus.

We're looking for a man who meets, let me say it again, man who meets the Bible qualifications for leadership. Second thing is that he shall be in complete agreement with the confession of faith. Complete agreement. I can't tell you how many times we talk to credible individuals who in every other area, their life, their walk, credible individuals to serve as a family youth pastor, but there are a number of them that said, you know, I just don't believe in this or I just don't believe in that.

And, well, God bless you. You know what? We're going to be neighbors in heaven, but it's, and I believe that. There are going to be Presbyterians there. My sister is a Presbyterian, okay?

[34 : 35] There are going to be Nazarenes there. There are going to be Wesleyans there. My brother-in-law is a Wesleyan. There are going to be Charismatics there. There are going to be Church of God. There are a lot of people and we ought to love on all of them.

Now, do we eat differently at the table sometimes? Yes. Yes. But when a person becomes a shepherd in our fellowship, we want them to be in our perspective.

Does that make sense? So you recognize here that there's an aspect to this whole thing that makes complete sense according to the way we've done things.

And I want you to know that behind this recommendation has been a lot of careful consideration and prayer.

Pastor Saul announced his eventual retirement to us well in advance of the date he had set for May 5th, or is it May? May 3rd.

[35 : 36] Raise your fingers over there so I can... May 3rd. He knows the day. Okay? He told us 18 months out. Do you know why he told us that? That's a loving thing to do.

Do you follow that? It says ahead of time, I care about you and I'm not going to walk in, walk up here to the platform and say, I quit. Tomorrow. Tomorrow. I've had many friends in the ministry who have done that to their church.

I think it's unconscionable. I think it's unconscionable. Pastor Saul let us know well in advance. And if you'll remember from that meeting, you'll remember that after he announced his retirement, guess what followed that?

I came up and I said, Lord willing, if you put up with me, my intention is to continue preaching and to serve as your under shepherd here until I'm about 70, give or take.

I said, and we'll bring you a job description in the spring. How many of you remember me saying that? This is about as close to the end of spring as we could get. And we can say that God was in that detail.

[36 : 49] We had decided as pastors and deacons that if for some reason God had not providentially led in our calling Pastor Andrew and his bride Deanna to become part of our ministry team here, we were going to let you know the plan because we, Pastor Saul is retiring.

Case closed. And so we thought we have to tell you anyway. I mean, we're not hiding anything from you but we wanted to be able to focus on calling Pastor Rowley before we said, hey, guess what? You get another chance. I want you to understand that what lies ahead for us is going to be a challenge.

So why do we propose a succession plan? Our thought is that the next pastor to be hired will come in the hopes that over a period of time our discipleship of him would lead us to eventually call him to be our senior pastor.

And the reason that we ask you to consider that is for one, preparing for the future is a wise thing to do. I want you to understand that successful businesses do it all the time.

[38 : 15] Successful businesses always plan for what their future is. Sadly enough, among churches that is generally not the case.

As a result of that, there is a standard little ditty that is shared among pastors. And it's this. You don't want to be a pastor following a long-tenured pastor.

pastor. You want to be the pastor who follows the pastor who followed a long-tenured pastor. I don't want to do that to you.

I don't want to do that to you. I don't want Discipling a man that hopefully would serve as your shepherd and future senior pastor will take time.

Regardless of where he comes from, what his background is, what he's accomplished, it will take time for him to learn to love you and to be faithful to his charge.

[39 : 45] I thought it was interesting last Sunday when Ken Loro was here. Providentially, he was here for the wedding and Ken Loro came up here on stage and I asked him to pray for Andrew who is now Pastor Andrew.

How many of you remember that? One of the things that Ken Loro said that I thought, hmm, that's interesting, he said he really appreciated the mentoring process.

Whether you know it or not, in every single case, it's been about a three-year process to prepare a man to become productive and fully engaged in this fellowship.

And in that three-year process, what has happened historically is either a man grows or he goes. Do you follow that? Let me say it again, a man grows or he goes.

And we had the joy of watching Ken grow to be just a minister of the Lord Jesus and a blessing to us as a fellowship and what a joy to watch him now as he's in Awana and a missionary.

[40 : 58] It's our blessing. And I've got to tell you, when we were interviewing Andrew, who's now Pastor Andrew, how many of you are picking up on that? We call him Pastor now? Just in case.

In fact, I had to tell Pastor Andrew the other day, he was answering the phone, he says, hello, this is Andrew. I said, no. Remember, discipleship three years?

We'll get the Pastor Andrew part pretty quick here, but it's like, hey, hey, you know, your wife, you can say, this is Andrew, but to the bride of Christ, your ministry is as a pastor.

And it's a responsibility that carries weight. So, we're going to be involved in discipleship if you allow us. I do want you to understand, furthermore, that a lot of thought and prayer has gone into this recommendation.

I first asked our pastors and deacons to begin praying about this, I'm going to guess, what, four years ago? Does that sound funny to you?

[42 : 00] Four years ago. Now, it became a formal agenda item about three years ago. A formal presentation was made to our deacons about our planning, and a committee, succession planning committee, was formed and continued to work throughout the last several years behind the scenes.

That committee has read a variety of resources, done interviews, talked with pastors and organizations that have both succeeded and failed at planning and making successions work. And I've got to tell you, there are probably more churches that fail at it than succeed. And we have given careful thought to why those churches, they can put their finger on this is what happened and here's why it happened.

We don't want that. Do you know why? Because we believe that godly people depending upon the word of God and following His counsel can succeed at succession.

there's going to be a day when if you call me pastor, I am not going to be disrespectful to you, but I would say, that's the man.

[43 : 18] Call him pastor. Now for some of you, since I've buried your father and I've married your children or whatever else, it's going to be a little hard to suck it up. But if I can't be Tim among you, do you follow that?

and mow the lawn like everybody else, we got a problem because I want to be able to righteously and honorably hand off the responsibility to another man.

We talked with leadership at ABWE. We talked with leadership at Cedarville. We talked with leadership at Word of Life. We've talked with literally dozens of pastors.

deacons. We sought out. I've talked with the executive pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church where John Piper just finished his ministry and they handed off the reins.

And I want you to know that your pastors and deacons recommend unanimously that we consider and follow this path as a congregation.

[44 : 27] So what's next? Well first of all, and this is almost like I could say this with my eyes closed. Read over the material, pray about it, and if you have any questions, guess what?

Guess what I'm going to say? Talk to your pastors or your deacon. Every one of the deacons that have been appointed by this congregation are fully aware of the planning and thought that has gone into that, and there may be a question or two that they don't know the answer to.

That's all right. It's not a bad thing to say, I don't know for sure, let me get back with you, but I can tell you in the next couple weeks all our deacons are going to be putting their arms around us and giving us a hug and saying, do you have any questions?

Does this make sense to you? Do you understand why we're thinking this? On May 18th, we're going to meet after the morning service to have a formal vote on the recommendation that we are bringing to you this morning.

And we trust between now and then, you as a congregation have the opportunity to pray, to think carefully, to ask any and every question that you have, so that when we come to deliberate as a body of believers, that we have done our very best of being clear in our information and allowed you to consider the matter before the Lord.

[46 : 08] And all God's people said, Amen. John, would you come and lead us? Let me pray as the musicians are coming. We are going to look forward to baptism, and I ask the candidates to come at this time as we prepare for baptism.

Let's pray as the musicians are coming, and then we will enjoy singing together.