

Nine Ways to Apostate Proof Your Life Part 2

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, all. Thank you. Hey, please turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 4. 1 Timothy chapter 4. Looks like my wife's kind of got it easy today with the kids, but I think if anybody needs prayers, the Mitchells.

They're with our youth at Cultus Lake right now, enjoying the slides and the water park and all that good stuff. But they're actually combining a church service with Grace Chilliwack.

If you remember last year, my friend Jeremy was here, kind of one of the churches that we partner with. We're looking forward to in a couple of weeks, and just to continue praying for the youth, they have another group camp in August with Prairie Bible Chapel.

So these are some of the churches which I happen to be friends with the pastors, and they've been wanting to create a network amongst like-minded churches to continue coming together, especially with some of the youth aren't all that big on their own.

But when they're together, they are a mob, I would guess. So we pray that they're having a blessed time. Let me just pray for our text here this morning.

[1 : 1 0] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, the wisdom that you give us is eternal. It's unending. It is as relevant to those who heard it, read, and preached 2,000 years ago as it is today.

Father, just as we deal with the subject of what it is to be godly, what it is to strengthen ourselves against the lies of the evil one, what it is to become pillars of the faith and to resist the temptations of this world, I pray that you would give us understanding.

And by understanding, I mean a personal application in our life. I just pray as we go through Paul's wonderful teaching to Timothy, we will see where it fits in our own lives.

Father, may it convict us. May it challenge us. May it grow us. May it mature us. Father, I pray that it's the prayer of everyone in here is to grow into a mature believer in Jesus Christ.

Father, when to listen, when to challenge, when to bring truth, and sometimes when to allow foolishness to continue.

[2 : 4 9] Father, there's so many riches here that we can only feed on them for so long. But I pray that these teachings bear fruit in our life, that it gives us eternal understandings, and even finite understanding of our world that we live in.

We ask these things in your most gracious and glorious name. Amen. Amen. So, you know, it's summertime. We've kind of had a little interruptions, but this is, believe it or not, a bit of a three-part series.

And I've entitled this Nine Ways to Apostate Proof Your Life. Apostate Proof Your Life. In this letter that Paul has written to his disciple Timothy, he's at the Church of Ephesus.

And sadly, Paul hasn't been here for a while. And last time he was there, they were bearing some fruit. Things were going well. But Timothy has reported back to Paul, hey, it's been a few years since you've been here.

There's kind of trouble in paradise. We've got people who are in leadership who should not be. People who are serving out of selfish desires.

- [4 : 01] In fact, not only do we have unqualified teachers, we've got false teachers. In fact, the gospel's not even preached from the pulpit anymore.
- And it's gotten so bad that people who were with us, who we considered brothers and sisters of the faith, walk with us no longer. Today there's a catchy term for this.
- It's called Christian deconstruction. It trends in certain discussion groups. It's about people who were once Christians are trying to entice other Christians to leave the faith.
- Be like us. You'll feel better about yourselves. They will tell you that there's mistakes in the Bible. They will tell you that the Bible and science are incompatible.
- They will even bring false teaching into their lives. And some will use their anecdotal stories of where either pastor or friends hurt their feelings and there's no way that they could ever be a part of a church again.
- [5 : 15] However, in the first part of chapter 4, Paul lets Timothy know, Hey, my brother, I know it's surprising, but it will happen.
- Why? Because there are false teachers. There are deceitful spirits. They will lie. And people will listen to these lies. And some will fall away from the faith.
- They will tell people to do things that God hasn't commanded. And they will tell people to do things against God's commands.
- And they will tell them even that it's done in the name of love. Paul makes it clear that these are the teachings of demons, of Satan.
- And the application for us is to teach them as such. But Paul doesn't leave Timothy on his own through this, but he provides some instructions how Timothy can lead his people in keeping their faith.
- [6 : 30] To be honest, it's somewhat of a sobering subject, is it not? I know there's many here, as I've said before, who know people, friends, families, those who have walked away from the faith.
- ones who have swore they would never leave. You regarded them as strong, faithful Christians.
- But at some point in their lives, they chose to chase their own passions rather than trust the truth of God.
- But it just doesn't end there with a sad story. The story is, how do we not let it happen to us?
- The reality is, we will experience seasons of doubt. There will be challenges of this life. We'll feel like we are being tormented.
- [7 : 35] There will be seasons of dryness where we will cry out for just a drop of God's goodness.
- There will be seasons where we've experienced hurt by other believers. And we will say, do I really want to have a part of this faith?
- The fact is, the enemy doesn't want you to believe. The enemy wants you to walk. The enemy wants you to give up. He wants you out of here. He wants you enjoying a lovely Sunday morning, enjoying the climbing and mountain biking of Squamish.
- Doesn't seem so bad, does it? You just need a breather, a couple of hours to yourself. You'll be able to enjoy the worship of all that God has created here.
- But don't be fooled. So how do we protect ourselves from this false teaching? How do we protect ourselves from these lies? How do we protect one another from these temptations?
- [8 : 57] Well, this is what this passage is all about. What's interesting is this week, my son has a relationship with a former friend.

Actually, he's the son of a pastor who has chosen to walk away from the faith. What we did is we just sat down through this text this week and looked at all the areas that are related to all his stories.

All the reasons that this young man had this text directly applied to him. Last sermon, I began with nine ways to apostate proof your life.

And I gave you three ways. The first three ways to apostate proof your life. If you remember, the first one was to fix your eyes on Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Verse six, Paul talks about, put these things. And what this word means, these things are the combined teaching that Timothy has received. Most of you, this isn't your first time in a church.

[10:02] You've been exposed either through your parents, your grandparents, Sunday school teachers, aunts and uncles. You know the Ten Commandments. You've been taught these things at different parts of your life.

You know they're right. But now you need to fix Jesus as the center point. You need to heed the teachings of those who taught you.

Proverbs 1.7 says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

You want to keep the faith, you've got to listen to Jesus. Amen? Amen? Can't say you follow Jesus and do something else. That's where it has to begin. It has to begin where God is good.

It's interesting. My son's friend, is God really good? And he talks about all the pleasures of the world that he wants to partake in.

[10:58] My son had no problem dismantling those things. Hey, they may seem really good and tasty right now. Where's that going to leave you? What kind of life is that? Now he also says, Being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine you have followed.

There's this idea of when we follow Jesus, we follow his word. Good doctrine, doctrine that Paul is referring to is biblical teaching. He preaches this constantly.

2 Timothy 2.15 says that we need to rightly handle the word of truth. Titus 1.9 says, Hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught.

Colossians 3.1, If you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Fixing your eyes on Jesus equals knowing God's word.

It's not enough to know John 3.16. I'm saved. Everything's going to be okay. We need to know so much more what Jesus taught. The second way to apostate proof, I said, was simply don't waste your time with irreverent and silly myths.

[12:17] We see that clearly in verse 7. Irreverent means ungodly, unholy, profane. That is any teaching that is contrary to God's word.

It is ungodly, unholy, profane. I'd like to think that if we drill these thoughts into our youth and our young ones, and they really see these ideas that challenge God's word, that they are ungodly, unholy, profane, it would keep them from falling away.

Many books are disguised as Christians which either attempt to add teaching or challenge the clear teaching of scripture.

If you do not know God's word, you will fall into those traps. That word silly means old wives, fables. Keep away from them.

Don't even bother with them. And the third way that I spoke about last time was to train yourself for godliness. What's godliness? One author describes it, it is a lifestyle that continually shows reverence for God.

[13 : 35] A lifestyle that continually shows reverence for God. We learn that it's not natural. It is not our natural disposition.

A lot of you here are probably more fit than anywhere else on earth. But it didn't come early or easy, right? It meant getting on your bikes. It meant getting up early.

It meant coming in after work because you wanted to enjoy the great outdoors. You need to be fit to walk. You remember Leo last week? Lou and Kim, we kind of laughed that we thought my wife broke them with her hiking skills.

Just taking them up and chief and all the way around. Thankfully, I have a bad ankle as an excuse not to go. But they were certainly winded on some days and on other days my friend Leo could barely walk.

But it's not a natural disposition. It's something that is a mindset. set. The point that I want to get through to you is godliness doesn't occur with just one prayer or just one action.

[14 : 49] It's a repeated set of prayers. It's a repeated set of actions that are aligned towards Jesus Christ. You got it?

It's a movement towards Jesus. We're not going to be fully redeemed, fully mature with just one step. It's a set of consecutive steps lived out in our lives.

That's why Paul talks so many times about this idea of walking. It's walking towards a destination, a purpose.

It is a focus, a philosophy of living. But even then, there's this godliness thing that makes us think that it's perfection that we're to attain.

And that can be daunting, can it not? If you know the end goal is so daunting you don't start. You may not believe this, but in high school I ran track and field, was able to go to provincial finals, and then I got to university.

[15 : 59] And I was recruited by the track coach to run track and field. I went out for my first session. I used to run the 100s, but they were going to train me to run the 400 meters.

They thought that would be a better fit for me. And who did I know shows up on the same track team? It was this kid named Carl who, I remember him being at the provincial finals as I was, and he destroyed the Canadian record coming out of high school.

I sat there thinking, why on earth would I keep running? Like this guy's already an Olympian. I will never be able to accomplish what he did. So I'm proud to say I walked off the track that very day and didn't return.

If I couldn't make the Olympic team or get any better that was going to do any good, why bother? And sometimes that's our mindset with Christianity. Right? I'm never going to be a great theologian or a great biblical scholar or any of those things, but that's not the calling.

And we're going to learn what that is. But godliness, to use another word, is maturity. It's to be mature in Jesus Christ, to think, to act.

[17 : 14] And the rest of today's sermon is really about unpacking the idea of godliness and how it is achieved in the Christian life.

Does that make sense? So that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to unpack Paul's teachings that are going to help us move towards maturity in Christ. The word godliness here.

Now let's take a look at the text. Look at verse 11. It's not an easy word he begins with. Simply says, command and teach these things.

We're not used to that word command. It means to direct, to mandate, to order, to regulate, to tell, to declare. These aren't options.

These are things that have to happen. But then he says, command and teach. Teach, which means to instruct, to share, to advise, to tutor, to warn, to influence, to preach.

[18 : 19] the best definition I thought, I found that was quite unusual, is to put in the mind. The Greek word means to take this teaching and to put it in your minds.

Timothy is being told by Paul, you need to put these things into the minds of those who are under you in your church, who are a part of your church.

They need to have these in their minds. We rebuff at that idea of command. But guess what Paul is talking about?

He's talking about saving your spiritual lives. He's talking about keeping you in the faith. He's teaching you to keep from shipwrecking your lives.

Paul does not want you to destroy your life. If you're married with children from ruining your spouse's lives, your children's lives.

[19 : 38] One of the sad stories that my friend and I shared last week is we had a good friend in university who was a Christian leader. He went and got much education and in the process became apostate and was so horrible that his wife left.

Well, Paul is telling us in verse 11, you as Christians must know these things. If you are going to keep the faith, faith, you must know these things.

So to continue on this morning, we're going to look at the last six ways to apostate proof your life.

So we're going to look at verse 12. The fourth way to apostate proof your life is to do not neglect your calling. You are all called to be followers of Jesus Christ.

Verse 12, let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct and love and faith and purity. Context, so here with Timothy, we believe he was a man maybe around 40 years old, but in that culture, he would not be quite seen as an elder.

[21 : 01] A lot of my friends who minister in Asian communities, especially the Chinese community, a lot of homage is given to those who are senior ages.

And sadly, a lot of the problems that they have is a lot of these senior elders don't want to listen to their pastors. Unless their pastors are older, more revered men, they don't listen.

They ignore this. It doesn't matter who some of my friends who've been taught by, who have shown exemplary Christian lives. They are disqualified by virtue of their age.

Here's Timothy. We believe at this point, he's been under the tutelage of Paul for close to 15 years. If this was one you wanted to listen to, this is the one you wanted to listen to.

But how does this fit into our own life? Timothy had to fight that stigma. The first thing I want you to understand is that instruction that Paul has given isn't just for Timothy or preachers, but it's for you as well.

[22 : 14] You see, one of the lies that I see circulate in truth in churches is that there's two types of people. There's the preachers, pastors, missionaries, I know that's kind of all one, and then everybody else.

And that somehow the preacher, pastor, missionary has a higher calling, therefore a different standard to live up to. The Bible doesn't teach that.

There's greater responsibility for what we teach, but we're all called to be mature in Christ. You're not off the hook because you're not preaching.

You're not off the hook because you're not helping in Sunday school. James 3.1 says, Not many of you should become preachers, my brother, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

But after that, there is no other thing they need to look after. Now what's interesting is that through the pages of Scripture, God never associates maturity with teaching.

[23 : 24] He does not associate maturity with knowledge. But this is what he does associate, and we see these commands, and I'm going to read these verses out to you.

1 Corinthians 4.16, Paul says, I urge you then be imitators of me. Philippians 3.17 says, Brothers, join in imitating me.

Philippians 4.9, what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Practice these things. 1 Thessalonians 1.6, and you become imitators of us and of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 3.7, for you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us. We are all look to those who are more mature than us who are in God's word and to imitate them.

Look to be taught. Look to follow. But this is the point that I really wanted to make sure you understood by our calling.

[24 : 39] The fact of the matter is many of us have made bad decisions. some of us have sinned, well, all of us have sinned, but some of us live in the consequences of our sins.

Some of us live with unwise decisions in our lives. Perhaps we've made mistakes with our kids or our spouses, perhaps our kids do not follow after the Lord, or neither does our spouse, perhaps not even our family, perhaps you didn't even handle a tough time of life very well.

Perhaps because of that you were embarrassed, you feel shamed, you feel less than, and if you were to teach anything from the pages of scripture, you'd feel somewhat of a hypocrite who would listen to me.

you think who on earth would ever follow me? Because of how I lived, I'm now relegated to a second class Christian.

If I might be blunt, there is no division between you and I. There is no division that I am a super child or you are a lesser child of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 04] if you have accepted the free gift of forgiveness that God offers to anyone who asks, there is no difference in how God sees you.

He sees you as his child and you are loved. You are precious.

You are forgiven. and because of that you are called. You are called to a ministry.

You are called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. You might not teach in a pulpit or anywhere in a church but there is still teaching.

There is still relationships you are going to have where you are going to bring God's word to bear in someone's life. The fact of the matter is you are called to live as faithfully to the Christian truth as I am.

[27 : 15] It's interesting. I was just dealing with a pastoral issue yesterday. One of my friends is graduated from seminary, has lived an exemplary life but before he became a Christian he was divorced.

His wife was divorced before she became a Christian and the church is having a hard time accepting them. Fact of the matter is he's been redeemed by the free gift of God.

Amen? And he has every right to sit in that pulpit and talk about the truth of God's word. Why? Because since the day that the Lord has transfigured him, and I say that word because it's such a miracle that he has gone from one horrible person in a lot of ways to a gracious child of God that he has exemplified God in every area of his life.

He is a man you want to follow. And how do you get there? How did he get there? How do we get there? This leads me to my next point.

The fifth way to apostate proof your life is be a godly role model. Be a godly role model.

Let's take a look at verse 12 again. Let no one despise you for your youth so that you have a calling, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

[28 : 41] Speech. How serious is speech? Matthew 12, 34, 37, Jesus Christ says, For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak. You know if someone's worth following by how they speak.

One of my greatest joys here at this church is the conduct of our membership. church, I have been everywhere, I can't say been everywhere in this city, but anytime I know someone who knows anyone from Squamish Baptist Church, there's always great words, a great reputation.

Even in our membership meetings, there is a sweetness. I've been to membership meetings where people say things with the sole purpose of destroying and hurting brothers and sisters of the faith.

I've seen vile wickedness demonstrate itself. I've seen and heard grumblers and mumblers. The Bible is immensely clear that this is not pleasing to the Lord.

[30 : 01] Criticism is a destructive element and when spread around causes bitterness, strife, and anger. The fact of the matter is careless speech grieves the heart of the Lord.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:21, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as it fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

The reality is even when we think it's justified, it rarely is. James 1:20 says, tells that the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

our conduct. We all know this, our actions matter. We act one way and talk another, what are we? Hypocrites.

That does not further the cause of Christ. To couple a biblical message with an unbiblical lifestyle kills personal ministry. That's what gives people a reason to walk away from the faith.

[31 : 12] from the faith. Most of my friends who walked away from the faith that I grew up with is because there was an inconsistent example by their fathers in the home.

They might have looked good, wore the right suit on Sundays, that's what they do in Ontario, but their actions in the home were quite contrary to the love of Jesus Christ.

James 1:13 says, Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 1:15 to be holy in all our conduct. And later in 2:12 1 Peter says, Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

What a wonderful thing it is to be a part of this world and when you walk into a room, people don't grumble or mumble, but they feel blessed. wisdom has appeared.

[32 : 26] Experience, graciousness, kindness, love, humility. So not only have speak in action, but we have this example in love. When we hear love, our minds are usually filled with worldly examples of love.

However, the Bible makes it clear that the love of the world is quite different than Christian love. You see, at the heart of Christian love is self sacrifice.

It is a love that is not based on a feeling, but it's based on an understanding. Paul makes this clear in Philippians 2, 3 when he says, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significantly than yourselves.

that word, that count others, it's to regard. It's not meaning.

You know how we can pretend to show humility, right? Your boss comes in the room, you might show deference, but you're like, that person really doesn't know what he's doing.

[33 : 37] I know how to run the business better than them. That's not what he's talking about. Paul is saying, really think and humble yourself under him.

Count himself better than you. Not because of his station, but even the person that's below you in station. Count them, regard them, consider them.

Christian love does not compromise on truth. Love also means assuming the best about one another.

It means trusting others' motives are right and true, and your actions aren't necessarily better or more right.

another thing that love is it keeps no records of wrongs. We know we've had those conversations with friends. They can go back five years and tell you everything that you've done wrong.

[34 : 41] It's hard to be friends with people like that. Amen? It is. Don't be that friend. Make it a joy for people to be your friend.

And then Paul also talks about an example of faith. And Paul is not talking about being an example of strong belief. What Paul is talking about is being faithful, having unswerving commitment.

It is being consistently faithful to the task. If you take up a task, complete it. One of my first mistakes that I ever made in ministry is there was about 40 people that served in the church that I was at, and they were involved in the music ministry, and it was chaos on Sundays.

So I asked one person who was clearly the best musician, the best singer, who was the best gifted, if they would bring organization. And they said they would. But it turns out that person never showed up on time.

So there continued to be problems that were going on. And then when I finally sat down and talked to some of the musicians, they said, well, last music practice they didn't even show up.

[35 : 50] Right? That person's testimony is kaput. Because in every area of their life, as I found out, I was new at the church, that they never show up, they're always lame.

And the fifth example of our faith where it's demonstrated to others in our actions is purity. Paul's talking about sexual purity, both of mind and of action.

Scripture calls us to flee youthful passion, calls men to be one, women, men, and women to be one, man, women. We are called to guard our hearts.

So that's the fifth way. How else do we keep from apostasy? Point six, verse 13, notice it says, until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Do not neglect church. Do not neglect church. church. Back then, not everyone had a copy of their Bible. They often learned through Paul or writings that they would receive.

[37 : 02] They had the Old Testament, but often they were parchments. They didn't have nice, finely pieces of paper that we could have multiple copies in our home.

They depended, their spiritual nourishment depended on coming together as one, and it's still the same to today. We still need to be taught.

We still need to know more of scripture. So these men, back then, they would get together, they would read the scripture, they would explain the scripture, they would provide application, which today we know is preaching.

The reality is the Bible doesn't always have nice fuzzy-wuzzy stories, does it? I find when we read the Bible on our own, we keep to the stories we like, we don't deal into the ones that are sometimes ugly.

Sometimes in our Bibles we have rebukings, warnings, counsel, we read about failures, we read about discomfort. You see, in the church is where you will learn sound theology.

[38 : 14] 1 Timothy 3.15 calls the church to be a pillar and buttress of truth. The truth that I teach here isn't just found in this Bible, well it is, but it's also what the historical church has been teaching for 2,000 years.

I'm not teaching anything novel, but I depend on the men and women that came before me and I pray that long after me people will continue depending on those who built the church.

So do not neglect the church. The seventh way to apostate your faith is do not neglect your gift. Check out verse 14. Do not neglect the gift that you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

Timothy had a pretty interesting story, didn't he? Council of all elders came, affirmed him. We don't always have that. But we do have affirmation as we serve, we are blessed, people thank us, they're excited that we are part of this church, using the gifts, and you guys have heard me talk about this many times.

It's how we were created. We were created to be together. My gift wasn't created for me, it was created for you, and your gift was created for me. We all need each other, we all need one another's gifts.

[39 : 40] The command that Paul is given here is use your gift. Do not neglect it. Don't rip us off.

If you want to keep the faith, join us, be a part of this church, make yourself known, be known, be loved, love others. The fact is, oftentimes we need to be encouraged to use our gift, but it binds us together, it binds this church.

If you've been faithfully attending this church, but not allowing anyone to know you, not only are you losing out, but I'm losing out as well. Our blessing is found together.

The fact is, I want to know you, I want to serve you, I want to love you. And I hope that would be your attitude here at this church.

If you notice, verse 15 says, the eighth way to apostate proof your life is give yourself wholly to ministry. Give yourself wholly to ministry.

[41 : 01] Look at the command, he says, practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see you progress. Don't mail it in.

Don't do the bare minimum. Do you seek to give your very best to this church? Do you seek to give the best of your gifts? Do you seek to love and care and cherish for those that are here?

Or do you just do it enough to get by? God. How serious are you about godliness? This chapter can't be ignored.

You have to trust others to teach you. You have to trust others to love you. my advice is look to those who are an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Notice it says, all may see your progress. That means it's not done in secret or as an individual, but it's done as a community.

[42 : 18] If I might say something, be single-minded. Be consumed with your ministry, your task, your gift.

One of my pastors said to me, I hear many people here want to make or to see God work mightily in the lives around them, but very few people, want to actually work hard.

We all want to see the blessings and the mighty works of God, but too often we object to actually working hard to be a part of that process.

That's why Hebrews 10:24 says, and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. In the ninth and final way to apostate proof your life from the words of Paul to his apostle Timothy is keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.

Verse 16 simply says, keep a close watch on yourself. Do not be ignorant. Persist in this, for by doing so, you will both save yourself and your hearers.

[43 : 49] What a warning. My friends, place yourself in accountability of mentors, pastors, friends, elders.

Ask them to speak truth into your life. My friend, my friend Leo, who you met last week, we've been friends for over 30 years. We can honestly say faithful are the wounds of a friend.

Although we met in Bible study, we went through many, many challenges together and encouraging, loving, supporting one another. When times were tough, when sin had entered our lives, we were both there to speak truth, but to pick each other up.

Don't be ignorant. The fact of the matter is most people know when they're slipping away. They come up with all sorts of silly excuses, excuses that they know isn't true.

But they're looking for excuses, not reasons. Proverbs 12, 15 says wise persons seek counsel.

[45 : 11] Proverbs 12, 15 says a fool goes it alone. To not be a part of this church and to give yourself to what Timothy is being called to by Paul is a sure way to apostate yourself.

If you want to fall away from the faith, ignore all the teachings that I gave you today. I guarantee it will only be a matter of time before you're not just not in this church, but you're no longer in the faith.

Let's pray. Father, I can't relate to Paul as he's in this prison and he's writing this letter to his disciple, to this church that he has written many letters to, he's visited many times, he's spent years with them teaching.

And to find out that some of those men and women which would have seemed closer than a brother and his sister are no longer a part of the faith.

faith. How discouraging that might have felt for Paul in that prison. I'm sure he wondered, Lord, what did I tarry so much for?

[46 : 42] But as we understand from this book, the Spirit spoke mightily in him, basically told Timothy, don't give up.

commit. Stay in your word, keep your doctrine true. Keep your eyes focused on Jesus.

Build into others. Do not neglect your gift. Understand that you have a calling. Father, these are the same things we need to be reminded of today.

Father, I do know, I recognize faces in this church, but I do not know them, and I long to know them, and I want to know them, and we all want to know one another to a certain degree here, oh Father, in order to stimulate each other to godliness and to pleasing you, oh Father.

God, I do not know. There is a city that my friend lives in that is the same amount of people, and yet they have a church of over 2,000 people.

[47 : 57] Yet in our community, it would be hard-pressed to find 500 people that are attending church in Squamish on a Sunday morning. Father, we do want to see mighty works done in this place, but I pray it begins with the resolve of us willing to do mighty works before you, oh God, to show up, to be committed, and to seek you above all things.

Father, we pray for the salvation of our children. We pray for the salvation of our spouses. We pray for the salvation of our mothers, our fathers, our brothers, our sisters, our grandparents, our neighbors, our friends.

There's so many interesting people here in Squamish, and when I speak to them and get to know them, I see that they're either desperately lost, following their own philosophy, or they see the foolishness of this world, yet do not know where to turn, and they sometimes see Christianity just like anything else that this world offers, that the truth of the Spirit hasn't been brought against them.

But I pray over time, as this church continues to grow, both in maturity and numbers, I pray that we would continue to to be a blessing to this community would seek your goodness.

Father, forgive us for being lazy, forgive us for seeking after our own ways, forgive us for not trusting you. But Lord, more importantly, I pray that you use this sermon to redeem the hearts of those who are listening.

[49 : 54] And may some decisions be made today. We ask these things in your name. Amen. Amen.