

Ordination of Jeffery Brown

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[0 : 00] And our next preacher is going to be Jeff's dad, Brother Brown. You can start making your way up. I'll tell you and Mrs. Brown that we at Vision know that it takes good parents to raise a kid like Jeff.

And we thank you for all you did to raise a young man that loves Jesus. God bless you. If I can just figure how to clip this to my belt. There we go. Just say a few things before I get into the text.

The first is, no amount of words will express what I'm about to say, how much I'm thankful for this church. For the love this church has just poured on my son, his wife, and their kids.

There are several things that I'm thankful for when I pray. And I'm thankful for this church. I know Jeffrey wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the love, the kindness, the accountability.

And I'm sure the many mulligans you've had to give him over the five or six years he's been here. But I am thankful. The second is, through the ordination process, I've learned some things about my son.

[1 : 14] Many of those things I already knew. He loves this church. He loves the Lord. He loves his wife. And he loves Skyline Chili.

And I have to be honest. I'm not an emotional guy, but when Skyline Chili was mentioned, I nearly broke down and cried. I thought, you know, I did a good job raising my son.

A proud dad. All kidding aside, I love sports. And I love college sports and pro sports.

And I can't imagine, really, what a parent must feel when their son or daughter receives a full scholarship to play for some big-time school. But whatever it is they feel doesn't come close to what I'm feeling right now.

Amen. Amen. This is better than a scholarship to Ohio State. Amen. Amen. Yeah. He's being ordained to the gospel ministry.

[2 : 17] Amen. And there's nothing that compares to that. Amen. I'm thankful that he's proved himself to this church. And I'm thankful that this church deemed him worthy to go to India to preach the gospel.

Amen. So with that being said, please turn your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 1. And we'll just read one verse this evening. 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse number 12. And just one thought this evening with three brief points.

1 Timothy chapter 1, verse number 12. Paul wrote to Timothy, pastor in this church at Ephesus.

And he says, I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Let's pray. Our Father, in the name of Jesus, we do bow before your throne, realizing that all the celebration and honor that's being bestowed upon my son really, as Paul would say, belongs to you.

For without you, none of this would be possible. And so I pray that you'll be magnified and glorified through this entire process, we pray in Jesus' name.

[3 : 34] Amen. In our text this evening, the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, he says that it's God who enabled me to do ministry. And I just want to take that one thought for a moment and bring out three brief points.

The first is this. I had the privilege to coach my son in basketball for four years. Three of those years were really long years.

His freshman, sophomore, junior years, the only phrase that kept coming out of my son's mouth was, I can't. Footwork, I can't.

Position, I can't. Shoot this way, I can't. Notice. Consequently, those three years, he underperformed. And he drug the team down with them, maybe.

But something happened between his junior and senior year in high school that I can't change to an I can, I will, and I am. He flourished.

[4 : 39] The problem was he struggled with tapping into that intestinal fortitude that God's given each of us that allows us to do things that we think we can't do.

Jeffrey, not just to you, but to anyone in ministry. There are a lot of voices out there that says, you can't. Satan, you can't.

Friends, family members, neighbors, even well-meaning church members will say, you can't. And if that wasn't enough, that natural voice that you've been born with that Paul wished would just be forever eradicated from his existence will say, you can't.

But I want to encourage you. It's God who enabled you into ministry. It's the Holy Spirit that God's giving you. And he's there waiting for you to just submit to his voice and not all the other voices so that he can enable you to do some impossible things in ministry.

God can't. Just think of the stories in the Bible. They're more than just stories. A few weeks back, I preached a funeral. And sometimes you get the idea that preachers just mention the name of Jesus because it's this feel-good name at funerals.

[6 : 02] He's real. He's powerful. And it's already been said, he changes lives and cultures and countries and families. So don't ever think you can't if God has called you.

He has enabled you. Just submit and surrender. The second is this. Most of you know my son.

He has a personality that's unlike many others. And he has charisma, I think. Any negative things he gets from his mom and positive things, he gets from me.

I've been saved for over 40 years. I've been pastoring just maybe nine or so years. And before that, youth pastoring for maybe 10 or 15 years.

And I've noticed something, especially in our ranks. It is easy for a pastor or a missionary or even a youth leader to forget who enabled them.

[7 : 13] And they began to rely on their personality or their charisma to get them from point A to point B. Never forget, Jeffrey. Jeffrey. I really struggle with you calling him Jeff.

I have to be honest. Whenever you say Jeff, I'm thinking you're talking to me, right? He's Jeffrey, Jeffrey, Jeffrey, Jeffrey. But it does say that he's grown into his own man.

So I'm thankful for that. But, Jeffrey, never think that your charisma and your personality will get the job done. At best, it's just an asset that God uses.

But it's not the source that God uses. It's the Holy Spirit that God uses. Be thankful God's given you a personality and charisma. But there have been many men in the Bible that have allowed their personality and charisma to ruin their lives.

Samson would be one. For a period, even David. Solomon. Even James and John. These peaceful, people-loving apostles once wished that God would just throw down fire and destroy the Samaritan village because they rejected Jesus Christ.

[8 : 28] Be submitted. Be thankful for what God's given you. But never forget, that's not the source of the success of ministry that God's going to give you.

And then third, if God enables us, and he does, then this means we have to be submitted and committed and surrendered to Bible reading and prayer.

Timothy had the best of all men to disciple him, right? The Apostle Paul. For years, he sat under Paul's ministry. And now he's launching out and pastoring this church at Ephesus.

And even in this spirit of pastoring, the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, Study to show yourself approved unto God. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it's profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

He says this to Timothy for Timothy's benefit. You need to be a prayer warrior. Prayer is the hardest thing for me.

[9 : 41] I don't have to be disciplined to read my Bible. I don't have to be disciplined to pray. And there are many reasons for this. One is because I'm not super open.

I'm not open with my inner feelings, right? But God not just wants us. He demands us to be transparent with him.

It's something that I have to be disciplined. I have to work on. I have a huge prayer list that I'm devoted to praying for every day. And sometimes it becomes monotonous.

And sometimes God just breathes in this thing. But it's a habit that I have to do. Prayer.

Bible reading. Study. Study, study, study. Because it's those two things that will be valuable in God enabling you.

[10 : 43] You can't teach a fifth grader an algebraic expression. Because they don't know. You'll never be able to use God's word as a masterful algebraic expression.

Bringing it down to a language that Indians can understand. If you don't know God's word enough. It's a mystery to them.

Not a mystery to you. You need to convey that to them. And God's word and God's power are the key. You can't be sufficient, Jeffrey.

You can't rest on the laurels of the past. I'll just close with this. In June of 1987, just a few days after I graduated from high school, I was shipped to Fort McKellen, Alabama for basic training.

The drill instructor gets on the bus and he welcomed all of us to Fort McKellen, Alabama. I thought, not a bad gig after all. That was the last time he said something nice to us until the day we graduated.

[11 : 55] In the ministry, you're being welcomed. But if you thought Satan attacked you before today, it's only going to intensify.

This isn't to scare you. Because greater is he that's in you than he that's in the world. I don't say this to scare you. I say this to remind you how much you need God.

Because he's the one who enables you. Thank you, Pastor Gardner. Thank you, Vision Baptist Church, for everything that you've done. If you would take your Bibles and turn with me to Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12. I want to talk to Jeffrey. I want to talk to Jeffrey.

I want to talk to all of us. I'll be honest with you. Preparing for this one was a little more difficult. Because I want to. Sometimes things may not be.

[12 : 56] Sometimes at vision, there might be too many preachers. And too many missionaries. And sometimes it can bother us and hurt us. And so I want to preach to you, Jeffrey.

On the eyes on Jesus, please. And I want to take you to Hebrews 12. 1. Give you three weights. Or three sins.

That easily beset most of us. And ask you to have victory over them. The Bible says in Hebrews 12. 1. Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us.

And let us run with patience the race that's set before us. There are three words you can write down right there. And just take it home. I think they're the weights. Comparing.

Competing. And complaining. Comparing. Competing. Competing. And complaining. In verse 2. Very famous verse.

[13 : 59] Puestos los ojos en Jesús. Looking unto Jesus. Putting your eyes on Jesus. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I want all of us to hear this tonight. And if you're lay people, members of vision, and you're not in the full-time go-out-of-the-church ministry, I think this really is something that the Lord's given me to share with you and all of us and with Jeff.

2 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12. Comparing is not wise. Eyes on Jesus. Not others.

For we dare not make ourselves. Let me go back to Hebrews 12. And just say this to you and everybody else. If you've got your Bible open in Hebrews chapter 12, you have a race that's set before you.

You didn't choose your race. He did. He didn't make me to be you, and he didn't make you to be me, and he didn't make you to be Eric. He made you to be Jeff Brown.

[15 : 14] Jeffrey Brown. McKenzie, I hope you call him Jeffrey all the time. Just remind him he's daddy's boy. Amen. There's a race set before you.

And if you're not careful, you start comparing. And here's 2 Corinthians 10, 12. It says we dare not make ourselves the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves, but they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.

And you and I already know that, and everybody in this room knows that. But sometimes if you're a lay person, you could easily say, I guess everybody thinks I'm not a good Christian because I'm not a missionary. That's comparing.

And if your church, if you're raising your support, and your support's not coming in as quickly as it ought to come in your opinion, you look around the room, and you compare yourselves, and you measure yourself by others.

The temptation is to decide how you are doing by looking at others. We brag on or feel bad about our ministry based on others. The measure is not how I stack up next to others, but it's the Lord and trusting God.

[16 : 25] We are to work the process and leave the product to the Lord. So I challenge you not to compare. Challenge you not to compare because I don't know if the language will come for you as easy as it does the others.

I don't know if you'll see as many people saved. And I know you've gone around the country telling everybody how great you are and what all good stuff you're going to do. And you might get over there and then your comparison's going to destroy you.

I remind you, 1 Corinthians 3, 7 says, the guy that plants and the guys that water are nothing, but it's God that gives the increase. Number two, competition is wrong.

Eyes on Jesus as your judge, not on yourself, not on others. Judging each other or yourself is wrong. We judge ourselves.

Paul didn't. I'm guilty of this. I'm guilty of everything I'm going to preach tonight. It's probably why the Lord dealt with me about it. Mexican guy that taught me Spanish said, you know, every time you guys preach, there's more fingers pointing back at you and the rest of us.

[17 : 29] And believe me, I feel that quite often. But in 1 Corinthians 4, 3, the apostle Paul said, but with me it's a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of a man's judgment.

I don't even judge myself. I don't even judge myself. For I know nothing by myself. He that judges me is the Lord.

Therefore judge nothing before the time. When God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsel of the heart, then every man, every man, that's amazing to me, then every man shall have his praise of God.

Look at that. Then shall every man have praise of God. Mind you, Jeffrey, you do not win God's love. You don't earn it.

There's nothing you can do to make him love you more. There's nothing you can do to make him love you less. And I would like to say, I say this often, but sometimes people don't seem to hear it.

[18 : 29] But you ought to have a blast every day. I'll just be wonderful. For every one of us, wherever you are, servant, wherever you are, he came to give you an abundant life. So if you stop comparing and stop competing, we could probably enjoy life a little bit more.

In Corinth, they're trying to pick who's the best. There's competition. And one of my favorite verses that I've heard so abused in churches, but in 1 Corinthians 4.1, Paul said, I just want y'all to think of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. I just wish you'd picture the white towel laid across his arm as he stands off to the side while the important people are there.

Paul said, I don't, y'all are trying to figure out who's the best preacher and who's the man and who you can brag on and who's somebody. He said, I just wish you'd think of me as the guy with a towel on my arm.

I'm just a butler. I'm just a steward. I'm just a servant. I'm just a slave over here in the corner. Competition ought to be out. Romans 14.4, Paul said this, Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?

[19 : 48] You know, you're not even your servant. You realize that, right? You're not your servant. You're not my servant. You're not the church's servant. You serve God to his own master, to Jesus.

He stands or falls. That's who you serve. And the last, you need to be convinced in your relationship. Eyes on Jesus and his love for you.

I just want to share something that just the Lord has worked me over with. So beautiful. 1 John 4, verse 14. We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

What a sweet Father. Dirty, stinking, wicked world. And he sends the Son to be the Savior. Verse 15. And if you'll confess that Jesus is the Son of God, if you believe, you trust him, God dwells in you and you and God.

I want you to go to verse 16 with me and I want to drive this home to you. Mr. Brown, when you get over to India, we have known and believed the love God has to us.

[20 : 59] We need to stop right here, mark that word known, and then we need to go study the Bible because we probably don't know how much he loved us. But in this passage of Scripture, and I'm not going to take time to go down in 1 John chapter 4, you know why we love him because he first loved us.

You know why we love him because he came to us but we couldn't go to him. You know why we love him because he's so good. God is love. We have no that.

But it's one thing, I know it, I've known it all my life. I just haven't believed it. I believe it, but I don't believe it. You know, I believe it up here. I just don't always believe it down here.

I wonder if he loves me sometimes. Look at what it says. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Known, then believed. Now we should just focus on this that God has to us.

That's God doing it. That's God loving you. And in India, when the Indians don't love you and the missionaries don't love you and the pastor at Vision's forgotten you and no one cares about you, God loves you.

[22 : 03] God has a love for you. God is love. He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. This is my verse. I was just in Wrigley Baptist Church where I got saved.

I was sitting there in Sunday school and the guy read verses and I just happened to notice this verse and I can't get away from it. Almost no Christian expects to have boldness in the day of judgment.

We feel like if we go see the Father, we're going to have to slink in, sneak in, stay down low. because he's after us. But look what the verse says.

The verse says, Herein is love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Boldness in the day of judgment.

I was thinking little granddaughter Abby, she got boldness in my office. She comes in swimming in love. She just knows she's loved and never is a question with her.

[23 : 06] She gets a little bit older, gets older as her mama, she might doubt love. But when you're little, you just go ahead and accept it. Man, everybody loves me. I think Abby's world is, I'm the center.

Everybody loves me. Not the wrong kind of center. I'm talking about the center. It's like she's in the middle of everybody's love. Boldness. And you know why you get to be bold?

You need to underline this in your Bible. As he is, so are we in this world. Look at that. He loved us so much.

He took a dirty, filthy, rotten, stinking sinner like me and you and put us in Jesus. And when the father looks at Jeff Brown, he doesn't see Jeff Brown. As Jesus is, so are you.

And I just think maybe this is just you can go meditate on this. This has been eating my lunch for days. That's how sweet he is. As we are in this world. Not the one we're going to get to.

[24 : 04] As we are in this world. So in India, or when you all step out to speak on Sunday and you wonder if anybody loves you. He does. He does.

You don't have to go to him wondering and scared if he'll love you back. He loves you first. He loves you. And that love is so sweet. It throws out the fear that we have in verse 18 that maybe he doesn't love us.

There's no fear in love. Mature love. Grown up love. Understanding love. When you understand what it is, it casts out fear. And it's so funny.

You know the kids that come to the office on a regular basis? Evelyn Cooper. Sometimes they open my door and they got two or three kids behind them. And they go, oh come on, he don't care.

Let's go in there and get our candy. They got boldness in the pastor's office. No fear. No fear. They don't even ask. Some of the parents are really working and get them to ask.

[25 : 10] But it's a sweet thing. They're not scared. You don't have to be afraid. You're going to India and our Father loves you. And if you're afraid and worried about when not he loves you, you just haven't understood love yet.

You've not been made perfect in love. You've not matured in love. So Jeff, I think there are three weights that weigh us preachers down and I think probably regular people too.

But I had a long time ago figured out I don't belong in the regular category. We compare ourselves amongst ourselves and we're not wise. We compete with each other to make sure God loves us and everybody thinks we're something.

And we complain because we wonder if God loves us. If any kid ever had a problem in understanding that God loves him, it's probably me. But boy, that verse is working on me.

Boldness in a day of judgment. Paul was kind of bold when he talked about his judgment. He said, yeah, I'm about to die. He said, but there's a crown laid up for me in heaven and for all y'all that love his appearing like I do.

[26 : 18] Y'all get one too. He didn't go. Man, I'm a little nervous about getting to heaven. He went, I'm going to go up and get my crown. See y'all later. I'm out of here. Bold. He loved us when we were nothing.

He loved us when we were in a sin pit. He loved us when he picked us up. He loved us when he knew we were going to sin. He loved us when we did sin. He loved us before we sinned. He loved us after our sin. He just loves us.

What a God. Father in heaven, I pray your blessings on Jeff and his ministry and all you're going to do in his life. I pray for McKenzie. I pray for the kids.

God, I just pray that you would do a great work and bring great honor to your name and I'll give you praise for all you do in Jesus' name.