

1 Timothy 4:1-16 - Fighting for Faith in a World at War

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[0 : 00] So 1 Timothy chapter 4, beginning to read of verse 1. Paul says, If you put these things before your brothers, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Train yourself rather for godliness. For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. And until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given to you by prophecy, when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourselves in them, so that all may see your progress.

[1 : 44] Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers. Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we come before you again and we open your word and we ask that you would do only what you can do.

Lord, we pray that you would expose what is false, encourage what is faint and strengthen what is faithful. Lord, we pray that you would guard my lips from error and guard our hearts from pride. We pray, Lord, let truth land with grace and let grace fuel truth. Lord, we don't want to merely understand this passage. Lord, we want to live it.

So teach us how to fight the good fight of faith, Lord, so that we may end well. Lord, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So as we look at this chapter, we are thinking about what happens when the church of God engages in the mission of God.

So in chapter 2, you remember that Paul had been kind of talking about God's mission, what God is doing in the world, what he wants to do in the world. And then he has called the leaders of the church to say, this is how you're going to help.

[3 : 06] This is how you're going to help the church to actually walk in God's mission. And then in chapter 4, he gives us some sobering reminders.

And he's going to say that when the church engages in God's mission, and this is not in any way an advert for what we've talked about in terms of engaging in God's mission for Christmas, because Paul is going to say is that what we often forget is that when we are on mission, what happens is that mission invites warfare.

And that's what he's talking about in this chapter. We're prone really to be a little bit, I think, spiritually naive, assuming that following Jesus should lead to peace and comfort and not conflict or cost.

And as a result, there's a danger that when conflict and cost comes, we grow weary or we grow disillusioned. And sometimes we compromise truth to avoid that opposition.

We try to escape. We want the mission of God, absolutely, but we want it without the warfare. We want the crown, but we don't want the cross.

[4 : 33] And so the issue is that when we signed up to follow Christ, if that's how we want to put it, we didn't enlist in a club, we were drafted into a war.

And many of us miss this until we find ourselves right in the middle of warfare. And we can start asking questions about what on earth is going on. I didn't sign up for this. And most of us kind of don't like that language. We kind of prefer faith as comfort. We prefer faith as a safe harbor or a place of rest. And we prefer church to think about church as a hospital we come to.

And in many ways, all of those are true. That Jesus is our rest. But listen, Jesus as our rest doesn't come without resistance. Because the moment you join the mission of God, the moment that you start advancing the kingdom in your home or in your city or in your workplace, you've stepped into a battlefield that's been raging since Eden.

And every step forward in God's mission is met with equal and opposite pushback from an enemy against that mission.

[5 : 41] And that's not paranoia. That's actually the pattern of Scripture. If you cast your minds back to when Moses confronted Pharaoh, it was vividly painted for us in the first chapters of the book of Exodus.

When Moses confronted Pharaoh, who showed up? The magicians, right? There was opposition. And the moment that God's people started moving towards freedom, what did Pharaoh do? Well, he started tightening his grip, didn't he? The plagues that came weren't just signs of God's power, but they were actually proof that the enemy never gives up his slaves without a fight. Deliverance always awakens opposition. Always. And that's why, you know, we have to be so, so careful, especially around new believers.

You know, Jesus tells a parable about the seed that goes in and it gets snatched away. That's opposition. When Nehemiah, much later on, almost at the further end of Israel's kind of return to the land, when Nehemiah went to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem, it was Sanballat and Tobiah, his friends, right?

[7 : 14] That all so-called friends that tried to tear him down. They didn't try to tear the walls down, but they did try to attack Nehemiah. They mocked him.

They intimidated him. They accused him falsely. Every brick, it seems, that Nehemiah laid was met with resistance. Because when God begins to restore what's been broken, the enemy whispers, you can't rebuild that.

It's too broken. And Reformation always produces or provokes ridicule. Always. Like, you're going to do what?

You're going to reset this. You're going to start doing that. You're going to not start doing... There's going to be ridicule from that. When Jesus stepped on the scene, and you can read it for yourself in Matthew chapter 4, he went preaching the kingdom of God.

What happened? There was demons everywhere. Light had entered the darkness, and the darkness didn't like the retreat. And it didn't go without a fight.

[8 : 22] Every healing, every exorcism, every word of grace was an assault on the dominion of evil. And wherever Jesus brought life, the powers of death protested.

Now, they didn't have much to say about the power of Jesus, because Jesus was around. But it's slightly different in our day. When the church in Acts began to move out, when ordinary believers, like you and me, they weren't super believers.

They were ordinary people. When they started proclaiming Christ in their homes and in their workplaces and in the streets, in the synagogues, what happened?

Persecution came like a shadow. They were in prison. They were stoned. They were martyred. But none of it stopped the mission. In fact, the more that they were scattered, the more the gospel spread.

And we see this idea that revival always invites retaliation. And so look, from Genesis all the way through to Revelation, it seems the pattern holds true. Every time God advances his mission, the enemy mounts a counterattack.

[9 : 32] The moment you say yes to God, you declare war on everything that resists his reign. And that's why Paul opens verse 1 in the way he does.

He says, look, God desires everyone to be saved. And everyone who comes to him is going to be saved. That's 1 Timothy chapter 2. Oh, but a church needs some organization because the church isn't going to be able to walk in God's mission on its own.

So here's what the leaders need to do. That's chapter 3. Oh, but chapter 4, don't think it's going to be a walk in a park. Because the Spirit expressly says, Paul says, that in the latter times, which, when is that?

Well, that's just from everywhere from the ascension right up until the return of Christ. Some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. So this sermon series is called Dangerous Church.

And a dangerous church is a church on mission. But listen, the dangerous church is a church that is at war. The fight isn't against people, but it is against powers.

[10:43] Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, and he says that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood. It's not against people, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

That verse isn't just reserved for super Christian disciples. That's for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, have entered into that battle, entered into that warfare, that wrestle, as Paul talks about it.

And the sobering truth is that when you carry God's mission, when you walk in God's mission, into the world, you carry into the world a battlefield.

You're going into a battlefield where there's going to be casualties and there's going to be costs.

And I bet there's none of us, there's not one of us here that couldn't name someone who was once seemingly walking with the Lord is now not.

Or is walking with the Lord and just seems to be so beat up just because of it. And look, look back at verse 19 of chapter 1, because Paul does exactly that.

[11:58] He recalls these two guys. He says, There's people that seemingly were once walking with the Lord and now no longer walking with the Lord.

There's casualties, there's a cost, he says. And look, there seems to be a constant concern of Paul in this letter to that end that we don't have our faith shipwrecked or we don't abandon the faith.

So in verse 6 of chapter 1, he says, certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion. That's a concern that Paul has.

In chapter 5, verse 15, he says, for some have already strayed after Satan. In chapter 6, verse 10, he said, for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

In chapter 6, verse 21, he says, for by professing it, some have swerved from the faith, grace be to you. And so it seems like even in just this short amount of six chapters, Paul is concerned about those people are going to wander or waver or are going to get fooled into or abandon the faith.

[13:20] notice that he grounds this warning with almost like divine revelation and it's a little bit of a conundrum because we believe all the word of God is inspired, right?

And it's God breathed. But in verse 1, he says, well, now the Spirit expressly says. Or is the Spirit not expressly saying everywhere else? Is this more important than everywhere else?

And I honestly don't know the answer to that, but I think what Paul is just trying to say is, look, this isn't speculation. There's a certainty to this. You're going to find, we're going to find that as soon as we step onto the mission field, there's going to be attack.

There's going to be problems. There's going to be challenges. And those challenges are going to come from inside our own lives through weariness and doubts and discouragement, but are also going to come from the outside.

Notice how Paul says it comes. He says, in the latter times, some will depart from the faith. How? By devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.

[14:30] And so look, the issue is this. The big issue is this. Paul is saying that the primary way we are in danger is through spiritual, doctrinal ideas.

That's what he says. Deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. it's fought with ideas, not swords. It's fought with ideas, not swords. Meaning that Satan's preferred weapon against the church, and listen carefully, is not persecution, but persuasion.

There's a lot of persecution in the world. Right? And it should grieve our hearts and we should be praying for our brothers and sisters. You know, the most dangerous person alive right now is Christian women.

If you're a Christian woman, you are the most dangerous person anywhere in the world. You run the highest risk of persecution, statistically.

But listen, that's not Satan's primary weapon. Satan's primary weapon is not persecution, it's persuasion. Think about it.

[15 : 55] In Genesis chapter 3, the serpent didn't attack Eve with a sword, he attacked her with a sentence. Did God really say? That's persuasion. It was a seed of doubt, a question that twisted truth into suspicion.

And the moment that Eve began to entertain the thought that maybe God was holding out on her, the battle was lost even before a single bite was taken. That's persuasion. That's how the enemy works.

Paul warns the Corinthians about the very thing in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 3. He says, I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Notice, it's not your bodies attacked, but your thoughts led astray. It's your thoughts. The front line of spiritual warfare is the imagination, it's the ideas, it's the thoughts.

What we believe about God, what we believe about ourselves, what we believe about the world. In the same chapter in 2 Corinthians 11, Paul says, no wonder, for Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

[17 : 09] Meaning, deception doesn't always look evil, it looks reasonable. It sounds spiritual and it feels right. False teachers don't show up wearing horns, do they?

I'm glad you agree. They quote the Bible and quite often they're very, very good speakers, but they quote the Bible slightly out of tune with grace.

And even in the wilderness, you know, in Matthew 4, when you look at the conversation that Jesus had with Satan, Satan came to Jesus not with chains, but with the Bible. Like, he wasn't quoting ideas outside of something that Jesus would recognize.

He says, if you're the son of God and then he starts twisting God's word to tempt God's son, but what did Jesus do? He didn't then attack God's word with philosophy or answer God's word with philosophy.

He answered God's word with God's word. He said, as it is written every single time. And that's exactly Paul's point here in 1 Timothy 4. Paul is suggesting that spirits are theologians and they traffic in distorted ideas.

[18 : 24] And that's why Paul tells Timothy later in 2 Timothy in his second letter, he says, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Because the only antidote to persuasion is precision in the Bible. It's the only antidote. Know the word of God. Because whilst persecution may bruise the body and it may end the life, persuasion will corrupt the heart and will have eternal consequences.

One makes a martyr, the other one makes apostates. And so, this is why Paul moves in verse 6 later on to talk about being trained for godliness. But before we get there, Paul gives some examples of what these ideas might sound like.

And I think some of these are context specific. Like, I don't think we can just kind of go, well, where he talks about forbidding marriage. We're like, well, he's okay with marriage, tick.

I think some of these are context specific. But look, notice the relationship between this idea that the spiritual, which we talked about in verse 1, the demons, the spirits and the demons, and then the false teachers.

[19 : 44] because in verse 2, he says that those ideas come through human means. He says, through the sincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.

And so, the idea is that they are from deceitful spirits and demons coming through people whose consciences have had no effect on them whatsoever. And then, in verse 3, he gives an example of what they teach.

And again, I think these are probably more context specific. But he says, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

And so, essentially, these people are taking good things. Things that have been created by God, they're good things. Marriage is a good thing to people.

Good. Right? So, yeah, no women. Yeah, no women said this. I did notice that. The women were just kind of like, hmm.

[20 : 54] So, there's conversations over lunch in there. So, marriage is a good thing and also food is a good thing. And all the men said amen as well.

Look at that. So, look, so the idea is that Paul is saying, look, they've taken what is good and twisted them into forbidden things.

They haven't, they're not, they're not presenting poison. They're presenting food with a twist. Right? There's a, there's a corruption.

It's not an outright denial. And, and, and really the purpose of doing this is to turn marriage and food into some kind of spiritual test of purity.

and Paul pushes back hard against this in verse 4 and says, look, creation itself isn't the problem. It's the human heart that mistrusts God's goodness that's the problem.

[21 : 56] He says, for everything created by God is good. It's good to be remembered of that sometimes, isn't it? Like, there is, there is so many good things about our world. Everything created by God is good.

And nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. To bring this into a, a 21st century problem, we have often talked about and had conversations about, you know, we live in a diverse society where food carries not only cultural but sometimes religious significance or religious meaning.

So, for example, halal food. And so, for some believers, the idea that an animal that has been slaughtered according to Islamic custom and tradition and religion raises questions.

But Paul's answer here is quite clear. Everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. And so, like we read in the book of Acts with Peter's dream and other places, the issue here isn't meat itself, it's the posture of the heart.

And so, Paul is saying in these first five verses that there is going to be a battle, there is going to be a warfare, and we shouldn't really be surprised about that.

[23 : 21] There's a reality to that. There is going to be deception in the last days. And we shouldn't shy away from walking with the Lord or we shouldn't shy away from the mission of God because of that.

We should instead be prepared for that. And in that same kind of vein in verse 6, he says, this is how you are going to be prepared for it.

And so, he says, if you put these things before brothers, verse 6, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of faith and of the good doctrine that you followed. So, Timothy's role was not to create new teaching, but to remind the church of the truth.

He says, have nothing to do with irreverent or silly myths. Joe C. pointed out yesterday morning that silly myths in some translations is translated as old wives' tales.

Everybody's quiet about that one. And that's simply because the Greek word Paul uses that translated silly literally means of old women. And so, what Paul isn't saying is that all old women are silly.

[24 : 41] He's not saying that. There are certainly some old women that are silly, but there are also some young men that are silly too. So, I'm not sure that some people need prayer by the looks of things.

So, I don't think that's what Paul is saying. I think he's saying it's really a dismissive way to describe speculative stories that are just passed around as truth.

Right? He doesn't mean as a slight against women or old women. In our time, we probably hear more myths than we actually realize, don't we?

Especially in the day of social media and things like that. You know, like if something feels, if I'm at peace with something, it must be God's will. That's just stupid and silly.

follow your heart, it will never lead you in the wrong direction. That's stupid too. Like read the book of Jeremiah, that'll tell you everything about that. Right?

[25 : 42] That's not Disney. That's Disney, not the Bible. Follow your heart. Paul's counter to this is actually very deliberate. And he's going to say, look, don't waste your energy on myths.

But rather, verse 7, train yourself for godliness. And he tells us why. For while bodily training is of some value.

Now, some of you will hate that and some of you will hate it more. Most of us will never turn around and go, oh yeah, goodie. Because it's bodily training, going to the gym, running, doing your weights, whatever you do, go walk.

It's of some value. There is some value to it. a little bit. But it's not the most valuable thing.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way. As it holds promise, not only for now, but for later.

[26 : 50] That's what he's saying. Like, going to the gym is going to help you out. after time is going to help you out. Right? But it's going to do nothing for you eternally.

But godliness is good for now and for eternity. That's Paul's point. The saying is trustworthy and is deserving of full acceptance.

Believe this, he's saying. for to this end we toil and strive to what end? That we would become godly. We're training ourselves to godliness. That is the end because we have set our hope on the living God who is the saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.

So there is a reality to eternity that is real beyond what we understand now. That's Paul's point.

Now look, interestingly, the Greek word for train in verse 7 is *gymnasia*.

Recognize that word? Yeah. Okay. So, which is why he then goes on to talk about physical fitness.

And notice the outcome of this kind of training is godliness.

[28 : 02] And godliness is valuable in every single way. But also notice that it's not easy. Right?

Like, if going to the gym is, if you find going to the gym is easy, you're doing it wrong.

Right? There should be some effort there. And he says it's not easy in verse 10. It requires effort. Which means that you don't get fit by accident, do you?

Do you? No, no, okay. So you're like rolling out of bed and you're like, oh, I feel fitter today than I was yesterday. Like, I'm on this fitness stuff. Right? You don't get fit by accident.

It requires some work. And look, godliness is the same. You don't slip into godliness, do you?

Slip and slide into godliness. We don't do that. It requires some effort. The writer of Hebrews puts it like this in Hebrews chapter 5. He says, solid food is for the mature.

[29 : 11] For those who have their powers of discernment trained, same word, by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. So, look, what he's saying is that not everything that sounds spiritual is actually true.

We need to be reminded of that. Like, it's easy kind of, you know, to hear things on the TV or the radio or to see things on the internet. They seem to have an appearance of spirituality.

But they go against God's word. They're not true. And not everything that is popular is healthy.

Godliness grows not from novelty, but it grows from truth.

And the requirement is to constantly, this is what the writer to Hebrews says, to constantly practice. To tell the difference between good and evil.

And so, what is really interesting is that Paul, along with the writer to Hebrews, is painting for us what it really means to be godly. What this training in godliness looks like. It is to have the right thinking about God and ourselves and the world.

[30 : 31] Thoughts. But it's also then to practice choosing the right decisions daily to say, this is evil.

I'm not going down that evil route. I'm not walking in that. It's not just about having the right ideas. You can have all the right ideas as long as you want, but if you're practicing evil, what good is it for you?

That's James' point, right? And you can seemingly have the most spiritually true life. You're making all the right decisions, but your ideas about God, yourself, and the world are completely off kilter.

Paul is saying, look, you need a good measure of both. You need to have the right idea about who God is, the right idea about who you are, and the right idea about this world. Ideas, thoughts.

But also, you need to be able to walk every single day choosing that when you're confronted by evil and good, as the writer to Hebrew says, you will be.

[31 : 35] You are constantly making the decision for right rather than wrong. So this idea of training is both thinking the right things and doing the right things.

And then Paul finally tells us in verse 11, he calls us to fight well, to keep going, to live life well, to persevere, to don't give up.

Why would he say that? Well, probably because there's a tendency in all of us to give up. There's a tendency in all of us to quit. And so he says to Timothy, command and teach these things.

In essence, remind people about these things. Remind people to keep going. Remind people to be trained in godliness, to think the right things and do the right things. Let no one despise your youth. Amen. Right? Let no one despise your youth. But set the believers an example and it's almost like he then gives Timothy four fronts of the battle that he's going to face.

[33 : 06] Four battle fronts. You know what a battle front is? We went to the D-Day landings last year at the beaches in France and there were fronts weren't they?

The allies were moving in on several different areas. And Paul is kind of painting this picture that actually there's going to be an area of your life where, let's just be honest, you're going to be weaker in one than the other.

There's a battlefield that you're going to have to fight in certain areas and they're going to be key to your godliness. They're going to be key to winning that war if you like.

And so he gives us five. He says in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and purity. There's not much left after that, is there?

There's not much left that we struggle with. Or we are challenged in. In speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Jesus said in Luke chapter 6 that the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good.

[34 : 19] And the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of his heart, speech, his mouth speaks. And that's a battlefield.

And I bet there's no one in the room that has not had that challenge in the past of either saying the right thing, saying the wrong thing at the right time, saying the right thing at the wrong time, just like that.

Just saying the wrong thing. Speech. words are powerful. And we know that. And sometimes we know that to our own shame.

They can break down or they can build. They can bless or they can curse. And the enemy loves to turn our tongues into weapons. And it's a front that we have to be aware of.

And actually in our own day, we don't even have to say anything, do we? It's a Facebook comment. Or an Instagram reel. Or an email.

[35 : 28] Or whatever it is, we actually don't have to say anything these days, do we? And sometimes that is the problem as well, not saying something. We are going to be challenged on the things that we say.

And in a world that seems addicted to outrage, especially right now, and you don't have to go far, do you? You don't even have to go on the internet, which gets the blames of all kinds of ills these days.

You go into the staff room, you'll find the same kind of outrage. Gentle speech is now radical warfare. Not to decide not to join in with that polarizing kind of mentality.

God And so he reminds Timothy to make his speech gentle, wholesome, truthful.

And then he says, look, the other one is conduct. Satan doesn't mind solid doctrine if he can erode credible lives. Right? And we know that.

[36 : 43] We've seen preachers who have fallen. They might have sound theology and they might have preached great sermons, but their lives have eroded. And so Paul reminds Timothy, look, conduct is a battlefield.

Make sure your conduct is an example. He says, love. Jesus said, by all this, people will know you are my disciples if you love one another. And so love is one of Satan's prime targets.

Right? He aims to call love into cynicism, to replace compassion with suspicion. And actually, I think the truth is, you know, as Paul is writing to this young leader, the truth is that the longer people lead, the easier it is to become guarded and even hard-hearted.

It's easy. But Paul says you need to set the example in love. And that means loving those who the world would seem unlovable.

And forgiving quickly and believing the best and enduring long. Timothy is being asked to lead this church in Ephesus that fights for love in a world of anger.

[38 : 01] And people are angry out there. And if you want, if you don't believe that, just join the outreach team on Tuesday at 10 o'clock. And he says, look, you need to be, so you need to be an example in love, but you also need to be an example in faith.

And why that's important is because the writer to Hebrews says that without faith it's impossible to please God. God. He doesn't say that it might be possible to please God if you don't have faith.

He says, no, it's impossible. It is not going to happen. Faith is often where the enemy aims his deepest arrows, right? To be an example in faith just literally means to keep trusting God when the results of your labor aren't seen, when your many prayers are unanswered, Timothy, when your ministry feels like it's a failure, and it will at some point, probably many times, faith.

And in probably the most obvious front, purity, maybe one of the most underestimated in a culture that worships pleasure and self-expression, purity is spiritual rebellion now.

the enemy knows that nothing discredits a leader faster than moral compromise. So these are fronts. They're fronts for all of us. Speech, conduct, love, faith, purity are not checkboxes of moralism, they're domains of discipleship for all.

[39 : 43] And so they describe a life that is both formed by truth and protected by holiness. It is this idea of godliness. holiness. And he says in verse 13, until I come, so Paul was planning to come, back to emphasis, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

And so again, look, the scripture, the Bible, the word of God is the church's primary weapon. It's not our opinions. It's not our politics.

Spiritual warfare is fought by saturating ourselves in the word of God. Thoughts, ideas. He says, don't neglect the gift you have, which was given to you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

Practice these things, immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. So he repeats what he said about teaching.

We need training in both personal holiness and theological integrity. Persist in this, for by doing so you will save both yourselves and your hearers.

[41 : 04] And so here's the deal. This isn't Paul saying like, oh, you know, life is a playground or a pleasure park or a lounge where you can just take comfort, a spa.

It's a battleground. And you are not saved so you could coast through life in Christian autopilot. You were rescued so you could join the rescue.

you. And so what Paul is alluding to is that the same spirit who raised Jesus from the grave is in you pushing back the darkness one obedient step at a time.

Your obedient step at a time. And you're not passive in that. That doesn't happen to you. There's got to be a level of obedience where we step into that.

And as I was thinking about that, like, I wanted to challenge all of us. Maybe we realize in some way we've been coasting. Maybe we've been playing it safe. Maybe keeping our faith comfortable.

[42 : 10] But the king hasn't called us to comfort. He's called us to a cause, God's mission. And so he says again in chapter 2 that God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the faith.

And he calls us to then unite together to walk in that. And to put our comfort aside. To realize that there is going to be a cost.

But to train ourselves in godliness. To have our thoughts right and our actions right. And so we're going to spend a few moments in prayer and I want to encourage you to maybe ask that question of yourself.

Have you been coasting? Have you been playing this safe? Are you more prone to comfort than to cost? Father, we thank you that even though the war is real, the victory is in Jesus.

Thank you this morning, Lord, that we do not work our way to victory. Lord, but we work our way away from victory, your victory.

[43 : 25] Lord, thank you, Lord, that you have called us to know you and we can know you. Thank you, Lord, that this isn't just a teaching about something that we should do.

Lord, this is an encouragement, an invitation about something that we can do. And so we pray this morning, Lord, that you would help us. Lord, maybe our hearts have grown a bit cold, maybe we have grown a bit lukewarm, maybe we have seen the Christian life as more comfortable than costly. Lord, and we ask you to forgive us. Lord, we pray again, Lord, that you would breathe life into us and help us each and every day, Lord, to make the right decisions, the right decisions towards godliness.

And, Lord, we do want to pray, Lord, about those five fronts. Lord, maybe we feel that we are weak in an area or maybe we feel weak in all.

And, Lord, we pray, Lord, for divine reinforcements to help us. Lord, we pray, Lord, for our speech and our conduct and our faith and our love and our purity.

[44 : 45] Lord, that they would be examples of you. Lord, not when everybody is watching, but only when one is watching. Lord, forgive us that many times when we have thought that we can either put on a show or we think we can do it on our own.

And so, Lord, again, we just want to surrender to you. Lord, we pray that you would set our minds right, our thoughts right, our ideas right.

Lord, help us to discern correctly the word of God. But also help us to discern correctly the direction that you would have us go.

Lord, make us bold in those decisions. Even if the whole office is going the other way, even if the whole world is going the other way, Lord, we pray. Lord, would you give us strength to walk with you.

Lord, help us to not give up. Lord, help us to persevere. Lord, we know that's a work that you will do in our hearts. Lord, would you raise up our weary hands, strengthen our feeble needs, we pray.

[46 : 05] And Lord, as we join you on your mission, on your glorious mission to save the lost, Lord, it may even be this morning that we feel that we are abandoning or walking away from the faith or have walked away from the faith.

Lord, we pray that you would remind us again, Lord, that those who abide in you, Lord, are safe and secure. Lord, thank you for the warning this morning, Lord, that we need to abide with you and stay with you.

Lord, give us the energy, spiritual energy to do that, the desire to do that. Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.