

November 21, 2015

Title - *Don't Let Go* (Preached at the 2015 Men's Retreat adapted from a message preached at Vision Baptist College on September 25, 2015 at Vision Baptist College, and also preached on June 1, 2011 at the School of the Scriptures Graduation)

Text - 2 Timothy 1 (entire chapter)

Text Verses: 6; 8; 13 - 15

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. ... Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ... Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." (2 Timothy 1:6, 8, 13-15)

Introduction

Illustration - KJ would not let go of the ball or stick

Illustration - Little Phil let go of the turnpike ticket

Paul is writing this letter to Timothy, a young man whom Paul had invested a lot of time and training. Four times Paul refers to Timothy as his son in the faith. Paul had no doubt seen many tragedies in his day. He had unfortunately witnessed many who were once faithfully serving the Lord suddenly turn back (Demas comes to mind). Paul cared deeply about Timothy and he wanted him to stay faithful; to not let go of the things that he had been taught. The very words "hold fast" and "keep" indicate the possibility that they could be let go of.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: (1 Timothy 4:16a)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (2 Timothy 3:14)

(Jesus said, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed [John 8:31];)

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (1 Timothy 6:20)

God wants us to hold on to some things:

Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. (Proverbs 4:13)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (Hebrews 2:1)

Jesus told both the church at Sardis to “strengthen the things that remain”; and to the church at Philadelphia, He said to “hold fast” to the things that they had.

I have been saved now for a little over 25 years; and yet in that relative short amount of time I have seen many Christians: some fellow church members, some former classmates, some fellow preachers gradually let go of some things that were committed to their trust. I’ve seen some forsake the Lord altogether. **It scares me.** Some of these men (and women) were much better Christians than me. It scares me because I don’t want to see it happen to me. I am very concerned about this generation of Christians.

Paul stated that the return of the Lord would not come before there was a great falling away. I believe that we are seeing that happen right before our eyes. Christians are falling away at a rate that I have never seen before. Yea, whole churches are falling away. It’s scary. Independent Baptist, just like us are letting go of the things that have been committed to their trust.

Men, your churches and pastors have invested hours of time and training, and lots of love into your life and ministry; into your family. They have given you some things, they have taught you the Bible and helped to develop and hone your skills. It would be a terrible tragedy if you somehow let the things, which have been *committed to your trust*, slip away. Don’t let go. Hold on.

Where will you be next year? Where will you be 5 or 10 years from now? Will you still be in possession of the principles that God has committed to your trust? Will you still be practicing the faith that has been handed down to you. Will you hold on or will you let them go?

Transition – Today, I would like to admonish you regarding some common areas where we have the potential of letting go; of not keeping; of letting slip away some principles that God has committed to our trust.

I Don’t Let Go of your Devotion to the Lord (Walk with God)

This is by far the most important area; for if you can hold fast here, you will not let go elsewhere.

Do you have a regular time that you spend communing with the Lord? You will make time to spend with the people that you love. If you truly love the Lord, you will make some time for Him.

Our first priority in life is our relationship with the Lord. It's been rightly said that we get sometimes so absorbed with the things of God that we forget about the God of the things. Don't let go of your devotion to God.

A Time Spent in the Word (not for some requirement; but just because you love Him and He loves you)

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. (Psalm 119:9)

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:11)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (Psalm 119:165)

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:14 - 17)

Time spent in the Word:

Will keep us from falling.

Will keep us in the will of God.

Will keep us separated from the world.

Will keep us from chasing after some crazy false doctrine.

Will keep our families and marriages in order.

We need to read it, study it, memorize it, meditate upon it, and apply it to our lives.

Are you going to hold on to your time with God in the Word, or are you going to let it go?

B Time Spent in Prayer

E.M. Bounds said:

"How the bitter of life is sweetened by prayer! How the feeble are made strong by prayer. Sickness flees before the health of prayer. Doubts, misgivings, and trembling fears retire before prayer. Wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and heaven are at the command of prayer. Nothing is outside of prayer. It has the power to gain all things in the provision of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul covered all departments and swept the entire field of human concern, conditions, and happenings by saying, 'In everything by prayer'"

Adoniram Judson said:

"I am persuaded that we are more deficient in a spirit of prayer than in any other grace. God loves importunate prayer so much that he will not give us much blessing without it. And the reason that he loves such prayer is that he loves us and knows that it is a necessary preparation for our receiving the richest blessings that he is waiting and longing to bestow.

Bro. Chalie once said, "Prayer is the spiritual thing you can do as a Christian."

Prayer is complete dependence upon the Lord; a total demonstration of faith.

Private prayer brings no recognition in man's eyes.

Why is it that we so often only make a priority for things people can see. We preach but people see that. We teach and people see that. We serve and more often than not our service is visible to the people, but private prayer is something between you and your God alone.

Jesus modeled a life of prayer. He taught us how to pray. He commands us to do it. He blesses us for it, and yet, it is the most difficult thing for most of us to do.

Illustrate – Dr. Fedena prays for us preachers. "Rev" and Mrs. Siebold pray down the entire list of Northeast churches and their families everyday. Pastor Clark spends all day Saturday on his knees praying until he can't think of anything else to pray for.

How's it going with your devotion to the Lord?

How is your walk with God?

How is your Bible reading?

How is your prayer time?

When is the last time you got an answer to prayer?

Illustrate – Bro. Hyles worries about not reading his Bible

Transition – If we can get this area nailed down in the Christian life, the rest will come easy.

II Don't Let Go of Your Desire to Serve (Humility)

A The Lord

And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, (Deuteronomy 10:12)

David said to *serve the Lord with fear* (Psalm 2:11); and to *serve the Lord with gladness* (Psalm 100:2).

Illustrate – Ocean County Baptist Temple – cutting the grass; setting up the Sunday school chairs; directing traffic in the parking lot.

B People

Turn to Mark 9:33 – 37

Turn to Mark 10:35 – 45

We have a lot of people that want to be served; but not many that want to serve.

We have a lot of chiefs, but few Indians.

We have a lot of people that want some place of position or prominence; but they really are not interested in serving people.

Illustrate – Ed feeding everybody

Illustrate Bro. Bowen scrubbing the toilet

Illustrate – Hudson Taylor unclogging the sewer

Two missionaries in China were standing by a clogged up sewer, arguing about why they shouldn't have to clean it out. The first missionary said, "I've been here longer, I shouldn't have to do this." The other one replied, "But I have more education. I didn't spend all that money on schooling to be cleaning out sewers." While they were arguing back and forth, famous missionary Hudson Taylor walked past them, opened the sewer, went down into it, cleared it out, and took care of the problem. While the missionaries were arguing, Hudson Taylor simply did the job that needed to be done.

Servants are humble, and because they are humble they can follow authority, and as humble servants they oftentimes make good leaders because they know how to co-labor alongside of other people.

III Don't Let Go of Your Dedication to the Work

Commitment – Dedication – Zeal

Not just when you start but when you finish

There are too many “used to be Christians”

There are too many “used to be churches”

I want to be serving the Lord with more intensity when I am at the end of the game.

Illustrate – Pastor Horton, Dr. Fedena, “Rev”, Pastor Clark, Brother Gilmore, Pastor Wedemeyer

IV Don't Let Go of the Doctrines and Distinctives that separate us from the Carnal Christianity that is rampant all around us in these last days

A We are Baptists – I believe Baptist doctrine is Bible doctrine. If I heard about another church that more closely modeled the New Testament pattern, I would join it; but, there isn't. I'm not an evangelical. I'm not a Pentecostal. I'm a Baptist, and I am not ashamed of it.

Illustrate Baptist Acrostic:

Biblical Authority in all matters of faith and practice. We believe the Bible is inspired and infallible and is the final authority. It is from God's Word that we understand and teach the fundamental doctrines of our faith as well as pattern our church polity. (See 2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17; Acts 17:11; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20–21.)

Autonomy or self governing power of the local church. We believe that every local church should be independent of a hierarchical framework or outside governmental structure. (See Colossians 1:18; Acts 13–14, 20:19–30; Ephesians 1:22–23.)

Priesthood of believers. God's Word assures believers that we have direct access to God through our relationship with Christ. We believe and teach that the priesthood of the believer is the unspeakably precious privilege of every child of God. (See Hebrews 4:14–16; 1 Timothy 2:5–6; 1 Peter 2:5–10.)

Two offices within the church. Scripture only mentions two church offices—pastor (also referred to as elder or bishop) and deacon. These two offices are to be filled by godly men of integrity in each local church. (See Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1–7; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:6–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4.)

Individual soul liberty. We believe that each person must make a personal decision of repentance and faith in Christ. (See Romans 10:9–17, 14:1–23.)

Separation of church and state. The state should have no power to intervene in the free expression of religious liberty. (See Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29–31; Romans 13:1–4.)

Two ordinances—baptism and the Lord’s Table (also called communion). These ordinances have no part in salvation and only serve as pictures of what Christ did for us. (See Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; Acts 2:38–43, 8:36–38; Romans 6:1–6)

Separation and personal holiness. We believe that Christ’s ultimate sacrifice demands our complete consecration, and we desire that our daily living would reflect the holiness of our great God. (See 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Peter 1:16.)

Don’t let go of being a Baptist – Many are forsaking their Baptist heritage, and I believe by doing so they are forsaking the Lord.

B We are King James Bible Believers

I’m not just a Baptist – I’m a King James Bible believing Baptist. I believe the King James Bible is both inerrant and infallible; both preserved and inspired. I believe the breath of God is preserved in this Book. I believe it is alive:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

We don’t need a new translation – we need to hold on to the one we have. Don’t let go of your King James Bible.

C We Believe in Both Ecclesiastical and Personal Separation

We don’t participate with other churches who don’t believe the same things that we believe.

We believe in Biblical modesty.

We believe in singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs - the Old Fashioned Hymnbook is just fine for us. We don’t need to bring in Christian Rock or Rap, or Christian Country music. God’s music is distinctive – it has lyrics that are sound doctrinally, and it doesn’t sound like anything that the world produces.

Illustrate – Tom Barnes left his evangelical church because the music reminded him of the bar he used to go to.

D We Believe in Confrontational Soulwinning

The progressive crowd is against any type of evangelism except lifestyle evangelism. We believe that people need to be confronted with their sin and their need for the Saviour; and they also need to be presented with a clear presentation of the gospel.

These are just some of the things that make who we are unique in a sea of compromise and confusion.

Conclusion

Hold fast – hold on tight to what has been given you – don't let go

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:5 –

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I want to hear the Lord say “well done”

I want to be able to say’ “I have finished my course.”

I don't want to throw away all o

Paul told Timothy, *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 3:1)*

Illustrate – A missionary society wrote to David Livingstone and asked, “Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you.” Livingstone wrote back, “ If you have men who will come only if there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all.”

Illustrate – Adoniram Judson sweated out Burma's heat for 18 years without a furlough, six years without a convert. Enduring torture and imprisonment, he admitted that he never saw a ship sail without wanting to jump on board and go home. When his wife's health broke and he put her on a homebound vessel in the knowledge he would not see her again for two full years, he confided to his diary, “If we could find some quiet resting place on earth where we could spend the rest of our days in peace...” But he steadied himself with this remarkable postscript, “Life is short. Millions of Burmese are perishing. I am almost the only person on earth who has attained their language to communicate salvation.”

Don't let **persecution** or trials cause you to let go of what the Lord has committed to your trust.

Don't let **prosperity** or triumphs cause you to lay back and "take thine ease". Stay at it until the Lord calls you home. Illustrate – A lot of the students called to Bible College found good jobs and never left Longview.

Conclusion

Illustrate – Todd Painter, Albert O, Willy R, Eric R

Don't let go of the things that God has committed to your trust. Hold fast; keep going; continue serving the Lord with more fervency each day. This is the beginning of greater days to come - **if you will hold fast to:**

Your devotion to the Lord

Your desire to humbly serve the Lord and the Lord's people

Your dedication or commitment to the work

The Bible Doctrines and Baptist Distinctives that we hold dear.