

“HOW A PASTOR GETS IT DONE”

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Installation of Pastor James Petersen
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This is a momentous occasion to mark the inauguration of Pastor James Peterson’s ministry as the Senior Pastor. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 is probably, and appropriately, the most frequently cited text for such an occasion.

¹*“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:*

²*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction.*

³*For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.*

⁴*They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

⁵*But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”.*

This section of the Apostle Paul’s letter follows immediately upon this reminder to Timothy at the end of chapter 3:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (3:12-14)

Then Paul gives that statement that every Christian would do well to memorize:

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’ (3:15-16)

What does this say to us? It tells us unequivocally that the shepherd-leader, the pastor that Christ calls to his church, is above all a man of the Word. His life and ministry revolve around Scripture.

It is unlikely that I will say much that is new to Pastor James.

What I will say should have a greater impact on the church family, the flock of God to which our Lord has sent James to be the shepherd, the pastor.

- This portion of God’s holy word is as much about **how** a pastor fulfills his ministry as it is about what he does. I want to focus on the “how.”

I. WITH PASSIONATE DEVOTION. 2 Timothy 4:1-2a

¹*“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:*

²*Preach the Word;*

This was not a casual suggestion to Timothy.

In my imagination I see the apostle Paul grabbing his former apprentice Timothy by the scruff of the neck and marching him into the holy of holies.

There in the presence of God, Paul says, “Timothy, nothing is more important than what I have to say to you right now. I give you this charge in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the judge of the living and the dead and who is coming again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Preach the Word! Pastor Timothy, be passionately devoted to it. Some people may try to get you passionately committed to their favorite cause. So watch out.”

At the last church I served as Senior Pastor for 15 years several groups tried to get me to champion their causes of political or social activism.

I told them courteously, but forthrightly that I could not do what they wanted. My primary role had been set forth clearly from the start. It was to preach the word—to be a pastor-teacher. They soon left the church.

Their causes were worthy, but they were not mine.

- In the game of baseball the field of play is clearly defined by foul lines and foul poles. All the territory between those foul lines is fair.

Using this analogy, God’s Word makes it clear what the field is for the pastor of the church, and where the foul lines are, beyond which the pastor is in foul territory.

But sometimes some people, whether well-intentioned or otherwise, would like to redefine the playing field for the pastor. If the pastor doesn't hit a ball in their field of play, it's foul. As your interim pastor for 16 months I must say this—and I believe you will agree with me—Pastor James and the Church Board, and the Search Team and the majority of this church know what the playing field is where Pastor James expects to hit the ball, and so to discharge all the duties of his ministry. Please respect that, and affirm it, and support it. Pastor James's ministry never moves away from the Word of God, as he explains it and applies it to you in a myriad of contexts.

II. WITH PATIENT INSTRUCTION. 2 Timothy 4:2b-4

Pastoral ministry is serious work.

² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction.

³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

The twelve apostles had to decide what was most important for the burgeoning church in Jerusalem (Acts 6).

The administrative demands of a growing church were urgent and clamored for their attention.

But they determined that they would not neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to get wrapped up in keeping the organizational machinery of the church running smoothly.

They would devote themselves to caring for the church as a living spiritual organism, the body of Christ. Others could manage the urgent matters of the church organization.

In First Church in Jerusalem we read that the apostles gathered all the disciples, all Christ's followers, together, and told them that the priority was the word of God.

So to Crossroads I say once more, on behalf of Pastor James on this his inauguration as your pastor, ***“The main thing is the ministry of the word of God. This is the right thing.”***

- This ministry of the Word is not always smooth. Sometimes the pastor has to correct, rebuke, as well as to encourage.

James I'm sure I can say that what has often happened to me has also happened to you. After teaching and preaching God's word in which you may be compelled to give strong warnings, someone comes to you and asks, “How did you know about me? That's what I was dealing with. It was just for me!”

The Word of God is sharp. It penetrates deep into people's lives (Hebrews 4:12).

Most often, the preaching and teaching of God's word encourages people. If they have confessed their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior with complete sincerity, all their sins are forgiven.

Your teaching of God's truth is vital. It's called doctrine here in verse 3.

Paul warned Timothy that sooner or later people some people would turn away from the teaching of sound doctrine and follow teachers that tickle their fancy.

There are plenty of preachers whose messages are entertaining and perhaps captivating, but worthless in terms of eternal value.

A pastor must be patient, but persevere with careful teaching.

III. WITH POISED COMPULSION. 2 Timothy 4:5

A compulsion is a strong, almost irresistible impulse to do something. It's a powerful drive that can get out of control.

But a poised compulsion is a composed, steady, powerful drive.

That, I believe, is what Paul called for in Timothy: “Timothy, let your pastoral ministry be marked by a cool determination.”

⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”.

James, in your experience as a pastor you have endured hardships. You know what it means to deal with resistance to your ministry, and to persevere in the strength of the Spirit and with the grace of God.

I've had to learn to stand firm and steadfast, without bending to pressure to look the other way and ignore wicked attitudes and speech and actions that can corrupt a church.

- There's one more significant encouragement here: “do the work of an evangelist.”

There's no indication that Timothy had the spiritual gift of an evangelist. But it was part of his role. God's word here says to pastors, "Make certain that people hear and understand the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor, never neglect the gospel in your ministry."

As the lead/senior pastor of a healthy, growing church, Pastor James will try to keep an eye on all that goes on at Crossroads, and his hand in a lot of it too. But I appeal to you as the church family, please support and encourage him as he focuses on the essentials:

Rom. 1:16 The gospel . . . is the power (dunamis) of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Acts 1:8 Our Lord said to his disciples, You will receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses . . .

Matt. 28:18-19 Again, our Lord said, just before his ascension, All authority (exousia) in heaven and on earth has been given to me, therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . .

Philip. 2:12-13 ' . . . continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works (energein) in you to will and do what pleases him.'

These are the essentials: The Power of the Gospel, the Word of God, the power of the Holy Spirit who is with us and us, the authority of Jesus Christ to take the good news to everyone, and the assurance that God is at work among us.

Pastor James, as you discharge the duties of your ministry here, the people of Crossroads will be looking for God's fresh fingerprints everywhere.