

Sermon Title: The Attributes of a Faithful Servant Part I

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to practice the attributes of a faithful servant leader.

Sermon Proposition: There are 5 essential attributes of a faithful servant leader.

I. The 1st attribute of a faithful servant leader is **strength**. V.1

The phrase be strong is a passive present in the Greek. It would be translated “keep on being empowered, keep on being empowered.” In other words, allow God’s power to flow through you. Put yourself in a position to be empowered. You and I can never achieve that position of empowerment without obedience. The sphere of obedience is mandatory. When we apply and practice the means of grace in our life, we put ourselves in the sphere of obedience, we will and do receive the love and know the power of God in our lives. Paul is saying to Timothy and all believers, you must be strong, or you must allow yourself to be continually being empowered through the grace that is available to you because of your union with Christ. And that is made a reality as we are obedient.

II. The 2nd attribute of a faithful servant leader is **teaching**. V.2

I taught you, you teach them, they’ll teach others. Timothy you are a teacher, spiritual leadership starts at this point. Teaching is the first and foremost priority in spiritual leadership, that is the imparting of truth, divine truth, to others. (*Hebrews 13:7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*) We who are spiritual leaders lead by giving people the Word of God. We are called to be teachers and preachers of God’s divine truth and to produce teachers and preachers for the next generation.

That divine truth of sound words, sound doctrine, the Scriptures must be studied, prayed over, understood, and transmitted.

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Colossians 1:28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. **29** To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

It is the Word of God taught, applied to the heart that brings about the maturing of God’s people.

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

Paul provides 3 essential attributes of a spiritual leader who teaches.

- A. The teacher must be a diligent student of the biblical text and able to articulate its teachings.
- B. The teacher must be loyal and faithful to that message in their own life.
- C. The teacher must be actively involved in equipping others so that they also can teach others.

III. The 3rd attribute of a faithful servant leader is **allegiance**. V.3-4

The scriptures sees the leader and all Christians as people engaged in war. (**2 Cor. 10:4-5**)

1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

They are engaged in a war with the whole demonic host, with all of their false ideologies and foolish speculations. We are engaged in a serious war, and war means suffering, pain, difficulty. The phrase in verse 3 “Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

The verb literally means “to suffer bad treatment, mistreatment, be ready to take your share of rough treatment. Spiritual leadership in the church is a warfare, it is not for those who seek ease, it is for those who are willing to be soldiers. Being a soldier is being a leader and being a spiritual leader involves self-sacrifice, endurance, vigilance, obedience, and loyalty.

- A. The spiritual leader must hear God’s call to join the battle and war. V.3a
- B. The spiritual leader is willing to accept suffering. V.3b
- C. The spiritual leader is willing to separate himself from normal daily activities. V.4

In other words, he stops being a civilian and becomes a soldier. The recruit in today’s military is given a brief time to get his affairs in order, he gets rid of all of his normal commitments and is only a soldier. He frees himself up from everything to devote all his time, all his energy, all his effort, all his thought, all his skill to being a soldier. (“For me to live is Christ”) (*Philippians 1:21* *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*)

G.R. Watson notes,

“Theoretically, an army may be more efficient if its members are celibate and wedded only to the idea of discipline. There is then no heart-searching when a unit is suddenly posted from one end of the empire to another, there is no attached civilian population to defend and to take into account in the siting and construction of camps and forts, and the soldier’s only ties are to the army in which he serves.”

- D. The spiritual leader is totally concerned with gaining his commander’s approval.

IV. The 4th attribute of a faithful servant leader is **self-discipline**. V.5

The Greek work for athlete is *athleo*, it means to strive, it means to agonize, it means to compete. It is a word that communicates devotion, discipline, and passion. You cannot approach ministry lethargically or in a half-hearted way. You can’t approach it as a part-time deal, as a come as you go, give and take, it takes giving everything. That’s how you win, that’s how you finish well!

The competing for the prize is key. The ability to focus on a goal with such devotion and single-mindedness, that completely controls everything you do, in order to achieve God’s end.

Verse 5 makes it clear there is a way to compete, according to the rules or you can’t win, or you could be disqualified. Please understand that self-discipline is mandatory in preparation and training, but it is also mandatory in running the race. You must compete (nomimos) lawfully, mere effort is not enough. It must be effort within God’s rules.

1 Corinthians 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

The athlete operates on self-discipline, self-control, and self-denial.

- A. The spiritual leader must be one who is willing to compete with all his strength.
- B. The spiritual leader must compete to win.
- C. The spiritual leader must compete according to the rules.
- D. The spiritual leader must be motivated by future rewards, and not present pleasure.
- E. The spiritual leader must be one with strong self-discipline.

V. The 5th attribute of a faithful servant leader is **steadfastness**. V.6

- A. The spiritual leader must be willing to work hard. Hard working is from the Greek word (*kopiao*), it means to work to the point of exhaustion and weariness, doing unglorious hard work.
- B. The spiritual leader must be nurturing his own soul in the Word of God.
- C. The spiritual leader must be patient for the results in the lives of other people.

Conclusion: A checklist used to evaluate whether you are a candidate for spiritual servant leadership:

1. Am I a diligent student of the biblical message and am I able to communicate its teachings and message?
2. Am I loyal and faithful to that message in my life?
3. Am I actively involved in the training and equipping of additional teachers?
4. Have I heard the Lord’s call and am I willing to join in the battle no matter what the cost?
5. Am I willing to suffer the hardships involved?
6. Have I separated from the world and its activities so that I have a single-minded commitment?
7. Am I strongly self-disciplined, willing and able to conform my life to God’s standards without letting up all the way to the end?
8. Do I desire above all to win His approval and rewards?