

11/26/23 - 1 Tim. 6:2b-21 - "Guarding Against Derailment"

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[0 : 00] Today, we're going to be reading 1 Timothy 6, 2b-21. Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.

He has an unhealthy craving for the controversy and for quarrels about words which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.

[1 : 15] Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasures for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

[2 : 34] O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. For, by professing it, some have swerved from the faith.

Grace be with you. This is God's word. Thanks be to God. I've got to start out with a question today of, how do you know if the course of your life is on track or derailed?

How do you know if the course of your life is on track or derailed? Obviously, for some, it only takes the foreclosure of a home, find out something's a little bit off, a divorce, maybe entering into a rehab program for an addiction to a substance, maybe even jail time, to realize that things might be off track, because it's obvious in those situations.

But for people who aren't in those situations, that are simply just living life, trying to live life faithfully to God, how do you know that your life is on the right track or even derailed?

Are you on the path of godliness, or are you on the path of worldliness? Godliness. Not long ago, the Norfolk Southern train derailed in Columbiana County, which was a huge shock, an unexpected occurrence in Columbiana County.

[4 : 18] They would have never expected it that day. And it's funny, because if you imagine the engineer getting in the train that morning, going on his route, it's just another day, right?

He would have never anticipated something like that. Just says goodbye to his family, goes on to work, they load the train up, and off he goes, right? But unexpected to that engineer, the train would actually shift course off the track, spilling toxic waste to contaminate the ground, the water source.

And so many people were affected by that occurrence in Columbiana County, and they're still affected, even farmers today, because people don't want to buy their stuff because they think that it's toxic.

It's a big issue. There's even pastors who are suffering that I know of in Columbiana County with health issues that they'd never had before, but mysteriously are now appearing after such a derailment.

The effect of that derailment was huge. It was massive to all involved, not just the engineer, not just Norfolk Southern, not just residents, everyone involved.

[5 : 39] It's similar to the derailments that we can experience in our lives if we're not careful as Christians. Similarly, we can just get ready to go to church.

We can do all the good things. We can pray. We can fast. We can do all the checklists within the Christian life, and we'll have no idea if we're on the verge of derailment or not.

So that's the question. How do you know that the course of your life is on track or headache for derailment, or could it possibly you are completely derailed at the very moment?

Well, over the last 12 plus weeks, we have looked quite closely at various constructs that God inspired through Paul to encourage Timothy to build a church in Ephesus.

It's a church according to God's design. It's His church. And we've got to ask why. Why all these blueprints of how to do it?

[6 : 50] Well, the emerging effect of this design serves as a pillar and a buttress of the truth. Why?

For all the world to see, the whole world to see truth. It's important. I could imagine Timothy probably wished Paul's letter would never end.

You know, you're getting to the end of a really encouraging email or something like that. And you know it's coming. You just want it to keep going. I could imagine Timothy in that situation right now holding that letter.

Timothy needed something to hold, to guide in the years ahead in this ministry in Ephesus. He needed something to remind him.

And the Holy Spirit seems to have known that best for Timothy. And precisely why Paul was inspired to give the following closing remarks which was read by Bethany this morning.

[7 : 53] We as a culture value closing remarks. It can often win a political debate or any debate for that matter. It can often create a judgment in a court case.

It can sway a final verdict with the judge in court. And so too, Paul's closing remarks has that resonating power to guide and determine Timothy's life, but also that church's life.

How do they know if they're on track or not? And he gives these closing remarks. In this passage today, we're going to see how Paul reinforces the persevering nature of a godly life that is on track.

And this happens in two ways. That godly Christians are content in God's provisions and they are committed to God's plans.

Godly Christians, as this passage entails, are content in God's provisions and committed to God's plans. And so we're going to unfold that point in two tests to expose the fleeing and the pursuing nature of a godly life.

[9 : 08] And it will ultimately challenge us to evaluate both the course of our lives and the condition of our hearts this morning. How do I know it's going to challenge us?

Because it challenged me all week long, arguably two weeks, because I took last week off because I couldn't talk. Thank you, Rick, for holding the pulpit down.

I'll just use that as a plug of appreciation. But we're going to reflect on that question. Are we on track? And this passage will inform the answer. Let's pray as we turn to God's word as our guide.

And I'm going to borrow from the book of Common Prayer. And please join me in prayer. Blessed Lord, you have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning.

Grant us, Lord, that we may in such a way hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them.

[10 : 12] that by patience and comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which you have given us in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let us see Jesus Christ this morning. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So again, I'm going to unpack that point in two tests and the first test.

Oh boy, I'm getting out of order. I've got to give you a sermon title. Oh dear, it's only been two weeks and I've forgotten how to do my job. Here's the sermon title.

Guarding Against Derailment. And let's dive into those two tests that revolve around that main point, that prove that main point.

And the first test is are we discontent? Don't you guys love how Paul takes his gloves off sometimes and he just makes it hurt.

[11 : 24] He makes you feel the blow. Paul takes the gloves off per se as he develops any person who finds himself straying off the path of godliness.

Who are wandering off the track thinking that they're on track. And the cry from their heart, these people's hearts that are off track is centered around personal opinions.

It's the cry of the depraved in mind as Paul says it or those who are deprived of the truth. These are ignorant and arrogant people.

And we have to ask, why would anyone teach a different doctrine that disagrees with Jesus Christ and teachings that accords with godliness?

Why would anyone deviate? well, a Sunday school answer might say, well, sin. Yes, but it goes deeper than that.

[12 : 32] Paul gets to the heart of it in verse six and seven which says, but godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. In other words, who do you think you are to ever not be satisfied with that which you have in life?

And this namely being opinions. He gets to the heart condition. The heart condition that strays us off the path is discontentment.

Discontentment. You see, contentment makes all the difference from pursuing a path for your namesake or Christ's namesake. And the first problem occurring in these eight verses is that godliness was a means of gain.

People were doing for the sake of doing. It was a means of gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain, Paul says.

[13 : 41] He's reinforcing something for us here. And he gives three noticeable forms that we'll unpack. And the first one of them being that this discontentment spreads into our belief system in what we know, what we hold to being true.

And now remember why this all matters because the church is to be a pillar and buttress of the truth. And if you got a bunch of people that are discontent in any sort of truth or belief or doctrine, what's that going to attest to the watching world?

You're going to be just as screwed up as you might watch CNN or Fox News, whichever your poison is, right? Considering the context of the book, Paul urged Timothy to silence false doctrine, those who are discontent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Silence them in chapter one, which we learn a little bit more insight in chapter four, remember, what the issue was, what the doctrinal error was, that these people in the church who are going off the track have found themselves making non-essentials essentials in the faith.

They were dying on the wrong hills. And here it's certain that an error like that finds itself discontent with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the truth of the gospel, and may I say, the simplicity of the gospel, that my kids, before the age of ten, could understand and be gifted the gift of salvation.

[15 : 31] have you ever thought that the gospel seems suspiciously simple? Right?

My kids will ask, Dad, how can I be saved from my sin? We're reading Pilgrim's Progress or some book like that that talks about a burden on them.

And having conversations before bed, how can I be saved? And all I have to tell them is repent and believe. That's it.

See, the godly life will rest content in sound doctrine, that sound doctrine, of that simplicity, never requiring more of that message or negating from that and taking away from that message.

Or else we find ourselves discontent with sound doctrine. Discontent of the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says in this passage in verse 3 and 4.

[16 : 40] The gospel. But not only that, as you continue and look into verse 4, you see that this breeds relational strife too. And I would imagine insistent arguing in Paul's day in Ephesus.

Paul's walking into that church like, oh boy, these people have really made some different truths than what Paul's been teaching me.

What is all this about food and marriage? You see lambskin thrown across the church, people disagreeing, arguing about controversies of what you should eat, who should be married.

All of these non-essentials have been replacing essentials in the gospel. What happens? Relational strife. You see that at churches all around.

Some of you might be actually exiting churches that were previously in that type of strife. And you've found yourselves here. Well, the remedy of such relational strife and debates is to embrace the profound clarity of the essentials of the faith and wisdom to know the difference of what he'll to die on.

[18 : 03] Lest we complicate the words of our Lord Jesus Christ straight to a different doctrine who instructs us to simply that God saves us and if it's a matter that we're debating of if Paul's day is marriage and food we have our debates today of baptism and soteriological debates of how God saves.

Well, guess what? We know this to be true. God saves and he commands his church after coming to faith to be baptized. End of story. All right?

That's embracing essentials and allowing non-essentials to have a good conversation over coffee once in a while. But not only that, relational strife is bred from this discontentment but discontentment also finds itself in financial affairs.

That shouldn't be a surprise to us, right? I mean, I'm human. It never seems like I have enough money. It never seems like that.

It seems like I'm always like, well, if I could only have this and then that money goes that place and there's always this pattern within humanity of discontentment in finances. And so, it challenges my sinfulness to trust in what God has given and steward those finances responsibly.

[19 : 29] And so, it doesn't matter how much you have. It's never enough, right? Financial discontentment. We all deal with it. Be honest. And this applies to the full spectrum.

You could be rich, all the money in the world like Elon Musk building rocket ships and you still feel like you don't have enough. Or you can be poor and you can still feel like you don't have enough.

It applies to the whole spectrum. You see, the remedy of financial tensions bred from discontentment is an understanding and a faithful acceptance that all we have been given or taken was from the hand of God alone because all that we have is from God.

Godliness without contentment is great loss. Using a play on words in Paul's emphasis in verse 6. Godliness without contentment is great loss.

And subtly, personal opinions arrogantly inquire of God, right? As godliness becomes all about us, all about what we want, well, the gospel seems too simple, so I'm going to make it a little bit more robust to prove to my friends that it's an intellectual thing, right?

[20 : 54] Even though my 10-year-old can be saved in his bed at night one time by understanding the gospel. Or discontent in essentials and non-essentials that you just don't understand how people could believe the gospel and not be a Calvinist, right?

Or even financial. How God can give you this and not give you something else that you want and that you want to steward your finances, right?

From foolish doctrine we define as essentials to hoarding our finances when others are in need, everything. God's word confronts our discontentment from whatever angle you want to have it.

Stripping our pride, stripping our agendas and returning us to nothing but faith alone in him. God is calling his church to be on track, be godly Christians who are content in his provisions.

This stretches through the span of biblical theology. This is what God has been teaching his people since Adam and Eve. It took shape for Adam and Eve who came into the world with nothing and they left with nothing.

[22 : 08] As Genesis says, for you are dust and to dust you shall return. Who do you think you are? It took shape in Job's life, in his wealthy estate.

He says, naked from my mother's womb I have come and naked shall I return. And even Jesus Christ, his own teachings on this earth.

He says, God provides for the birds and clothes the lilies. How much more shall God's children be provided for?

You may ask, how am I doing? Am I on the right track? But it's really a question that the Holy Spirit is asking our hearts, my hearts included, are we remaining content in all things, whether it being doctrinal in our minds or with our hands, with our finances?

We can set our opinions aside in the matter. God challenges us. I told you we're in for a challenge today. You see, one of the most vivid marks of a true follower of Jesus Christ is abandoning any need except that which we have received in Jesus Christ, our need for forgiveness of sin.

[23 : 36] That is our ultimate need. And church, how do we know that we're on track? We have to look at our lives and say, is our life saturated in the sound words of Jesus Christ, which point to our contentment in godliness?

kindness. The call to die to self, die to your opinions, die to what you think is knowledge, die to what your financial advisor, who seems to be a guy who knows how to get you to get more money, forgetting his advice and taking God's advice in what your future should be planned out to be.

the banner over our relationships, whether single, married, widowed, or anything in between, divorced, the banner over our endeavors, whether it's Bible reading, fasting, or prayer, the banner over vocations, whether you're the CEO of the company, or you're the janitor scrubbing toilets, the banner over goals and desires in this life, whether financial or career, every banner in our life has to be all glory be to God.

Everything is glory to God alone. Maybe you just said amen, and I want to challenge that amen, because you want to get real?

If you say amen to all of those banners that are over your life, that are encapsulating your life, and that are saturating your life that you think that you have, if you were on the path of the greatest goal that you think that God is blessing you and doing, whether it's career, financially, or maybe just this level of knowledge and doctrine, if God were to take everything from you, just as you're approaching that finish line that you might define as a finish line, if He took everything from you right as you're crossing that line, would your heart's song be, it is well with my soul, or it was a waste of time?

[25 : 58] You see, godliness with contentment is great gain. Amen? It is possible to impress others with our godliness, stuff we know, the arguments we can debate, finances, how much we give, this or that, but it is absolutely impossible to impress God with our godliness without contentment.

He sees the hearts. And so, some of us may need a call to action just as I was this week or the past week of repenting of our sin of discontentment because God's word challenges us in this regard today.

And flee, as Paul says, right? He says, flee these things, O man of God. One of the highest addresses to Timothy that Paul ever gives, arguably, I would say.

I charge you in the presence of God. As for you, O man of God, flee these things. There's a second test though. He continues to make it burn.

And so, it's going to burn today. The second test is, does God's agenda rule our lives? And Paul's logical flow is true that when God's people are content, God's agenda will reign supreme over our plans.

[27 : 34] When God's people are content, God's agenda will reign supreme over our plans. Water on their bridge. God is God. We are not. Whether we have plenty or little.

In other words, it reshapes our commitment and our priorities as we inquire, am I on the right track? And so, Paul revisits some military terms here. You know Paul with his military terms.

He loves those military terms. He loves those competition terms, the military terms. And it is applied to a Christian's pursuit in sanctification.

He says, fight the good fight of faith. I imagine that this would turn the arguments that are going on in Ephesus completely on their head.

These people are fighting over essentials and non-essentials. They're forgetting the gospel of Jesus Christ. They're worried about money. I mean, this is a hot mess.

[28 : 36] This is a dumpster fire. This is a church that I wouldn't be a part of. Right? I don't want anything to do with that. Like, if you're going to fight, fight God's way. Fight the good fight of faith.

And this turns us to God's agenda over ours. From my observation, I don't want to be extra tough on the church or any specific church.

I don't think that it's my place to do that right now. But from my observation in the church on this side of the world, of the country, the western world, there seems to be two powerful dynamics.

You've got churches that are either entitled or apathetic. It's kind of, okay. Right? You're either entitled or apathetic.

Entitled in the sense that this becomes all about entertainment. It's so funny how I think the Holy Spirit did inspire Carmen to say something about entertainment.

[29 : 45] I was just like, oh, I'm going to mention something about that today. That entitled that this becomes something that we can dictate what we do and how much level of entertainment that we receive.

Like, you are the consumers and I'm the provider. I'm the spiritual care provider. I'm not covered by your insurance though, but I'm your spiritual care provider and you are consumers. Right?

And this is largely a part of Western churches in our day. We're entitled to do whatever we want, but also we're apathetic. There's churches that just have no mission.

They have no vision. It's like they're void of life. Clinging to tradition and what worked back in the 70s. And we're forgetting that God is always doing something different from culture to culture, decade to decade.

Same gospel, different tactics. You see, there's no urgency to fight. Paul says to fight the good fight of faith. But in our world, we sit in our comfy chairs, in a building, in a ministry full of programs that we think suit our needs.

[31 : 03] And the moment that just something doesn't meet our expectations, we just go try the other spiritual care provider during open enrollment season.

Right? I don't know what that's supposed to mean, but I don't know if there is an open enrollment for churches, but I haven't been aware of that. But ma'am, we've mistaken contentment with complacency.

Maybe we've been content for so long that we've found ourselves on the opposite side of where we need to be with complacency. Maybe that's someone here today. Well, you see, God's agenda for all time is a military fight for the faith.

That's His agenda. And it's a pursuit, He says in verse 11. You see that? Pursue. It says, flee those things, but pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Pursue. I don't know about you, but it doesn't take too many war movies to see what that war scene looks like of pursuing something.

[32 : 25] He is saying, charge, make war for the faith. It's not about your entertainment. It's not about tradition.

It's about God's agenda to rule our lives and to guide us. notice in the logical writing style, it's not just about the church and God's people retreating from something.

It's actually pursuing to someone or something. That a retreat, sometimes people flee for safety and don't think that God wants you to be safe.

Right? Ask some people in China what that means. It's not just that God wants you to live in a comfy, cozy Christian life. life with this constitution protecting all your rights from anything.

You're not just fleeing from this. You're pursuing the right thing. You're not wasting your time in that fight. You're fighting this fight, pillar and buttress of the truth.

[33 : 34] Right? As we ponder the question, are we on the right track? Much of that answer has to do with our willingness to fight the good fight of faith.

And now, not only is it a pursuit of training, remember we talked about hitting the gym. If you missed that sermon, sorry, you're going to think I'm nuts, but I titled a sermon, It's Time to Hit the Gym for the Sake of Retention.

But training ourselves for godliness is a very viable pursuit of a Christian life, but it's also the constant pursuit of Christ-like attributes.

It's the quality of our pursuit as we read them, of our pursuits of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness, like the fruit of the Spirit to 1 Timothy chapter 6 that we see in Galatians 5.

In other words, our godliness has a standard. Our godliness has a quality to it. It has a trajectory of what we focus our mind on and our hearts on.

[34 : 43] Now, I don't know what can coerce entitled and apathetic Christians to jump to action, but Paul certainly did through the Holy Spirit's inspiration. What does he tell them to do?

We cannot forget the ruling power, the overwhelming power that our testimony in our profession has when we reflect on the moment we gave our life to Jesus Christ, where we said, God, I give you everything.

And it's like the ghost of Christmas past will take you to that moment at the altar with your arms open wide where you are at the end of yourself and you say, God, take everything from me.

All I want is you. Paul says, get back to that in verse 12. He says, fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life in which you were called and about which you made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

[35 : 50] God saying, I saw you, the angels saw you, the church saw you, everyone saw you. Get back to that time in order to fight the good fight.

Remember the moment you gave your will to God and then you get back to the why. Why and how you can endure the fight.

How you can pursue, how you can flee from something, not fleeing to safety, how you can live radically against the culture regardless of the culture says what to do.

You do what God's word tells you to do at all times. And personally, ministry can be discouraging at times. I know I'm not, it's not a public service announcement, it's not a plea for sympathy at all or anything, but it's a reality that even I struggle to stick in that fight because life sucks sometimes.

Things get tough, right? But God seems to always bring me back to the reason I started in the first place. Because the profession at the moment where I gave my life to Jesus Christ brought me here.

[37 : 12] And when I think about the energy that it's going to take to endure this fight, I go back to that confession, to that profession.

You see, it's that powerful sense of testimony that roots us in our purpose. And in that God rules our agenda, our plans, our expectations, because we go to where we made that profession.

Not your will, not my will, but yours be done, what Jesus said. Jesus was the model. It's interesting, this anticipatory language that Paul uses from verse 12 to verse 14.

He's saying, hold, reach out to something. Keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

He's saying, turn to Jesus. He says, take hold of eternal life. Keep the commandments. All this anticipatory language is consummated in this rich doxology that turns us into praise, just utter praise.

[38 : 22] Do you hear the choir singing? He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in an unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. Do you hear the choir, the robust choir singing that praise in our fight?

This is big thinking. And so maybe the problem of Western church, as entitled or apathetic, is that they're actually thinking of God too small.

Limited to our entertainment or our tradition. Well, Paul gives the exemplary testimony. Jesus Christ, our endurance in the fight is intricately related to the gospel where Jesus Christ laid down his life before Pontius Pilate as Jesus Christ surrendered his will to the Father.

And what was the result of that surrender? Glory. Glory in his resurrection. Glory in his ascension.

[39 : 42] And the same glory exists for the godly Christian who remains on track. Fighting the good fight of faith is a worshipful pursuit.

And here we surrender complacency and replace it with contentment. It's no wonder that Paul transitions then to those who are rich in verse 17.

The ones who have the greatest propensity to lord over their financial affairs, to dictate where every penny goes. Never once trusting in God, in God's agenda, directly has to do with that.

Those who trust in their money more than God. We have to appreciate Paul's play on words in verse 18 as he turns his emphasis upon laying down all to God.

And what's the result? Verse 18, and be rich in good works. In other words, surrender all, your agenda, your finances, and serve.

[40 : 47] In other words, be more concerned about counting how much of your estate is going out. Count that. That's more countable than what's coming in that we can often idolize.

Remember your calling. Forget your riches because they will not last. From dust we came to dust we shall return.

Now, it's not saying that there's any indication that being rich is some sort of some bad juju. It's a sin to be rich or have money. It's not any case. God honors those.

And actually, if you go back to the logic of Spider-Man, where much is given, much is required. You know, with great power comes great responsibility. And often that responsibility can become discontent and you can be Lord over that agenda.

And so, for us sitting here today, we may ask how we're doing. Are we on track? And Paul might simply just point you to your bank accounts.

[41 : 57] Are you generous? Are you ready to share? Are you more committed to God's agenda in your life or your financial advisors plan for your life? Or God's? Fight well.

Lay it all down. Surrender all. Now, this might be a good time to take up a special offering to offset some of our debts in the church. And we will not do that. That's not what we're about.

But maybe this might be a better time for an altar call. As God is inventorying our hearts, as He's checking our lives, as He's saying, how are you doing?

And maybe you're here today realizing that you have been laying your finances down. You've been writing that check faithfully, all the while withholding God yourself from Him.

Putting all this other stuff at the foot of the cross, and God is calling you to surrender all your whole life. Fight the good fight. Repent and believe.

[43 : 04] The promise of the gospel is that if you do repent of your sin and believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, you become rich beyond all measure.

Eternal life. An inheritance that's laying ahead for you. You think you have in this life?

This is dust. This is a vapor. Be rich today.

Be free from the penalty of sin. And simply believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Every one of us, myself included. Believe that and live that.

And so as we close, I know I went a little bit longer, but I missed a week, so we'll just add some time, carry over the time today. But as Timothy is reaching the final lines, you can imagine him getting to that signature at the bottom of the letter.

[44 : 08] I don't know if that's how manuscripts happened back then, but I would imagine something like that. And as we reach the end of our series in 1 Timothy, we experience the similar heart challenges that come along with God sanctifying in our lives, sanctifying power, His closing remarks.

The things that resonate in our lives when you leave this building. During the week when this building is all cold, you guys are at your homes, locations, with your families.

Remember, unbeknownst to Timothy, think about realistic time here. Timothy didn't know that it would be four years until he'd hear from Paul again.

This letter, these six chapters that our translators have created, six chapters, this would hold him for four years.

This would guide him until he got the next letter, 2 Timothy. And for that, we should pay attention to those closing remarks in our lives. You might ask, am I on the right track?

[45 : 21] Or am I headed for disaster? Well, remember, the Norfolk Southern derailment. It's an ordinary day. They never thought that anything like that would happen.

Don't be surprised at this point. If you find yourself at a certain point, off track, and the Lord makes it known, my call as a shepherd, a pastor, is to put us all on those tracks.

On tracks as godly Christians and to encourage that among all of us in our lives. To be content with God's provisions and committed to God's plans.

There's two final humbling remarks and encouragements that he says to Timothy. To guard the deposit entrusted to you. Isn't that wonderful just financial language?

You didn't earn it, Timothy. It's been given to you. Guard that. Steward that well. Steel Valley, steward that deposit well. In your life.

[46 : 30] Your calling. And he also says, avoid, in verse 20, avoid irreverent babble. I love that word, babble. Irreverent.

Avoid contradictions of knowledge. And some have swerved from the faith. Steel Valley Church. Not you. Not us.

May we not swerve and stay on track. He's not just talking to Timothy here. Don't think that he's just talking like bro talk with Timothy.

No. He ends, grace be with you all. This is a plural address to the entire church body in Ephesus, transcendent through all time, and it reaches its application and emphasis here today.

Paul is saying, grace be with you all. So how do we know we're on the right track? If you're content in God's provision, committed to God's plans.

[47 : 37] This is the track and course of every Christian. And may it be our pursuit in our day and age where truth is so desperately needed in this world.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Amen.