

Week 2 Sermon Series: Gifted Together- Unleashing Heaven's Team

September 27, 2025

Opening Monologue

Welcome, New App Downloaders, to Almont Vineyard Church, and welcome to Week 2 of our series: Gifted Together – Unleashing Heaven’s Team. If you missed Week 1, I encourage you to listen to it! Last week, I highlighted the flaws in the American Church. Yet, we know Jesus established the Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18). However, the gates of hell can invade our churches—and, unfortunately, they already have in many ways. We must not fall prey to Satan’s bait that leads us away from Biblical Truths.

“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.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

This means God’s Word provides the answers to guide our lives. It clearly directs us, showing us what is right and wrong. And guess who’s catching the fire of God and His truths, looking past the hypocrisy in America (besides older Christians like me)? Our youth and young adults! I’ll share much more about this in this week’s sermon—stay tuned!

God wants to use our gifts and talents, but through the Biblical lens of truth, working together. The Apostle Paul says, “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.” (1 Corinthians 12:1-2). Paul wrote this to a very dysfunctional church. – More next week

Friends, the gifts in the church will not function properly if the church worships “mute idols.” “Have nothing to do with godless myths and

old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." (1 Timothy 4:7-10)

This Sunday, we will dive into God's Word to be refreshed and renewed. I encourage you to come and be a part of it. May the Lord's blessings be on you and your families!

In Christ,
Rev. Brad Standfest

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Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

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Key Sermon Texts

Matthew 16:18

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016%3A18&version=NIV>

2 Timothy 3:16

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Timothy%203%3A16&version=NIV>

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2012%3A1-3&version=NIV>

1 Timothy 4:7-10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20timothy%204%3A7-10&version=NIV>

Sermon Segment

The gates of hell cannot overpower God's Church. Jesus Himself declared in Matthew 16:18, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Yet, while the gates of hell cannot prevail, the enemy can and does attack the Church. We must stand firm against the devil's schemes, guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

There is a revival spreading across America, capturing the hearts of teens and young adults. They are hungry for sound doctrine and Biblical truth, looking past the hypocrisy in American culture and even within the Church. Our youth are rising up, eager to embrace God's Word and live out His truth!

We must rally behind our teenagers and young adults in our churches, standing on the unshakable foundation of God's Word. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, "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."

Let us not become complacent. Let us not let our guard down. We worship a living God, not mute idols that cannot speak! As 1 Timothy 4:7-10 reminds us, "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."

Let's stand together, rooted in God's Word, supporting this revival, and equipping the next generation to live boldly for Christ! (Sermon Reflection LBS)

Commentary on Main Scriptures

Scholarly and Theological Commentary on Matthew 16:18

Matthew 16:18 (1984 NIV) reads: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." This verse has long been a cornerstone for discussions on the church's enduring nature, often interpreted as a divine

assurance of its ultimate invincibility against the forces of death and evil. However, many scholars emphasize that this promise does not imply the church is impervious to attacks or internal erosion—rather, it calls for active vigilance against Satan’s schemes, as the church must “stand firm” in faith amid opposition. Below, I’ll draw from several respected commentaries and theological reflections that align with your request, highlighting the balance between the church’s unassailable foundation and the real threats it faces.

The Church’s Ultimate Triumph Over the Gates of Hades

The “gates of Hades” (or “hell” in some translations) is a Jewish idiom referring to the realm of the dead or the power of death itself, not necessarily a literal demonic fortress to be stormed. As theologian Kevin DeYoung explains, Jesus’ promise is a guarantee of eternal life for the church, ensuring it will not be “vanquished by death,” even as it endures fierce opposition: “With intense opposition and persecution, the early church was under attack from the gates of hell.” This echoes Ephesians 6:11-13, where believers are urged to “stand against the devil’s schemes” by putting on the full armor of God, underscoring that while the church will prevail in the end, it must resist actively to avoid being caught off guard.

Similarly, in a sermon by Ray Pritchard, the Greek term *katischyō* (“prevail” or “overcome”) conveys that the gates of hell may “fight the church but they will not win,” allowing for temporary setbacks or “skirmishes” where Satan scores apparent victories, such as through personal tragedies or divisions. He illustrates this with the sudden death of a promising pastor, which felt like “the strongest blow I have ever seen Satan take against the church,” yet the church emerged stronger through communal support and renewed commitment. This reinforces that Satan’s attacks—whether through death, persecution, or temptation—can wound the body of Christ, but they cannot destroy it, provided believers respond with vigilance and unity.

Acknowledging Satan’s Attacks and the Need for Guarded Hearts

Classic commentaries further nuance this by portraying the church as

resilient yet vulnerable if faith wanes. John Gill, in his 18th-century exposition, notes that “all the infernal principalities and powers, with all their united cunning and strength, will never be able to extirpate his Gospel, to destroy his interest, to demolish his church in general, or ruin any one particular soul that is built upon him.” Here, the emphasis is on Satan’s persistent “cunning and strength” as a real threat that demands a firm foundation in Christ, lest individual believers or local assemblies fall prey.

The Pulpit Commentary adds that “neither malignant spirits nor their allies, such as sin, persecution, heresy, shall be able to wreck the eternal building which Christ was founding,” explicitly naming Satanic influences like sin and heresy as ongoing assaults that the church must guard against through doctrinal purity and moral steadfastness. Likewise, the Expositor’s Greek Testament warns that the church’s strength is “not an absolute promise” but conditional on the “reign” of faith in Christ; when “the Christ spirit is weak the Church will be weak,” opening doors to Satanic infiltration via complacency or worldly compromise.

A more contemporary reflection from Light on the Rock Ministries frames the church (ekklesiā, meaning “called-out assembly”) as offensively advancing against hell’s gates, but it candidly admits the spiritual warfare’s intensity: “We are in a very, very real war. We need to put on the armor of God.” It cautions against “lukewarm and apathetic” attitudes, drawing from Revelation 3’s rebuke of the Laodicean church, to stress that while the gates won’t prevail, believers must repent and arm themselves to weather Satan’s targeted strikes.

Tying It Together: A Call to Vigilant Endurance

In synthesis, these sources affirm your point: God’s church, built on the rock of Christ’s confession (as Peter exemplified), is eternally secure and will not be overtaken by the powers of death or darkness. Yet, Satan remains a prowling adversary (1 Peter 5:8), launching attacks through deception, division, and despair that can erode local expressions of the church or individual faithfulness if we’re not on guard. As DeYoung concludes, our role is to “hold fast and resist,” trusting in Christ’s victory while stewarding the promise through

prayer, truth, and community (1)

The Life Application Study Bible (1984 NIV) provides the following commentary on Matthew 16:18 (“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”):

Text of the Note: “Jesus was not saying that the church would be built on Peter alone, but on the confession that Peter had just made—that Jesus is ‘the Christ, the Son of the living God’ (16:16). The rock is either Peter himself (whose name means ‘rock’), the truth of his confession, or the faith of those who confess Christ. The church will be built on this foundation and will stand forever. The ‘gates of Hades’—a phrase meaning the powers of death or the forces of evil—will not overcome it. The church, the community of believers, will endure because it is founded on the unshakable truth of Christ’s identity and will be sustained by his power. This promise does not mean the church will be free from attack or persecution, but that it will ultimately triumph through Christ.”

Key Points from the Commentary:

1. Foundation of the Church: The Life Application Study Bible emphasizes that the church is built on the truth of Jesus as the Messiah, not merely on Peter as an individual. This foundation ensures the church’s ultimate invincibility, as it is rooted in Christ’s divine authority and power.

2. Gates of Hades: The phrase “gates of Hades” is interpreted as the “powers of death” or “forces of evil,” which includes Satan’s influence. These forces cannot ultimately destroy the church, but the commentary explicitly acknowledges that the church is not immune to attacks or persecution.

3. Call to Endurance: The note implies a need for believers to rely on Christ’s power to withstand evil forces, suggesting an active stance of faith and vigilance to maintain the church’s strength and integrity.

Application to the Sermon Theme

- **God's Church Will Not Be Overtaken:** The commentary underscores that the church, built on the confession of Christ as the Son of God, "will stand forever" because of Christ's sustaining power. This aligns with your reference to Matthew 16:18 as a promise that the gates of hell cannot overpower God's church, ensuring its ultimate triumph.

- **Satan Can Attack the Church:** By noting that the church is not "free from attack or persecution," the Life Application Study Bible affirms that Satan's forces (the "gates of Hades" as forces of evil) can and do assail the church through external persecution, internal division, or spiritual deception. This mirrors your call to "stand against the devil's schemes" and guard hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

- **Need to Be on Guard:** The commentary's focus on the church enduring through reliance on Christ's power implies a need for active vigilance. Believers must hold fast to the truth of Christ's identity, as Peter did, to resist Satan's attacks. This connects to your exhortation to avoid complacency and to rally behind the revival among teens and young adults who are eager for sound doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and to worship the living God, not mute idols (1 Timothy 4:7-10).
Practical Application for Believers

- **Stand Firm in Faith:** Just as Peter's confession was the rock, believers today must anchor themselves in the truth of Christ's identity to withstand Satan's schemes, such as cultural hypocrisy or false teachings.

- **Support the Revival:** The note's emphasis on the church as a "community of believers" resonates with your point about rallying behind teens and young adults. Their hunger for Biblical truth can be nurtured by a church that actively guards against spiritual complacency and equips them with God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- **Resist Idolatry:** The call to worship the living God (1 Timothy 4:7-10) is reinforced by the commentary's focus on Christ's power over the forces of evil, urging believers to reject "godless myths" or modern idols that distract from true faith.

3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Timothy had known the Scriptures from childhood, so he knew that all Scripture was inspired by God. When Paul spoke of all Scripture, he was primarily referring to the Old Testament, since it was complete at that time. But the scope of Paul's assertion would include any writing that was considered authoritative enough to be read in church meetings, which by the end of the first century would have included the four Gospels and Paul's writings. According to 2 Peter 3:15–16, Paul's writings were classified as "Scriptures."

LET THE CHILDREN COME

Jewish families began their moral and religious training when children reached age five. The original teaching was given by mothers until about age ten, when fathers were expected to take over. The role of the family was essential in Jewish tradition and developed from God's own instruction (see Deuteronomy 6:1–25).

God-designed parental roles cannot be easily replaced or eliminated. At home and in church, we should realize that teaching small children is both an opportunity and a responsibility. Jesus wanted little children to come to him (Matthew 19:13–15). Like Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, do your part in leading children to Christ.

The Scriptures, affirmed Paul, were God-inspired. A translation closer to the original Greek would be, "All Scripture is God-breathed." This tells us that every word of the Bible was breathed out from God. The words of the Bible came from God and were written by men. The apostle Peter affirmed this when he said that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Paul's words here reminded Timothy that because Scripture is inspired and infallible, it is also profitable. The Bible is not a collection of stories, fables, myths, or merely human ideas about God. It is not a human book. Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed his person and plan to certain believers, who wrote down his message for his people. This process is known as inspiration. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. Although they used their own minds, talents, language, and style, they wrote what God wanted

them to write. Scripture is completely trustworthy because God was in control of its writing. Its words are entirely authoritative for our faith and lives. (See the discussion under 3:15 for the extent of the Scripture canon Paul may have had in mind.)

Scripture was profitable to every aspect of Timothy's ministry:

- **doctrine**—the content and teaching of truth, which must flow from and be consistent with Scripture. By calling the Bible “God-breathed,” Paul was identifying its divine source; by making it the source of doctrine, he was reminding Timothy of its authority. Doctrine that contradicted biblical doctrine was to be rejected, corrected, or replaced by accurate teaching.
- **reproof** —rebuking those in sin. The initial impact of true doctrine involves the confrontation of false teaching and understanding. The offensiveness of some who teach biblical truth may have to be excused, but the offensiveness of biblical truth to error and evil requires no apology.
- **correction** —helping people straighten out errors. In the area of correction, the Scriptures have two roles: (1) they provide a complete presentation of the teaching, where only part of the truth has been present; and (2) they provide for a right understanding and application where true doctrine may have been taught but has not taken effect.
- **instruction** in righteousness (training in righteousness)—showing people how to please and glorify God. The ideal setting for doctrine includes the kind of preparation that minimizes the need for later reproof and correction. The nature of Scripture allows us to teach it confidently to our children and to learn from it ourselves.

The Bible is not purely a record of the past—the history of the Jews and then of the church. Rather, every story, every prophecy, every teaching, every admonition, and every command points beyond to the author, God, who came to us in Jesus Christ. God confronts us in the pages of his Word—telling us how much he loves us, how we can

become his children, and how we should live to please him.

INSPIRATION AND APPLICATION

Verse 3:16, known for its affirmation of inspiration also serves as a basic pattern for application of the Scriptures. We can approach every passage with the assumption that it accomplishes one or more of the four purposes of Scripture:

1. Doctrine—What basic truth that God wants me to know does this passage teach?

2. Reproof—What error in judgment, understanding, or behavior might this passage be reproofing in my life?

3. Correction—How might this passage correct, balance, or direct me?

4. Training—What does this passage present to prepare me for some future spiritual challenge?

3:17 That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Timothy must never forget Scripture's purpose—to equip him (and all believers) to do good. Timothy carried a heavy responsibility in Ephesus, but through his faith in and reliance on God's Word, he was complete and thoroughly equipped. This means he was capable and proficient—able to meet all duties and challenges. Believers should not study God's Word simply to increase their knowledge or to prepare them to win arguments. They should study the Bible so that they will know how to do Christ's work in the world. Knowledge of God's Word is not useful unless it strengthens our faith and leads us to do good (Ephesians 2:10).

ARE YOU EQUIPPED?

The whole Bible is God's inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should read it and apply it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true. It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should live. It is our only source of knowledge about how we can be saved. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for him. How much time do you spend in God's Word? Read it regularly to discover God's truth and to become confident in your life and faith. Develop a plan for reading the whole Bible, not just the familiar passages.

1 Corinthians 12:1-3

12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. The words “now concerning” introduce another question that the Corinthians had apparently asked Paul to answer. The words “spiritual gifts” refer to special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to every believer that are to be used to minister to the needs of the body of believers. The word “gifts” in Greek is *charismata*; it comes from the same root word as the word “grace” (*charis*). Freely bestowed by God, the gifts are special endowments given to believers to enable them to do extraordinary work for God. Paul did not want the believers to be uninformed about these gifts, but, rather, to understand and use them for God’s glory.

12:2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. To contrast the work of the Holy Spirit, Paul reminded the believers of the influence of evil spirits (see 10:20–21). When they were pagans (sometimes the word refers to “non-Jews,” but here it means “non-Christians”), they had been influenced and led astray to mute idols. Evil spirits had done the “influencing” and “leading astray” and had led the people to idols, which could tell the people nothing. Evidently, in the cult religions, evil spirits “spoke” through their followers in what was called “ecstatic” or “inspired” speech. Evil forces were at work in the world, and the Corinthians would need to understand that what they had experienced as “tongues” or “inspired speech” in their pagan religion was completely different from the “speaking in tongues” that the believers might experience through the Holy Spirit.

12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. The way to know whether a person exhibiting “inspired words” actually was filled with the Holy Spirit was to listen to what he or she said about Jesus Christ. Those who said Jesus be cursed or who blasphemed Jesus in any way obviously were not speaking by the Spirit of God. Those who proclaimed and believed that Jesus is Lord, however, were speaking by the Spirit, for only by the Holy Spirit can a person acknowledge the lordship of Christ. Some false teachers might be able to say those words and not mean them, but the truth would eventually come out.

The Holy Spirit within believers helps them to truly believe and publicly confess Jesus Christ as Lord. The words “Jesus is Lord” formed the earliest Christian confession of faith. When Peter confessed that Jesus was “the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” Jesus responded, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being” (Matthew 16:16–17 NLT). All who truly have the Holy Spirit will be able to say that Jesus is Lord of their lives.

PAUL GIVES GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING /1 Timothy 4:7-10

Paul ended chapter 3 explaining that “the church of the living God [is] the pillar and ground of the truth” (3:15 NKJV). Paul’s original letter, of course, had no chapter divisions, so the thought beginning chapter 4 continued Paul’s line of thinking. His mind turned from the exalted role of the church in the plan of God to the obstacles that were preventing the Ephesian believers from being totally effective.

Paul warned the church of the tactics and teachings of its enemies. False teachers were (and still can be) a threat to the church. Paul knew that their teachings, if left unchecked, would greatly distort Christian truth. This critical danger would come from within the church.

The false teaching that Timothy faced in Ephesus may have been a form of Gnosticism (which became a major problem in the Colossian church). Gnostics believed that the physical world was evil and that only the soul mattered. Thus they refused to believe that a God who created the world could be good, because any contact with the physical world would have soiled him. Though these Greek-influenced church members honored Jesus, they could not believe he was truly human. Paul wanted Timothy to be well armed in his opposition to the false teachers that plagued the Ephesian church with this dangerous heresy.

mattered was the feeding of the soul.

4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales. The opposite of “words of faith” and “sound teaching” is false teaching. Paul emphasized the absurdity of the false teachings by

calling them godless myths and old wives' tales (see also 1:3-4). Have nothing to do with translates one Greek word (paraitou—"reject, refuse, refute"). Timothy needed to understand the false teaching in order to fight it effectively with the truth, but then he was to completely reject it. There can be no compromise between the truth and false teaching. Timothy may well have remembered the counsel that he and Paul had given to the Christians in Colosse: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Colossians 4:6 NIV).

SIDETRACKED

Christians who are convinced that they must answer every question and be familiar with every controversy will wear themselves out running down Satan's rabbit trails. Learning Scripture and understanding spiritual principles to give better answers to others provides more benefit than mentally cataloging issues and viewpoints. This is demonstrated by cults who use Scripture out of context to prove their point. Note, for example, how Satan tried to use Scripture in his tempting of Jesus. Jesus answered Satan's misuse of Scripture with properly applied Scripture.

We must not be ignorant of what others are teaching, but we must emphasize a thorough grasp of biblical truth and a central commitment to Christ.

Train yourself in godliness. Paul often borrowed athletic words to emphasize the need for spiritual training (see 1 Corinthians 9:24; Galatians 2:2; 5:7; 2 Timothy 4:7). "Training" emphasizes the point that spiritual development does not happen by chance. An athlete is focused and committed, constantly training, refusing to let up, always striving. Believers must have the same focus and commitment, refusing to be sidetracked by wrong teaching.

Godliness means correct behavior and genuine Christian faith, first in the heart but also in visible expression according to the standard of God's Word (3:16). It takes self-control, continual work, and commitment day by day as we strive to please God despite our sinfulness and weaknesses. But as we can train our bodies for physical feats, we can approach the various aspect of our spiritual life as

training in godliness.

Paul was urging Timothy to model an alternative training program in Ephesus. The false teachers were promoting their system, which included controversy, heresy, legalism, and general rebellion against God. The freedom that we have through Jesus Christ does not give us license to live any way we want. Rather, it frees us from futile attempts to earn God's favor and challenges us to pursue a life of obedience based on love. In too many cases today, Christians have resisted training by calling spiritual disciplines legalism or asceticism. This has resulted, however, in ill-informed, spiritually malnourished, and unprepared believers. To use Paul's imagery, Christians want to be on Christ's Olympic team, but they don't want to live as athletes in training. We must never shift our primary focus from all that Christ has done for us, but we must not neglect the kind of living he expects of us.

TRAINING PLAN

Throughout much of Christian history, people have practiced the classic disciplines. Some of these, like study, meditation, prayer, and fasting, can be used for internal and private spiritual training. Others, such as solitude, silence, service, and submission, are external and visible experiences. Some, like worship and confession, require participation by other believers. All of them have been subject to misuse, but they have also proven to be effective "training exercises." They are worth exploring. Even though initially they may seem ineffective (remember what it was like to run around the track the first time when you were out of shape?), they can bring about beneficial change in your Christian life.

How would you describe your present spiritual training plan? How many "exercises" are you practicing, and how often do you do them? Compared to a year ago, how is your spiritual training progressing?

4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Physical exercise, while benefiting the body, has no eternal benefit. Some interpreters have drawn a distinction here between bodily exercise and bodily discipline. But since exercise serves as the most obvious form of physical

discipline, it is not likely that this is what Paul had in mind. A body discipline such as fasting would not properly be called an exercise, though it may benefit the body in a dietary way. But it is not as common an experience as regular physical exercise. Being in good physical shape positively affects health and perhaps mental outlook; yet godliness affects everything. It benefits its practitioner both for this life and for eternity.

Paul is not devaluing physical exercise. He believed his readers would agree with the importance of physical training, so he could use it as an illustration. The key issue is how we use our time. Some people spend ten to fifteen hours a week in physical activity, but spend little time in Bible study, prayer, and service. Paul was not urging Timothy toward a life of asceticism or stiff and narrow godliness. His practical instructions (see 4:12–16) were to be carried out in relationship with others. Paul did not mean by “godliness” only personal piety, personal holiness, or deeper devotion to Christ; he implied service and ministry to others.

SHAPE UP

Are you in shape both physically and spiritually? While physical fitness offers benefits, spiritual health (godliness) is even more important. Like bodily exercise, spiritual exercise requires discipline, daily effort, and ongoing commitment. As an athlete performs daily exercises to strengthen muscles for better performance, so “spiritual athletes” must regularly train their “spiritual muscles.” The following general disciplines ought to be part of every Christian’s life:

- Reading God’s Word
- Applying God’s Word
- Attending public worship
- Praying
- Giving time, money, and abilities to God’s service

4:9 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance.

Questions have been raised about whether the saying to which Paul referred is in the preceding or following passages. While the next verse does not easily fit the description of a “saying,” Paul had twice before used this formula (1:15; 3:1), each time with the saying coming right after the introduction. Here, however, it seems reasonable to assume that Paul changed the order. He underscored the importance of the saying by following it with his approving statement.

That “godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (4:8 NKJV) is a true saying. Believers who train themselves for godliness really do have the best of both worlds—they receive immediate and eternal benefits, and they benefit others as they instruct and model the Christian life.

COMPASS POINTS

Paul reminded Timothy of key truths that they held in common. Believers can benefit by knowing important biblical teachings by heart. Jesus’ statement of the great commandment (Mark 12:29–31), the brief gospel (John 3:16), the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13), along with sayings like those Paul included to Timothy, are like compass points for Christians. Having these words readily in mind helps keep believers on course. How many trustworthy sayings can you recite? How many do you live?

4:10 For to this end we toil and struggle. The toil and struggle in the daily spiritual exercise of godliness has a goal, an end—eternity with God. The “toil and struggle” do not assure us of eternity, rather we are already assured of eternity because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. We toil and struggle, not for eternity, but because of eternity. Eternity with God is not just hope for a possible occurrence, it is hope set on a certainty. Why? Because it is hope set on the living God—not on a philosophy, a human being, a material possession, or a standard of behavior (see Colossians 1:29).

Hope grows as we remember the promise of the resurrection. Because Christ came back to life, so will all believers. All Christians, including those living when Christ returns, will live with Christ forever. Therefore, we need not despair about tragedy and death. God will change defeat to victory. Paul comforted the Thessalonians with the

hope of eternal life (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

As elsewhere (1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4), Paul attached the role of Savior to God. God in his fullness—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—was active in carrying out the plan of salvation. Christ is the Savior of all people in the sense that his work on the cross was sufficient to provide salvation for everyone (see 2:6). God desires that all people be saved (1:15); but people still may reject him. Some have interpreted “Savior of all” to mean that God does good to all people and will eventually save everyone. More likely, Paul was referring to God’s offer of salvation to everyone.

The phrase especially of those who believe stresses that God’s salvation actually becomes effective only for those who trust him. Universalism is not taught in this passage. The offer of salvation has a universal range but does not impose itself on those unwilling to respond. This argument was aimed at the false teachers who attempted to restrict salvation to an elite few and put many more requirements on it than believing in God.

THE RACE

Christian ministry and leadership require hard work. Jesus himself assured us we would have troubles (John 16:33). But the training on Paul’s mind included resistance, difficulty, and hardship. Toil and struggle in spiritual matters parallel the effort and agony experienced by the athlete in training and competition.

Few athletes enjoy the drudgery of training, the pains that accompany and follow exertion, or the loneliness of preparation that the cheering crowds seldom see. But the thrill of competing, of doing one’s best, of winning the race, somehow make the rest endurable. Again, Jesus is our example: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2 NIV).

None of us deserve or earn the privilege of running the race (Hebrews 12:1); membership in Christ is a free gift. Once on the team, though, we are challenged to train and run our race!

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest, (1) Logos Bible Program, Walter A.

Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, Guzik, David, Life Application Bible Commentary, Factbook Logos bible, Barton, Bruce B., and Philip Wesley Comfort. 1995, Barton, Bruce B., and Grant R. Osborne. 1999. Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1993. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Barton, Bruce B., and Grant R. Osborne. 1999. 1 & 2 Corinthians. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1993. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. (Sermon Reflection LBS)

Sermon Notes:

Welcome to Week 2 of our series, Gifted Together: Unleashing Heaven's Team.

Before we begin, here are our AVC Connections:

- YouTube
- App
- Facebook/Website

[Let's Pray]

Last week, we kicked off this series, and I admitted the American Church has flaws. If you missed it, check it out. I made bold statements, and I stand by them:

- If your church teaches unbiblical truths, get out now.
- If your church is doing a Thomas Jefferson—cutting out parts of God's Word—run and don't stop until the Holy Spirit leads you to a Bible-believing church.

[Thomas Jefferson Story]

- Founding Father, 3rd U.S. President, wrote the Declaration of Independence.
- Had issues with the Bible, created his own "Jefferson Bible"—only 84 pages, literally cutting out verses with a razor.

Quoting Jefferson's letter to John Adams, October 12, 1813:

“In extracting the pure principles which Jesus taught, we must strip off the artificial vestment (aka Scriptures) which have been muffled.”

My point? Many American churches act like Thomas Jefferson, cutting out parts of God’s Word while claiming to be Christian.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18: “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Truth: The gates of Hell won’t overcome the Church, but they will invade it.

Truth : 2 Timothy 3:16: “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.”

God’s Word guides us on what’s right and wrong—identity, marriage, family.

Guess who’s seeing through the hypocrisy in America, the Church, and media?

Guess who recognizes the demonic forces at work?

Teenagers and Young adults. They’re opening their eyes and hearts to truth.

1 Timothy 4:12: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

Over 100 million people watched Charlie Kirk’s memorial service—more than the Super Bowl halftime show.

Young adults and teens, Jesus and I are cheering you on! Praise God, a revival based on biblical truth—Jesus is the answer—is spreading globally.

Apostle Paul spoke to a dysfunctional church in 1

Corinthians 12:1-3: “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not

want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

Christians, don't be led astray. Spiritual gifts won't work if the church worships mute idols— (literally dumb, demonic, heathen gods.)

Church, we must protect our God-given gifts and use them.

I conclude with 1 Timothy 4:7-10:

"Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."

Closing Prayer

Devotional Questions

Read the Passage and answer the following questions:

Read Matthew 16:18:

"I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Question: We know the church is not going to collapse under the Lordship of Jesus Christ; but how is the church being invaded by hell?

Question: What can we do to push back the Evil One in our church?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

Question: What does God's Word do for our lives?

Question: Does God's Word provide Biblical Truths to some complicated tensions/questions the world is wrestling with? Think of a hard one and use God's Word to respond to it?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-3

Question: What influences can keep us or hinder us from using our gifts?

Question: What are “mute idols”?

Read 1 Timothy 4:7-10

Question: How can you be led astray; and what spiritual boundaries should you put in place to protect yourself?