

A Certain Disciple Named Timothy

Acts 16:1-5

Halifax: 25 November 2012

Introduction

As we move into chapter 16, we have Paul having just set out on his second missionary journey.

- There must have been much on his mind as he did so!
 - God had placed him in Antioch just at the time that he was needed to stand up and oppose the Judaizers who had even influenced Peter and Barnabas.
 - In large part, through his leadership,
 - the whole church had come out with a clear decree against any who would insist that circumcision and law keeping were required for salvation.
 - But now there had been this quarrel with Barnabas, and Paul had been sent out without him—with Silas as his new companion.
 - Before launching into new territory, the Apostle first wanted to look in on the churches that he and Barnabas had founded in Southern Galatia two or three years before.
 - We are told that in back in 15:36 when Paul had said:
 - **Acts 15:36: Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.**
 - Paul later mentions in one of his letters how he was continually burdened about the churches he had planted...
 - He cared very much about them and continually prayed for them.
 - And now as he sets out with Silas to visit them, he must have wondered how he would find them.
 - It is my understanding that the Judaizers had already been through and that Paul had written the letter we call Galatians to warn them against this heresy.
 - How would he find them now??
- When he gets there, we are informed that God had a very pleasant surprise awaiting the dear apostle.
 - It is rather marvellous the way this surprise is presented to us.
 - Paul has just come on his journey to Derbe and Lystra, and the first and only thing Luke has to say about it is this...
 - **“Behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy.”**
 - The word “behold” is used in scripture to draw special attention to something that is remarkable—
 - Often it says things like, “Behold, an angel appeared!”

- When John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”
 - It is a way of saying, “Wow! Look at that!”
 - Apparently this not-yet-20-year-old son of a Jewish woman and a Greek man is the most striking thing that Paul found!
 - We cannot say that for sure, but we can certainly say that Luke presents it as something very remarkable and significant!
 - Here was a young man in whom the Lord had done a wonderful work of sanctification.
 - Luke draws our attention to this faithful servant of God.
- And because Luke highlights this, I want to focus on it too in our sermon today.
 - “Behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy!”

I. I want to show you that the Lord gives faithful servants to His church...

II. And then I want to show you how beautiful the service such servants is...

III. And then I want to show you the fruit that comes when faithful servants serve.

So let’s get underway with the first point:

I. The Lord gives faithful servants like Timothy to His church.

A. I tell you that it is His way to do this because of His great love for us.

1. He so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son...

- He sent His only Son who is eternal and equal with the Father to the church to give His life a ransom for us.
 - He sent Him to die for our sins that we might not perish but have everlasting life.
 - “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
 - Jesus constantly declares that the Father sent Him to save.
- The Father does this, not because we deserve it, but because He loves us!
 - The truth is, the very reason we need such a Saviour is because we actually deserve God’s eternal wrath and condemnation.
 - Jesus came to take our place in bearing this punishment so that we might be fully pardoned!
 - And Jesus tells us repeatedly that the Father sent Him to do this great service for us.
 - The Father so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son!

➤ So you see that God is in the business of giving to His church...

- It is His very nature to be gracious and kind hearted.

2. All along the way He had given servants to His church—to preserve them and keep them until the coming of Christ...
 - It was all a part of the giving of Christ...
 - These servants were necessary along the way...
 - There was Joseph, whom He sent to save them from famine...
 - There was Moses and Aaron, whom He sent to save them from Egypt and to consolidate them as His people.
 - There was Joshua who led them into conquest of the land...
 - And then there were the judges whom God raised up—one after another—to keep Israel from being swallowed up by their enemies.
 - They were always in danger of either being wiped out by them or of being absorbed by them through intermarriage.
 - And then there was David, a true servant of God—a man after God’s own heart.
 - And then there were other kings and there were the prophets whom the Lord calls, “My servants the prophets.”
 - God graciously gave all of these servants to preserve the church until the coming of the Messiah.
 - You see why I say that it is His way to do this...
 - But of course the climax of His giving was the giving of Jesus Christ.
 3. Yet, even after this, He continues to give servants for His people!
 - As we saw just last Sunday afternoon, when Jesus ascended on high, He gave gifts to men—and the gifts He gave to men were men!
 - He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.
 - Such was Paul the apostle and Silas the prophet and Timothy the evangelist.
 - And God has continued faithfully to give faithful servants to His people for 2000 years...
 - They serve His people by helping them to continue in God’s ultimate gift and ultimate servant—Jesus Christ.
 - We should always think of Jesus whenever we think of God’s ministers.
- B. What a delightful thing it was for Paul to find this servant here in south Galatia.
1. Timothy comes from such an unlikely background.
 - a. He came from an unlikely place—Lystra.

- Perhaps you will remember this place—it was the most backwater of all the places mentioned on Paul’s first missionary journey...
 - We are not sure if there was even a synagogue there—there is no mention of one at least...
 - And this is the place where Paul healed the crippled man and the idolatrous inhabitants mistook him for their god Hermes and supposed the Barnabas was Zeus...
 - but then refusing to accept it when Paul and Barnabas told them that Jesus had done it,
 - they were easily persuaded by the Jews, who came to persecute Paul and Barnabas, that these servants of God should be stoned.
 - It was from this idolatrous, uneducated, backwater town that Timothy came
- But not only that—
- b. He also came from an unlikely parentage!
 - 1) Luke informs us that he was the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but that his father was Greek.
 - This bespeaks of unfaithfulness in his mother, for she had married this Greek man who was outside the covenant.
 - Apparently this was fairly common in Southern Galatia, but it does not make it any more acceptable.
 - We are further told that Timothy had never been circumcised, showing that his father was not even supportive of his wife’s Jewish faith...
 - for even if only one parent was Jewish, their children were allowed to be circumcised...
 - just as Paul teaches in 1 Cor 7:14 that the children of mixed marriages under the New Testament are ritually holy which implies that they are admitted to baptism.
 - But because Timothy had not been circumcised, he would have been classified by the Jews as an apostate Jew—
 - one who was in the covenant by right of birth, but had been cut off for breaking the covenant in not being circumcised.
 - 2) But at some point, Timothy’s mother had repented...
 - Perhaps not long after Timothy was born—because...
 - in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, Paul says to Timothy:
 - **2 Tim 3:14-15: But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

- To have taught him from childhood would indicate that his mother must have repented of her ungodly marriage before she had met Paul...
 - Whatever the case, she and Timothy had both trusted in the Lord Jesus because she is described in our text as a “Jewish woman who believed.”
 - They were probably converted when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra on their first missionary journey.
 - But the point is that you would hardly expect an outstanding disciple from such a background!
- c. But this really should not surprise us,
- for it is not only God’s way to raise up servants for His kingdom, but also to raise them up from unlikely places!
 - Who would have ever expected that the Messiah should come from a poor carpenter from Nazareth?
 - Our God is the God who brings forth David from the sheepfold, the youngest son of his father’s household...
 - He is the God who brings Isaac, the child of promise, to a woman who was not only barren, but also past the age to bear children.
 - He is the God who continues the line of Christ through mothers who are Gentiles, idolaters, and even prostitutes...
 - not to commend idolatry and prostitution, but rather to demonstrate that servants are His gifts of grace.
- Timothy is a servant that God raised up by His grace for His people.
2. When God raises up a servant, it should be obvious to all who know him that he has been given by God.
- a. Something is badly wrong with us if God raises up a faithful servant and we do not recognize it!
- Jesus rebuked the people for their blindness in not recognizing Him as the One that God had sent.
 - Many of the prophets were rejected in their day because the people were so ungodly that they would not acknowledge them—
 - If Jesus had come in their day, they would have rejected Him just as His contemporaries did.
 - If He were to come in our day, He would be rejected by all of those who prefer ungodly leaders today—
 - They do not want godly leaders like Timothy because they don’t want to follow their example or have to answer to them.
 - They rather like it when their leaders are wishy-washy.

- That is why so many people don't want to join sound churches.
 - They prefer to soothe their consciences by surrounding themselves with leaders are more ungodly than they are.
 - And if there are godly servants sent by God among them, they like to find fault with them and pick them apart.
- b. But the disciples in Lystra and Derbe were happy to recognize Timothy's outstanding godliness.
- Acts 16:2 says:
 - **Acts 16:2: He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.**
 - They were serious disciples.
 - They almost had to have been—because following Christ meant persecution and rejection—it was not socially acceptable.
 - They wanted leaders that would encourage them to be strong.
 - We should want God to raise up zealous faithful leaders among us who are worthy of imitation.
 - Jesus tells us to pray that God would give us such leaders.
 - We ought to keep our eyes open that we might recognize those upon whom God has His hand and follow them.
 - It is a very sad thing when the church is in such a state that men like Timothy are not recognized by the people and they go after unworthy leaders whom God has not called!
- c. Paul immediately recognized the kind of man that Timothy was.
- Verse 3 begins with the words:
 - **Acts 16:3: Paul wanted to have him go on with him.**
 - This was the kind of young man that Paul could count on!
 - And the truth is that Paul never regretted this decision!
 - Over and over again, he refers to Timothy as his spiritual son.
 - Years later in writing to the Philippians, Paul said:
 - **Phil 2:19-22: But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.**
 - What a remarkable thing to say about him!
 - *No one that will sincerely care for you the way he does!*
 - No one who is so free from self-seeking as he is...
 - And that is just after writing about having the mind of Christ!

➤ Now this brings us to our next point...

II. Consider how beautiful the service of God's faithful servants is!

A. His servants are willing to lay down their lives for others!

1. This is what is so marvellous about our Lord Jesus Christ!

- That He loved the Father so much, and delighted in the Father's goodness,
 - that even before He became flesh, He, as God the Son,
 - fully submitted to the Father to become flesh and to dwell among us in this sinful world...
 - We like to flatter ourselves, but really, at our core, we are selfish pigs.
 - The worst thing about us is that we don't glory in God...
 - We do not see how high above us He is—how worthy He is of our total devotion and service.
 - We think it's okay to ignore Him, and we pat ourselves on the back whenever we pay Him a little attention...
 - when instead we ought to be horrified and appalled at how little honour and respect we show Him.
 - But Jesus, before He was Jesus—as the Son of God in glory—had such delight in the Father that even though He was His equal,
 - He left glory in obedience to His Father's will—because it pleased the Father—and came into this sinful world in human flesh...
 - And not only that, but He humbled Himself all the way to the point of that ignominious death, even death on a Roman cross.
- What a servant He was!
 - How the Father, who greatly delights in goodness and kindness, delighted in His Son who had shown such goodness!
 - One of the reasons He sent Him was that He might display this goodness and kindness in a world that had not seen it.
 - He was so pleased with what His Son did that He gave Him the name that is above every name—that every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord.
 - Jesus already had such a name as the eternal Son, but now He had it as Mediator—in His humanity.
 - Jesus was a servant who served!
 - He served in the most outstanding and marvellous way that anyone has ever served!
 - There is no one comparable to Him—
 - This is true beauty that God delights in!
 - How we ought to delight in Him and in those who are like Him!

2. Timothy was such a one! He had something of this beauty.
 - a. No doubt, those who gave a good report about him in southern Galatia had seen the mind of Christ in him...
 - They had seen his willingness to put others first—to esteem others as better than himself...
 - They had seen him not caring about his own things, but for the things of Christ...
 - But when Paul invites Timothy to join him in his work, we see all the more what Timothy is made of!
 - b. This young man agrees to go along to serve with the Apostle Paul!
 - Why is this so revealing of his servant-like disposition before God?
 - Well because Paul was intensely driven!
 - You didn't choose to work with him unless you were serious about serving the Lord!
 - We have already seen how the Apostle had no use for John Mark's softness that caused him to turn back.
 - Timothy had seen Paul's persecutions in Lystra and Derbe.
 - Paul mentions this to Timothy in 2 Tim 3:10-11:
 - **2 Tim 3:10-11: But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured.**
 - Timothy knew all about how he had angry mobs of Jews and magistrates who pursued him and who seized him and stoned him and left him for dead right in his home town!
 - This wasn't one of those feel-good-about-myself mission trips!
 - This was a totally-pour-out-your-life-and-forget-about-yourself mission!
 - This was about risking your life—about going on no matter how you feel—about toilsome and dangerous travels—about being looked at as the off-scouring of the earth.
 - This was about denying yourself and taking up your cross to follow Jesus!
 - And to this, Timothy said yes and he went and he did not turn back.
 - c. And not only that, but Timothy also shows his servant's heart by submitting to circumcision—of all things!
 - Look at verse 3...

- **Acts 16:3: Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.**
- This is remarkable!
 - Paul, the one who has just been fighting against the Judaizers who were insisting upon circumcision for believers has Timothy circumcised!
 - Is Paul just capitulating? Is this a moment of weakness?
 - No, not at all!
 - This is very much in keeping with Paul's staunch consistency as one who poured himself out in service to Christ.
 - It was always his way to be, as John Newton put it,
 - "a reed in non-essentials, an iron pillar in essentials."
 - Paul describes the policy by which he continually lived in 1 Cor 9:19-23:
 - **1 Cor 9:19-23: For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; ²¹ to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. ²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*."**
 - Those who accuse him of inconsistency do not understand the higher consistency he lived by—
 - He sought to bring every aspect of his life under obedience to Christ and was ready to relinquish all of his rights for the sake of the gospel.
- Timothy, being considered an apostate Jew by the Jews, would have been the cause of great offense to the them.
 - His presence with Paul would have kept Paul out of the synagogues.
 - Understand that uncircumcised Gentiles were not nearly so great an offense to the Jews as an uncircumcised Jew!
 - God-fearing Gentiles like Cornelius were often well spoken of by the Jews, but an uncircumcised Jew was an apostate.
 - Paul so loved the Jews that he would do almost anything lawful to maintain his standing with them.

- He went so far in retaining his own access to the synagogue that he submitted to the 39 lashes five times!
- If he had wanted to, he could have refused this punishment and just let them excommunicate him.
- But he so wanted to maintain his status among them that he accepted this painful, even life-threatening punishment, on five different occasions!
 - He did this all that he might win the Jews to Christ.
 - That is the mind of Christ!
 - That is a love for his lost Jewish brothers and sisters!
 - That is a willingness to bear all things for the sake of the gospel.
- So you see that having Timothy circumcised for the sake of access to the synagogue was a minor sacrifice to make in the mind of the apostle Paul!
 - And apparently it was in the mind of Timothy as well because he freely submits to it.
 - What an example of laying down your life for others!
- But there was no compromise here about circumcision.
 - Paul absolutely refused to have Titus circumcised because Titus was a Greek—
 - It would have been the adding of an additional requirement to the gospel for Titus...
 - But because Timothy was a Jew, he needed to be a Jew to the Jews that he might by all means save some.
- I have often observed that there are two sorts of people in the church...
 - There are those who are rigid and uncompromising about everything—including matters of indifference...
 - Like the Pharisees, they make their own traditions equal with God's Word!
 - And then there are those who are pliable and compromising about everything—even about matters that are not indifferent!
 - They often have their limits—but they bend in areas that ought not to be negotiable.
 - Like Aaron, they make a golden calf because the congregation wanted it.
 - People seem to have a natural disposition toward one or the other of these two extremes...
 - There are not many who are like the Apostle Paul and Timothy—

- Luther admonishes us to be like Paul. He says:
 - “Paul was strong in faith, and soft in love. So, as concerning faith we ought to be invincible and harder than an adamant stone; but as touching charity, we ought to be soft, and more flexible than the reed or leaf that is shaken with the wind.”
- Jesus was certainly like this...
 - He would not capitulate to those who wanted Him to follow their traditions which they held as necessary...
 - But when it came to something like paying the temple tax, He told Peter to pay it for Him, though He was free from it as a requirement, “lest we offend them.”
 - What beauty there was in Him!
 - Just think how He laid down all of rights and took His place as a servant when He came to this world and went to the cross!
 - Truly He emptied Himself for our sake!
 - His example had gripped Paul and Timothy.

B. My brothers and sisters, this beauty of servant-hood ought to characterize every one of us who claim to be disciples of Jesus.

1. Are you willing to lay aside your rights for the sake of gospel?
 - Are you willing to suffer deprivation if it will further the cause of Christ?
 - Are you willing to be inconvenienced that you might win some?
 - Are you willing to suffer even in your body as Paul so readily did?
 - Don't you see what your Saviour has borne for you?
 - Don't you see what Paul and Timothy bore for Him?
 - Don't just be shamed by your shortcoming—
 - Look at how beautiful the service of Christ really is!
 - Keep meditating on it and praising Him for it until you truly delight in it—
 - and then keep on meditating on it and praising Him for it so that you can delight in it even more.
 - The more you delight in His loving service, the more you will be willing—and even take delight in laying down your life for others!
2. What a difference it will make in your life if you will do this!
 - a. How it will beautify your home—
 - For you as a brother to step aside to let your sister go ahead of you—to let her take the last cookie because you love her...

- For you as a husband to step in and take the blame for something foolish your wife has done...
- For you children to look at your mother with compassion when she is overwhelmed, and to offer to take on extra responsibilities!
- For you all to treat the other members of the family as more important than yourself...
 - You say, "I will be taken advantage of if I do that."
 - Well of course you will—just like Jesus.
 - But you will still be a debtor before Him.
 - It will always be the case that He has done way more for you than you have ever done for Him.
 - So if you want more fairness, lay down your life much more than you are doing now!
 - And if you do—your walk with Him will be sweet enough to make up for any losses you sustain.
 - Of course I am not advocating that parents do not uphold their honour and require obedience from their children...
 - Parents, that is part of laying down your life for your children.
 - It is your duty to hold them accountable before the Lord.
 - But at the same time,
 - are there not ways of showing kindness to them that you could include—just to show them your love?

TRANS> How it will beautify your home if you will live as Christ there!

- But not only that...
- b. How it will beautify our church if you will live this way...
 - You will beautify the church the way Timothy beautified the church at Lystra...
 - Do not go around demanding your rights and getting your feelings hurt all the time...
 - Be a servant.
 - And do not press doubtful matters as if they were gospel truth...
 - things like political opinions
 - or matters of Christian liberty like home schooling or health foods or the use of alcohol or details about observing the Lord's Day.
 - We must distinguish between matters of conscience and matters of truth.
 - And above all, we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for each other—to truly care for each other...
 - to give up my right to my possessions if my brother is in need.

- c. And indeed, we ought to be this way in the world—at work, at play, in the neighborhood...
 - Be willing to bear with an insult without retaliation...
 - Instead of demanding recompense, do good to the one who has wronged you!
 - Aren't you glad that Jesus does not demand recompense of all the wrongs that we have done to Him?
 - If your loud music or your barking dog is offending your neighbours,
 - Be willing to give it up for the sake of the gospel.
 - If someone at work is gossiping about you,
 - Don't feel that you must straighten out the record.
 - You will feel most burdened to do that if you have been living selfishly at work...
 - Think about it—if everyone knows you to be a kind person who is always giving of yourself,
 - the one who gossips will be the one who is looked down upon...
 - but even if not—the Lord knows and He will set the record straight soon enough...
 - Maybe you will be able to win the gossip if you keep showing kindness to him.

➤ And that brings us to our third and final point...

III. What great fruit comes when God's servants serve!

A. You know what excellent fruit came from Christ's sacrificial service!

1. He brought eternal life to us!
 - He brought full remission of sin to us by laying down His life.
 - He brought new life to us through our union with Him.
 - In God's economy, when servants serve, blessing comes!
2. Consider that through the service of Christ, the whole world was blessed.
 - The Father promised to Jesus that He would give Him the nations as His inheritance if He would indeed lay down His life for sinners.
 - In Isaiah 49:6, He said to the Son:
 - **Isa 49:6** Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' "
 - How the Father delights in faithful service!
 - How He cherishes seeing the beauty of the One who gives Himself for His friends.

- He always rewards such service with fruit.
 - It brings so much glory to Him!
 - It is something that He holds in the highest esteem such that the greatest commandment is love!
- B. See in our text how the Father rewarded the faithful service of Paul and Silas and Timothy with fruitfulness!
1. This fruitfulness is described in Acts 16:4-5.
 - It says
 - **Acts 16:4-5: And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.**
 - You see that their work was effective.
 - a. Luke tells us that as they went about, the churches were strengthened in the faith...
 - This indicates that they grew in their understanding of the Christian faith—they became more grounded and firm.
 - The word *faith* with the definite article always points to the body of truth that has been revealed in Christ.
 - The decree of the council helped these new believers to understand all the more that salvation is in Christ alone and not by works of righteousness that we have done.
 - b. Luke also tells us that the churches increased in number daily...
 - He makes it clear that he is speaking about numerical increase.
 - Sometimes we can become overly righteous about numbers and say that numbers don't matter.
 - They do matter—
 - We should yearn to see more people coming to know our gracious Father and our dear Lord Jesus Christ.
 - We should yearn to see more and more people praising Him.
 - We should yearn to see more and more people raised from death in sin to follow Him.
 - We should yearn to see them saved from the wrath to come.
 - Of course this concern for numbers ought never to make us compromise the truth in the least...
 - But it also ought to make us sacrifice for the sake of the gospel the way Paul and Silas and Timothy did.
 - And when we do, we will be doing what we can to strengthen and increase the church.

2. In almost every case, when God wants to bless His people, He does so by raising up faithful servants among them!
 - So we ought to pray earnestly that we would be those servants for our God!
 - Not that we all must become preachers of the gospel—but that together each of us would take the part we have been given!
 - That each of us would lay down our lives for others!
 - You need to see the connection!
 - Don't expect God to strengthen the church and give us increase until we are first prepared to serve the way Jesus served.
 - God has very much tied together faithful service with fruitfulness.
 - I don't mean to say that it is a mathematical equation...
 - There are faithful servants like Elijah or Isaiah that do not always see a lot of fruit for their labour...
 - But the truth is, there is a lot of fruit.
 - It may not come until after their death, but their faithfulness in preserving the faith in hard times makes it possible for future fruitfulness to blossom...
 - Abraham only had to have Isaac to be one of the most fruitful men who ever lived!
 - Isaac was the connection to future blessing and Isaac was through Abraham's faithful service.
 - He believed God and kept His covenant.
 - So it was with Paul and Timothy...
 - If they had been unwilling that Timothy should yield to circumcision,
 - they would have had all sorts of conflict and all sorts of problems with the Jews.
 - And this would have hindered their work.
 - Do you see what I am saying?
 - Because Timothy was able to relinquish his right to abstain from circumcision...
 - Because he selflessly laid down his life for others...
 - There was more fruitfulness.
- But don't misunderstand what I am saying here.
3. Of course it is not us, but God who gives the increase!
 - All the glory goes to Him for the fruitfulness, just as it does in farming.
 - If one farmer labours more diligently than another farmer, he will ordinarily have a lot more fruit.

- Only God can make the crops grow—but He ordinarily blesses sacrificial labour...
 - He ordinarily uses sacrificial labour when He wants to bless His church!
- It ought to be a great an encouragement for us to pour ourselves into the service of Christ.
- Whether we are a lone voice in the wilderness faithfully carrying the gospel into the next generation...
 - or whether we are joined with a great growing multitude,
 - God will give us that increase if we lay down our lives for the gospel.
 - It is our privilege, by His grace, to lay down our lives for our Lord and for His people.
 - May He make us all like Timothy!
 - May He make us all like Jesus Christ!
 - That our fruit may abound.