

Serve humbly

Part 1

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[00:00:00] In the ministry of the Lord Jesus, he prepared the hearts of his chosen few, the twelve, for the service that they would render after he had gone back to glory.

And one of the great features of teaching that he put before them so often was humility, and we can well understand the need of it.

They were going to represent him, and they were endowed with a great deal of authority, what we often call apostolic authority.

They were going to represent the Lord Jesus, they were going to do things in his name, they were going to help the people of God. So this matter of humility was a most important one.

[00:01:01] The Lord Jesus well knew the frailty of the human heart, the corruption of fallen nature, and the tendency of man always to exalt himself at the expense of others. So any feature of haughty arrogance being expressed in the disciples or in their ministry would have nullified the teaching that they were to continue and to present with force the power of the Holy Spirit.

So again I say you can see the necessity for this form of teaching, and we'll see its importance as we go on in our talk together.

I've chosen these two passages to emphasize this form of teaching by the Lord. There are many, many more. You remember he says, if you're invited to a feast, don't go to the most prominent place, take the lowest place, and it may be someone will tell you to go up higher. And he says, if you're going to be in the kingdom, become like a little child, and so [00:02:05] you'll be in the kingdom. And now these two passages where he said to those who wanted to be the greatest, he says, I am among you as one who serves.

We listened this afternoon to a naval exposition of the glory of the Lord at the right hand of God, and we saw something of the wonderful glories of the Son of God.

And we always have that in our minds when we think of him expressing himself in this way as one who was among them serving.

Not seeking to be served, not presenting himself in all the glory of his person, but as a humble man here seeking to help and encourage and bless in the attitude of humility and grace and lowliness. And what a powerful testimony it was. [00:03:03] The children could flock to him, the adulterous, the needy, the helpless, and they found in him a ready answer of blessing and kindness and forgiveness and cheer. There was nothing in Jesus that repelled people, but rather that drew themselves to him. Oh, the power and attraction of that glorious, humble man as he was here for God.

And this is the kind of attitude that he sought to instill into his apostles. You remember he said to them at one time, you don't know what kind of spirit you are of. They wanted to cry down fire from heaven in judgment against the village that had refused the service and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And again and again and again, he instilled this into them, be humble, be lowly, be like me, as we see from John 13.

[00:04:04] And in Luke 22, there were those who were wanting to be foremost. And isn't that an attitude of fallen nature, always wanting the foremost place.

And before we criticize the apostles, we look into our own hearts and we see the very seeds of that kind of thing.

This hateful attitude of being the first, preeminent, when in the Christian circle, there's only one man who is entitled to preeminent. And the Bible says clearly and distinctly, in all things, he must have the preeminence. And so the Lord Jesus, very quietly, very humbly, corrects his disciples, those who were seeking to be the greatest. And he did this by presenting himself as the one who served.

Now, I think the inference is as plain as possible.

[00:05:01] If I am so great and so glorious and so powerful, and yet I can take a place among you as a humble servant, what ought your attitude to be in relation to one another? And we would say, what a gracious, chiding word it was, calculated to set them right and to destroy this desire for preeminence.

And in John 13, what a beautiful picture.

The early verses of that chapter tell us of the one who came from God and who went back to God, not simply as a servant born into this world and chosen by God, and then after his service was finished, he died and his spirit went to God, waiting that glorious moment when he would have a glorified body. Not at all.

This is different.

This is the Son of God, the one who ever was with the Father before time began. [00:06:01] And he left that place and came into the world. And coming into the world, accomplished his mission, and after that was accomplished, went back to the Father.

Although strictly speaking, it says God in John 13, but what I've said can be amply proved from other scriptures.

I came out from the Father, and I go back to the Father.

Here he came out from God, he goes back to God, his work accomplished. It's in this context, the greatness and glory of this person that is presented to us in such a concise way that the Lord girds himself, divests himself of his other clothing, girds himself with a towel, bends down with a basin of water, and he washes the feet of his disciples. The action of a servant doing the most menial task.

Now he says, do you really understand what I've done? He says, if I have washed your feet, you ought to do the same for each other. [00:07:03] Get down, don't be proud, don't be looking for some service to be rendered to you.

Be prepared to get down and wash each other's feet, because I've left you an example that you should follow it. Oh dear brethren, what a wonderful example.

If it was so for the disciples, how much more in relation to ourselves in our day. How we need to be marked by the spirit of humility towards each other and in relation to any service that we perform amongst the people of God.

I've said that by way of introduction to what is really upon my heart.

Quite recently I was privileged to give some talks about the assembly, and after one of them a young brother wrote to me and said that he had felt the Lord was speaking to [00:08:01] him, that if what I said was correct, and he felt it was because I had said what I had to say from the Bible and tried to support it all from verses of scripture without giving the scriptures a twist, just a plain interpretation of the word of God. He said this destroyed a notion that was in his mind, what he called the hierarchy that exists amongst the people of God, and he asked if I would help him in a particular way with the terms mentioned in scripture, and we've read them together, bishops, deacons, elders, and ministers.

Well that was quite a task.

But we searched out the scriptures and wrote him the letter, and I feel I want to say again, or rather I want to say now something of what I wrote to the young man. I feel this is important, very important, because we come across those terms and we [00:09:03] might say, well, why haven't we bishops?

Why haven't we deacons?

Why haven't we elders?

And have we ministers?

Now we must inquire not what we have got or what we haven't got, or what other people have or what they haven't, but what does the Bible say about these various forms of service? Now you will see why I have spoken about humility, the Lord's ministry to his own, because in the ordinary usage of those terms we can find things that are anything but humble, things that are really a denial of the Lord's ministry of humility. But with that, we have nothing to do this evening. We want to see what the scripture says about those various positions of service.

I want to say that the three expressions, bishops, elders, and I forgot to mention one, [00:10:08] overseers, are all services rendered by the same person.

Bishops, overseers, and elders, as far as scripture is concerned, belong to the same person, not to different persons holding different positions amongst the people of God. Now, having said that, I've got to prove it.

Now will you turn, please, to the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts chapter 20 and verse 17.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.

[00:11:09] Now there's a very definite statement. He called the elders of the church.

Now just go down to verse 28.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.

He's speaking to the elders and now he's saying the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, and he says why, to feed the church of God. Now there's the first point that we've settled from scripture, that elders and overseers are one and the same person, different names to describe them, and we'll speak about that in a few moments.

Now I don't want you to turn to it, we read it. In the epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1 and verse 1, Paul addressed himself to bishops.

[00:12:09] Now the word for bishop, the Greek word I mean, which is translated bishop in the English language, is exactly the same Greek word that is translated overseer in verse 28 of Acts 20. Now I think I've proved my point that elders, overseers, and bishops are synonymous terms for the same person engaged in some particular form of Christian service.

That there is a difference between elders and bishops in their function, in the form of service they perform, or rather in their character, we shall see in a moment. So that's the first thing I think that we've proved conclusively, I hope we have, that elders, bishops, and overseers are exactly the same person.

[00:13:04] Now it's always good to get further evidence, and I want you to turn to Titus, chapter 1.

Titus, chapter 1, and verse 5, for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee. Then he goes on to explain some of the characteristics that should be with an elder, and in verse 7 he says, for a bishop must be blameless.

Now he's talking about the same service, the same persons who were to render the services, so again we find here in this portion by Paul to Titus that elders and bishops are really [00:14:07] the same person.

Now lastly we'll turn again to chapter 5 of 1 Peter.

In verse 1 he says, the elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.

Then he says in verse 2, taking the oversight thereof.

Here we have the noun in the 20th chapter of Acts, the overseers, here we have the verb, the oversight, the work that they are doing. So here again we find scriptural confirmation that elders and overseers are the same person.

Now I hope that's sufficient to indicate the scriptural basis for these three designations, [00:15:03] and also to show that they're in the one and same person.

Now a little explanation regarding the names themselves.

The term elder is often used in the Old Testament indicating those who ruled amongst the people of God in those days, guiding, helping, and ruling.

Not ruling in a despotic way or an arbitrary way, but simply seeing that people were doing what the word of God says. It wasn't that they had power to impose sanctions or punishment, but they were to see that the people of God followed in the way that God desired them to go. Now when we come to the Gospels we find that those very rulers who should have been standing for the word of God were among the most imbetterate haters of Christ, the rulers of the people. How often they stirred up enmity against the Son of God. [00:16:04] But when we come over to Paul's epistles and we find this expression rulers or leaders, we'll find that it's connected with this idea of elders.

Now the term itself is often used in connection with age, simply to indicate that one is older than another. That's perfectly obvious. But amongst the people of God it indicates persons of maturity.

Paul says distinctly, not a novice, a mature person able to handle the things of God for the benefit of the people of God. We'll see some of their responsibilities. But we keep this in mind, an elder is a mature person, not necessarily just because he's of advanced age.

He's mature in experience and in the things of God.

Now an overseer, it explains itself.

Whether you use the term bishop, which simply means overseer, or the plain statement itself [00:17:04] overseer, the plain term itself overseer, it means just exactly what it says. Persons who look over or oversee the flock of God to see what is necessary.

When a shepherd goes out into the field to look at his flock, he's not thinking about how he can impress them with his power, with his authority. He's looking anxiously to see if there are features of need in the flock, some of them injured, perhaps some of them needing some care, some wound that has to be bound up. He counts all the flock to make sure they're there. And if there are those who are missing, he goes and looks for the one that is lost. And he protects them from danger. He's overseeing his flock and looking for the signs of need there so that he can meet it because he has all the ability and knowledge to care for the flock.

[00:18:03] No good you or I going to look after the flock. I don't know the first thing about looking after sheep. So obviously a shepherd is one who has to know what he's doing or the flock is going to be seriously affected. So an overseer is a man who must know what he's about in a spiritual sense in

caring for the flock of God. And we'll see more of this later. So we have the two terms, elder, a mature spiritual person able to handle the things of God correctly.

An overseer looking over the flock that he might see the things that require attention and provide that attention for the benefit of all concerned. Dear brethren, over many years there has been much declension amongst the people of God.

I believe much of it would have been spared if we had had brothers of mature spiritual [00:19:06] caliber who had the well-being of the flock of God at heart and who were of sufficient spiritual status to provide the influence that was necessary to meet the problems that arose amongst the people of God. Oh, what a necessity it is.

What a crying need there is amongst the various companies of the saints for this kind of person, a mature, godly, exercised person and persons who really care for the flock of God.

Oh, what a need there is.

And the door is wide open, I may say, for persons to take up this service and we shall see how this comes about.

So we have the elders and the bishops, what the terms mean.

[00:20:02] How did they find themselves in this position in the early church? And we find there are three things.

First of all, apostolic appointment.

Not only the passage in the Epistle of Paul to Titus where he sent Titus as his delegate, if you like, to go to the island and to appoint what was lacking. That's the first thing, apostolic delegation or appointment. In Acts chapter 14 we find Barnabas and Paul involved in the same kind of thing. They appointed elders.

Secondly, what we read in Acts chapter 20, that the Holy Spirit set them as overseers in the assembly at Ephesus.

And thirdly, in 1st Timothy chapter 3, the person was deeply exercised himself to perform this service.

[00:21:02] And in speaking on 1st Timothy 3, I want to point out something. In the authorized version it says, if any man desires the office of a bishop, now I'm not a Greek scholar and I'm open to correction of what I'm going to say, but I understand from good authority that there is no such word in the Greek that indicates an office. So that clearly destroys any idea that there is an office in this position of a bishop. And Mr. Darby's translation gives a better rendering when he says, if any man aspires to the work of oversight. Ah, that's a different story. The work of the oversight.

Involves labor, exercise, concern, but it's obvious in 1st Timothy chapter 3 that the onus is upon the person himself and his desire to perform this.

[00:22:01] Now we're not living in the apostolic days. We're living at the close of the church period. Is there anything in the world today that corresponds with apostolic authority? Is there any central body of believers who have this power by apostolic succession? In spite of all the claims that are made to this end, we would say there is nothing in scripture to indicate that ever such a thing was contemplated as apostolic succession. Yes, we have a succession in 2nd Timothy 2.

Paul says to Timothy, the things that I've spoken to you, you hand them on to faithful men and they will hand it on to others.

And so the truth is maintained. It's the truth that has a succession, not the apostolic position. I believe that that has gone and gone forever.

That we have the apostles fellowship, of course, is true because that involves the ministry [00:23:04] of our Lord Jesus Christ. But apostolic succession, no.

However, we have no body of men that we can turn to to say, now look, we want you to indicate to us the persons who are to be appointed as elders in the various assemblies. That doesn't exist.

But those two other things exist. The personal exercise of the believer in relation to the work involved and the setting of the Holy Spirit in the assemblies where the need is greatest. Now I believe these two things continue and will continue right to the end. It may be, dear brethren, that many of us have wasted our time to such an extent that there is no longer the opportunity for us to qualify for this position amongst the saints of God.

I don't mean as a position, but it may be that we've wasted our time and there is no [00:24:01] time to reach the maturity and spiritual status that is necessary for the fulfillment of this work. We can all ask our hearts if this is so or not. But there are young people here and if the Lord doesn't come, the maintenance of the things that we trust in, that we believe in, that we value will rest upon your shoulders and very squarely there too.

And we don't want to return to the things that we've given up. We don't want to give up the truth that we've been taught, that has been secured at such cost and suffering.

We want it maintained and maintained, although in weakness, in some measure of power. So upon your shoulders will rest the maintenance of the truth as it has been delivered to us. And we want you young people to be concerned, to be men and women of spiritual maturity and to be exercised. [00:25:02] That may be a hackneyed word in your ears, but it's a very good word. It means applying yourself with diligence to the things of the Lord, not only in the acquiring of knowledge, but in the practice of them in your lives, that you might be men and women of influence amongst the saints of God. This is a crying necessity because if the Lord doesn't come, young people will come along to the meetings and you will be responsible to care for them and teach them. And if you don't know the truth, you won't be of any use for them. If you don't practice the truth, you won't be an example to them. So upon your shoulders, dear young people, lies very heavily this burden if the Lord shouldn't come. And the sooner you apply yourself to it, the better.

So then this personal exercise is a very important thing.

Now leave it to the Holy Spirit just to place you where your worth and influence will be [00:26:03] best

used.

Leave it to him. He knows.

And the Holy Spirit knew in Ephesus that these particular people were necessary and so he set them there. It's very interesting to see that this position or this service, if you like, might be better to refer to it as that. This service is connected with all the persons of the Godhead. We've quoted Acts 20.

The Holy Spirit set them as overseers.

In Titus, I think they are referred to as God's stewards, responsible to God himself as to the exercise of this service.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, he is referred to as the bishop. If you like, the chief bishop. He himself is the chief overseer under whom all the rest would operate and serve him and [00:27:01] his beloved people. So you can see it's an exalted service. It has to do with God, has to do with the Lord, has to do with the Holy Spirit, and is a very important function indeed.

Now, dear brethren, you'll see the importance of what we said at the beginning, this attitude of humility. Give a man a position and it's not very long before he goes a step further than the position warns.

He begins to think highly of himself. He's a little bit above the rest.

He's something to do. People look up to him, ask his advice, want him to do things. And so the position grows in his mind until he thinks of himself above the rest. And I believe that this has been the way that what we call the clergy and the laity has developed.

Indeed, church history tells us so.

And instead of this attitude of humility, there is this idea of preeminence, prominence, [00:28:07] and a desire to be something, and oh, the need for humility in the exercise of this service amongst the people of God. We're not saying for a moment, of course, that there aren't humble people who bear the title bishop or who bear the title deacon or elder. We're not saying that for a moment, that there aren't humble people who do this according to the knowledge they have and in the firm belief that they're doing right. But we're occupied with what the scripture says, and we seek to take our bearings from that. Now, we'll just point out in 1 Peter, turn to it please, 1 Peter, chapter 5, and verse 1, the elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, Peter, the first apostle, [00:29:16] the main person, the rock on whom the church is built, the first pope.

Do these scriptures in any way indicate this kind of thing? Listen again. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder.

Isn't Peter saying, I'm one among many.

I'm not one above many.

I'm an elder, just as you are an elder, and I want you to perform your service in this particular way

that the scriptures indicate. Oh, dear brethren, what evidence of the Lord's ministry to Peter being appropriated.

[00:30:04] There was a time when he didn't think himself the foremost. All the others might forsake me, Lord, but I'll never do it. I'm the man.

I'll be faithful right to the end. It doesn't matter what others do. And how soon he found to his bitter experience that he was just like the rest. And here he is, he's saying, I'm not the foremost at all. I'm only one amongst many others who are doing this important service. Indeed, if you look at the scriptures where the ordination of elders is mentioned, it's always in the plural and never in the singular. That is, for each assembly, and we don't know how many were in each assembly, it might be 20, 40, 50, 100.

I feel convinced that they weren't large companies at the beginning, in spite of the fact that 3,000 were saved in Pentecost, that might have been distributed through the city in [00:31:05] many small gatherings. I feel convinced from the tenor of scripture that there were no large gatherings of the saints.

Now, think of elders being ordained in, say, a gathering of 100 people. We'll see six elders.

Does that tie up with the present usage of the word? Six bishops for 100 people?

Well, that's the kind of thing that scripture presents. And they're not one above many, they're all working together, helping forward the things of the Lord. Now, I think this portion here, before we finish, is extremely important. I've been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, he said, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Oh, the experience that Peter had in his soul, the experience of walking with the Lord and [00:32:05] seeing all the sufferings that he endured, in his pathway of reproach and opposition, Peter shared in that.

I suppose, too, that after the cross, he became aware of those atoning sufferings on the cross. Not that he saw them, but he would realize something of what they meant. But he knew that for the Lord, there was what our brother brought before us this afternoon, first, then the glory, the right hand of God.

Now he says to the elders, I have experienced this, I've seen the suffering of the Lord, I've shared in it, too, but I'm very thankful that at the end, there is glory. I was on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord, a little picture of the coming glory. And if you read Matthew 16 and 17, you'll find that when the Lord announces the church [00:33:03] to be built upon his person, in between that and the Mount of Transfiguration, a picture of the glory, the Lord lays down the principles of discipleship. The suffering, the sacrifice, the reproach that would be involved in following Christ. Now Peter says, this is the kind of thing we elders can expect. We're not going to receive adulation, we're not going to receive prominence, we're going to be partakers of the sufferings, just as Christ met them in his pathway here. Thank God, the end is secure, and we're going to enjoy the glory. Now he says, feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, and we'll speak about the other things in a minute. Feed the flock of God.

In chapter 20, it says, shepherd the assembly of God.

And in Titus, I think it is that the elders are to minister the word of God. [00:34:04] You see, this has nothing at all to do with rules or regulations or conforming to a certain pattern.

It means simply that I care for the people of God, I shepherd them, I feed them. They don't belong to me, there isn't such a thing in scripture as a flock belonging to any man.

It's the flock of God.

It's the assembly of God, and what they present is the word of God. And so you can see that the elder's responsibility is a very important one. Now again, let's speak about a shepherd, if he went into a field where there was a flock of sheep, and he just flung some hay in and then went away feeling that his job was finished, he would be a poor shepherd, wouldn't he? Feeding means much more than providing food in the scripture. It means caring in the widest possible sense. And if you turn over to the book of Ezekiel, where God indicts his shepherds because of [00:35:01] their lack of care for his flock, you will see what an important service it was in that day. He says those that have been broken, he says you didn't bind them up. Those who were lost, you didn't seek after them. And those who required fed, you didn't feed them, and so on. I think there are about eight different things he mentions, and it's all an indictment against their care.

And so Peter is saying here, feed the flock of God. Oh, how well he had appropriated what the Lord said to him in resurrection. Lovest thou me, Peter?

Oh, yes, Lord.

Well, he says, if you do, you care for my sheep and care for my lambs. And Peter couldn't possibly miss the importance of what the Lord told him on that resurrection day. Feed the flock of God, care for the lambs.

And in all the value of his own experience, he is asking the other elders to do exactly that, to feed and care for the flock of God.

[00:36:05] Now dear brethren, when we bring this home to ourselves, how do we do this? We certainly don't do it by criticism. We certainly don't do it by fault finding. We don't do it either by adopting a rule of tyranny amongst the saints of God, and that my word must be obeyed at all costs.

Surely there is sufficient guidance for us in the word of God as to how we are to do this kind of thing.

And surely love would be the great motive, love for the people of God, love for the name of Christ.

The shepherd, I understand, gets very attached to his sheep. I remember a dear brother in Northumberland, and his flock, his sheep, and also his herd of cattle contracted foot and mouth disease, and of course they all had to be destroyed. And many of them were known by name. Our dear brother was crying as his flock and his herds were destroyed. [00:37:03] He became attached to them. They weren't only a means of making money, they were animals, they had life, and he moved amongst them and got attached to them. Dear brethren, ought not this to be our attitude towards each other? We belong to God, the flock of God, we are his, but with such a tremendous cost.

Indeed, this is what Acts 20 says, shepherd the flock of God, that which was purchased by, we

believe the right translation, the blood of his own, not God's own blood, but the blood of his own Son.

What a cost! And if that was the cost, ought it not to impel us with concern that we might be governed by the features that encourage and help and bind together, rather than scatter and destroy? Now he says, not by constraint, by willingly.

[00:38:01] What a poor business it is if we just enter into some form of Christian service, because, well, it has to be done.

Nobody else is going to do it. Someone's got to do it, so I suppose if no one else is available, I'll have to do it. Constraint.

How much use is that service in the light of heaven? Not for filthy lucre.

What a terrible business it would be if we served amongst the people of God for financial gain. How we could make ourselves independent by what we obtain amongst the people of God. What a terrible outlook.

And it says, neither as being lords over God's inheritance.

Lords over God's inheritance.

How does this ring in your ears when you hear such an expression as, my Lord Bishop? Does not this verse destroy that kind of idea, lording it over God's inheritance?

[00:39:07] Not seeking some position of preeminence, but caring and loving and supplying.

I'm going to tell this story. It may seem to you to be amusing, but it's certainly very much to the point. A brother was asked to go and preach in a Methodist chapel, and he went along a long time before the service was due to take place. As he went in the door, he found a little box, and marked on the box was, expenses. Well, he took a half crown out of his pocket before the decimal currency was in vogue, took out a half a crown and put it in the expenses box. So after he had served the saints there, a brother came forward to him and said, Brother, we would like to help you with your expenses. So he handed him the half a crown. He says, this was in the expenses box. So the brother took it, and he went home, and he was telling his wife and children about [00:40:03] this experience. Up pipes his little daughter and says, well, Daddy, if you had put more in, you would have got more out. Well, dear brethren, this presents a very definite point, that it's not what we get out, it's what we put in.

And I'm sure that elders are very much responsible before the Lord as to put into the Christian circle as much love and care and influence as they can possibly supply.

What a service. Now, I see the time has gone, but look what it says. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Think of that, the chief shepherd.

The chief shepherd, he's going to give rewards to all those under him who really care for [00:41:02] the people of God.

And he says, likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

We hear a great deal today about the young people not being submissive towards the elder.

The scripture here says very definitely that they should. They should submit themselves to the elder, those who are concerned about their spiritual progress.

Hebrews tells us that they watch for their souls. That's a part of the leader. Now, perhaps if we who are older were more governed by the truth ourselves and had more spiritual power and influence ourselves, it would be easier for the young people to submit themselves to such when they spoke and advised and exhorted or admonished. [00:42:04] You see, there's a great deal of responsibility rests upon us, those of us who are a little older.

It's not all on the shoulders of the young. We ought to be showing a better example. Now briefly, as I finish, if you examine 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1, where Paul shows the characteristics of those who are to be occupied in this kind of service, it falls mainly into three categories, three characteristics, very carefully defined. First of all, the person himself, what he is to be.

Secondly, what his home is to be.

And thirdly, what he is to be in the circle of the saints.

Now very, very high standard is demanded of those who are occupied in this service amongst [00:43:04] the saints of God, themselves, their homes, and their position amongst the saints.

I say this very humbly, dear brethren, that the measure in which we fail individually or in our homes or amongst the people of God is the measure in which the testimony is going to be adversely affected.

But the measure in which we answer to the truth, either individually or in our homes or in the assembly, is the way the assembly is going to be prosperous. May the Lord help us all to be concerned with what the scripture says about these various things.

I think it's obvious that this responsibility rests very squarely upon the shoulders of the brothers, but this does not mean that the sisters cannot be concerned in this kind of service and prayer, and a wife can do a great deal to encourage her husband, as she [00:44:06] can also do to adversely affect her husband. So wives, encourage your husbands to take their part amongst the people of God. Let them all, you can, in prayer and influence, so that the things of God might be helped forward in these last days. No, above all, let's remember, as our brother said to us this afternoon, that there is a man in the place of power, supremacy, and glory.

He is our object, not our service. He is our object. I'm sorry to have brought you down from the heights you were this afternoon, but we're talking about things that are practical, that we know have to be faced day by day in the Christian life and experience. May we all be helped, for his name's sake.