

Pleasing God – 1 Thess 2.4-6

1 Thessalonians 2.4-6 (p 22) But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

PRAY: Father in heaven, we pray that we would have hearts set on pleasing You, and minds ready to hear Your word. Enable us through Your precious Spirit to understand and desire to apply it. We come now as Your children in need of guidance and truth, and we commit ourselves to You and ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Intro: I believe most of you have heard the name of Dietrich Bonhoffer, a Lutheran pastor in Germany during WWII. During that time, many German pastors did not stand against Naziism and Hitler. They did what was expedient and safe and pleasing to men in power.

Rather than stand firm and speak out against the atrocities of Naziism, and please the Lord, they caved in to please men. Dietrich Bonhoffer died because he spoke up and took action.

And another pastor named Martin Niemoller waffled some early on, but later stood against some of the atrocities of Naziism, and suffered for that. And he is remembered for this quote:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

In trying times, and even when things are going fairly smoothly, we

are tempted to act, and to speak, as people pleasers, when we should be God pleasers. We are by nature protectors of our selves, and avoiders of discomfort. We want the approval of others too much, or fear what others think too much. And we don't think maybe about the cost of pleasing others, like Niemoller, on ourselves and others.

This text from 1 Thess 2 and topic has been on my mind for some time, and it was impressed on me again because the young men and I, and a number of their fathers, have been going through 1 Thessalonians, and when we studied Chapter 2, several of them commented on this struggle with being men pleasers. We didn't go over this passage or this topic, of pleasing God rather than men, in detail then, so one of the young men said I should develop a sermon on this. So here it is!

I have organized some of the major scriptures on this topic using some thoughts from Richard Baxter, the Puritan theologian who lived in the 1600s, from his chapter on Christian Ethics from The Practical Works of Richard Baxter.

1. Pleasing God through the Approval of the Appropriate People;
2. The Folly of Pleasing Man (rather than God); (examples of people-pleasers)
3. The Advantages of Pleasing God; (examples of God-pleasers);
4. Some Signs of living to please God (what does a God-pleaser look like? How do we please God?)

First of all, in general, there are two sides to the unbiblical ways of being a people-pleaser. One is that we long for the approval or favor of others more than that of God, more than God's approval.

And the other is that we fear the displeasure of people more than God. People-pleasers love the wrong thing, the approval of man rather than God, and they fear the wrong thing, the disapproval of man rather than the disapproval of God.

Lou Priolo, in his book titled Pleasing People: How Not to Be an "Approval Junkie, said, "For the people-pleaser, love of man's approval is accompanied by the flip side of the coin, the fear of losing

someone's approval (or respect, or favorable opinion), or the fear of being rejected, or sometimes even the fear of conflict." He said "The love of man's approval is inextricably bound to the fear of man's disapproval."

So essentially, this is to make idols of people. Modern politics came to my mind here. It has become, or politics in all of history, the art of pleasing as many people as possible. For many people, and sadly some Christians also, the state has become an idol. And we should pray for Christians in the political world, who daily face tremendous pressure to please the wrong people.

And we are each tempted to be people pleasers in certain ways, under certain situations. So we need to be on guard in those cases especially, and pray that we would stand in faith to please God, when our flesh wants to please others out of fear or because we want approval.

1. Pleasing God through the Approval of the Appropriate People;
In other words, there are ways we can please God by pleasing others. Baxter had an interesting section on not going too far the wrong way in this discussion on not being a people-pleaser.

Don't go to the opposite extreme. There are appropriate ways, God-pleasing ways, to please or seek the approval of the right people.

For example:

-Regarding children and parents: Col 3.20: **Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.** By gaining the approval of parents, children are pleasing the Lord. 5th Command.

-Wives to husbands: Eph 5.22: **Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.** and **Husbands love your wives..**

-Citizens to God-given authority: Romans 13, 1 Peter 2.13: While the state is growing in tyrannical behavior and control, yet there are ways we can and should honor the Lord, even as we bring the law to bear

upon their disobedience.

-Church members to God-ordained leaders: Heb 13.17: **Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.** By submission to church leaders, we can rightly be pleasing God, if we submit to God-given authority as unto Him, as submitting to Him.

-Employees to employers or self-employed to customers: Col 3.22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.**

By working for others, we may rightly honor the Lord and please Him, if we do so with sincerity of heart, as pleasing the Lord, and in the fear of displeasing God.

We will see later, this must all be done, all right submission and work must be done, as to the Lord, according to His will.

So we don't want to go to an extreme and say, or think, that gaining the approval of some people is always wrong, or that we can't be submissive or pleasing to others because it automatically displeases God, or makes us a people-pleaser.

But the natural inclination of our sinful hearts (Jer 17.9: **The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can understand it?**) is to protect ourselves, and to promote ourselves, by pleasing others or by fearing others in ways that are idolatrous, that displease the Lord our Master.

2. The Folly of Being People-Pleasers: by looking at some examples people-pleasers in the scriptures

First, Saul the man-pleaser (before he was Paul the-God pleaser). Gal 1:13 **For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried***

to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Saul was busy advancing in his field by pleasing others. A Pharisee of Pharisees. He had convinced himself that he was pleasing God by keeping the rules of men, by seeking the approval of the Pharisees. And through his folly as a man pleaser, many saints were killed.

-Peter: before the crucifixion and resurrection, had his own agenda. When the Lord told the disciples that He would be crucified; Peter didn't want that!

And Peter denied that he knew the Lord three times, in fear of the people gathered around the fire in the high priest's courtyard. But by the mercy and forgiveness of the Lord, he certainly served faithfully, and ended his life, as a God-pleaser.

-The Lord often referred to the **Pharisees** and scribes or rulers as the prime example of people-pleasers:

John 12.42, 43:**even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

They were afraid of being put out of the synagogue, which would mean the loss of reputation and material gain and privilege. And their love of those things were more important to them than the love of the Lord, by whom they had just seen a miracle, Lazarus being raised from the dead.

For too long they put their hope and security in their position and how others looked at them, so they didn't recognize the One whom they should have been looking for and serving.

Jesus said of them: **Matt 23.5-7: But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad (small leather box with scripture worn on head or left arm) and enlarge the**

borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

They were motivated by the recognition of others, by being known or acknowledged as above others, when in truth God does not show favoritism or partiality. Acts 10.34: Peter said to Cornelius: **"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."** Is approved by Him. God pleasers fear God and work righteousness to be accepted by Him, to please Him above all.

And because the Lord hated this pride of the Pharisees, and often spoke of their man-pleasing ways, I'd like to read from Matthew 6 about three areas in which the Pharisees were focused on pleasing men, and in which **we** are to please God rather than men.

Matt 6:1-8, 16-18, 24 (turn with me)

First way that the Pharisees were pointed out by the Lord for the pleasing men: **"Take heed that you do not do your *charitable deeds* before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.** (Men-pleasers may gain some fleeting reward, but not from the Lord.) **2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men (the favor or approval of men). Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed (as a God pleaser), do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.** God rewards those who do good to please Him, not to those who do so to be seen by others or "have glory" from men.

The second example: **5 "And when you *pray*, you shall not be like the hypocrites (Hypocrites are men pleasers who speak for man's praise but do not act to please God). For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their**

reward. **6** But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. **7** And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Therefore do not be like them.

The Lord is pleased when we pray to Him, not to be seen as “spiritual” by others. So we must pray in secret to Him. Which doesn’t mean we can’t pray publically, but we must guard against pride, and pride can come out in being showy or using a lot of words. **Therefore do not be like them.**

16-18: **“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites (men pleasers), with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you** (if you want to be a God pleaser), **when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret place (*you are fasting as unto Him and to please Him*); and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

We do good deeds, and pray and fast, we memorize and learn the word, we practice spiritual disciplines, to please the Lord, not to impress others and be approved by them.

Spiritual pride in myself for the approval of others just grosses me out! I have no claim to doing anything good in myself! Or taking glory which belongs to God alone for what He has done in me or through me. May God forgive me, may God forgive us, for doing these good things for the approval of men.

Matt 6.24: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Pleasing people to gain their favor rather than God’s is like trying to serve two masters! It cannot be done!

After the Lord said that (You can not serve God and mammon), it is recorded in Luke 16: **14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15 And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**

May the Lord keep us from living for what is highly esteemed among men, because those things are an abomination in the sight of God, and very displeasing to Him.

3. Examples of God pleasers/the advantages and blessings, and temporal costs, of pleasing God:

Matthew Henry said “Good examples either convert sinners or condemn them.”

The apostles: Acts 4.18-20 **So they** (rulers of the Sanhedrin) **called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”**

But the rulers feared the people at this time, so they let them go.

Apostles: Acts 5.29: **29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”**

May God give us all this boldness, and keep us from the fear man. If God is for us, who can be against us?!

I found a list of the apostles, and the way they ended their lives, as far as we know.

Tell me if you think these apostles and disciples were people pleasers, at the end of their lives:

- Matthew was slain with a sword in a city of Ethiopia
- Mark died in Alexandria, in Northern Egypt after having been cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.
- Luke was hung upon an olive tree in the land of Greece
- John was banished to the island of Patmos
- James was beheaded in Jerusalem
- James the Less (as he's called in Mark 15:40) was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple
- Philip was hung up against a pillar at Heiropolis in the province of Phrygia
- Bartholomew was flayed alive
- Andrew was bound to a cross, and left to die
- Jude was shot to death with arrows
- Matthias (the apostle chosen to replace Judas) was first stoned, and then beheaded
- Barnabas was stoned to death by the Jews at Salonica
- Paul, after a variety of tortures and imprisonments, was finally beheaded in Rome
- Thomas was run through the body with a spear in east India
- Peter was crucified upside down in Rome.

They, as our martyred brothers and sisters, pleased God by being faithful to proclaim the gospel of life in Christ, to the end. If they had been motivated by pleasing men, they wouldn't have suffered this way. Like Paul, if they had still wanted to please men, they would not have died as servants of Christ. May He give us His grace to do the same, when we are called to suffer temporal trials.

I referred to Saul the man-pleaser earlier. But in Galatians 1, we see one of the many ways Paul the apostle was certainly not a man pleaser!

Turn with me to Galatians 1. Paul was basically accused of pleasing himself in the way he was communicating the gospel.

Gal 1.8, 9: **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (anathema) 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (let him be given over to God for judgment.)**

One commentary said: The vehemence of Paul's language (here v8, 9) was enough to show clearly that he was anything but one who suited his preaching to the whims and the desires of his hearers".

Preaching to the whims and desires of his hearers, was not Paul, nor the apostles, after the resurrection and the filling of the Spirit at Pentecost.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? (ESV "Am I now seeking the approval of man?") Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Paul said to the Corinthian church: **we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** Paul was always striving to please God, whether with them in person, or absent from them and with the Lord. His aim, his goal, was to always please the Lord, and always will be, to please the Lord.

In the text we read from 1 Thessalonians, we see again Paul was not seeking man's approval above God's. **But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.**

Paul was defending himself against claims by the Judaizers that he was communicating the gospel in his own way, for his own benefit. He was accused by those who themselves were acting to please men, and for their own benefit.

But Paul knew he was approved and called by God to speak the gospel of grace in Christ alone, and so he spoke as pleasing God, who knew his heart in this matter.

He didn't use flattering words, which is a common way to please others. He didn't try to hide his true intentions, like hiding something with a cloak, he wasn't coveting anything of theirs, as he was accused of. He didn't serve for personal gain, to please himself

Many other examples in the word of those who pleased God: **Enoch** (Heb 11) was taken by God because He pleased God by his faith. He walked with God, which in the Septuagint is translated. "he pleased God".

Noah was ridiculed for building something those around him thought was foolish.

Hebrew midwives were told to kill all males at birth, but feared God rather than Pharaoh.

Jeremiah the prophet said a lot of things the people didn't want to hear, and suffered much for pleasing God rather than saying what others wanted to hear. The Lord said to him Jer 1: **They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you."** A promise to those who choose to suffer for obeying God rather than pleasing people.

Daniel; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego obeyed God rather than Nebuchadnezzar in what they ate and how they prayed.

Stephen spoke boldly before he was stoned to death. Acts 7: **"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*."**

And Jesus is our ultimate example in pleasing God:

The Lord shared this with the crowds who were following Him, about himself, from Isaiah 42: **"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit**

upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

When Jesus was baptized by John, Luke 3.22: **...the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”**

Jesus said this to the Pharisees and rulers: Jn 8.29: **...He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.** In the flesh, Jesus always did what was pleasing to His Father.

Rom 15.3: For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.**”** He bore the reproaches of men to please His Father.

Our Lord made Himself of no reputation, took the form of a bondservant, *and* came in the likeness of men. Therefore God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name which is above every name. Jesus is our example of pleasing God.

4. How can we please God rather than men?:

It is amazing, it is incomprehensible, that we can please God at all! It is all by His grace, and through His Son, that we are acceptable to our Heavenly Father, and can act in ways that please Him, as imperfect as those actions and thoughts may be.

We please God by:

A. confidence in His call; trust in His protection:

Proverbs 29.25: **The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.**

The fear of man is a huge snare, and trips up many Christians, and drives them to be people-pleasers. It is when we trust in the Lord that we are kept safe, not when we fear man.

Paul **Gal 1.15, 16: it pleased God, who separated me from my**

mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, ...

Paul went forward by faith that he was called by God, and so he didn't fear man. He didn't fear those whom he formerly tried to please, who now tried to kill him.

And we also must go forward no matter what we face, knowing we are called by His grace to be his servants and stewards, to be His adopted sons and daughters; to be His soldiers. (Rod shared last week: 2 Tim 2.4: **we are to please him who enlisted us as a soldier.** We are to please Him first..

Ex. Jim Elliott who desired an AUG degree more than a bachelor's degree or the approval of men. KJV of 1 Tim 2.15: Paul said this to Timothy: **Be diligent to present yourself approved unto God, ...**

B. And this confidence in His call is by faith: Heb. 11.5,6; **By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.** Gen 5: he walked with God.

We don't know exactly what actions of faith Enoch did, but he was a man of faith, and believed in the coming judgment of the Lord (Jude 1), and so he pleased God; he was well pleasing to God.

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

As we talk about ways in which we can please God, it is also clear that any action, not done in faith, is not pleasing to Him. It is impossible to please God without faith. Trust in Him and His promises, not ourselves.

Charles Spurgeon: "The most self-sacrificing and most heroic deeds, whenever they have been performed from any other motive than that of pleasing God, and without confidence (faith) in God, have remained outside His acceptance."

The Lord said to the many following Him, (John 6) **“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He (Father) sent.”** The Lord is pleased when we believe in Him, which we can only do because He gave the gift of faith for us to believe, and the power in the Spirit to continue to grow in faith, by His grace.

And regarding God’s grace, Jerry Bridges, in The Discipline of Grace, said, one of the most important statements of a very helpful book:

“Our worst days are never so bad that we are beyond the reach of God's grace. And [our] best days are never so good that we are beyond the need of God's grace.”

We please God by faith because of God’s grace.

C. We please God by fearing Him: Peter Hammond: “10 Things that are undermining the church today”; top 3 are 1. Prayerlessness, 2. Neglect of the word of God, 3. and Lack of the fear of God.

A lack of the fear of God undermines the church today, because there is too much of the fear of man.

Psalm 147:10, 11: **He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.11 The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.**

God is not pleased by our attempts at being strong, but by our fear of Him, who has all strength, and by our hope in His mercy.

D. We please God by walking in the Spirit; **Eph 5.8-10: 8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable (pleasing) to the Lord.**

We are to continually work to find out what pleases the Lord, and

grow in conformity to His will. We find out more and more how to please the Lord as we walk by the Spirit, according to His word.

The opposite of walking in the Spirit is to walk in the flesh.

Rom 8.6-8; 6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Unbelievers do not please God, nor believers who are not walking according to the Spirit, who are not finding out in His word what pleases Him. Rod exhorted us last week to read all of the word, to be able to find out what pleases Him.

If we think or act according to the desires of the flesh, rather than the word of God understood and applied by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can not please God.

E. We please God by obedience from the heart: 1 Sam 15.22; So Samuel said:

“Has the Lord as *great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.

Obedience from the heart pleases God, not just outward conformity to be seen by others.

One of those areas in which we are called to obey is the great commission. Daniel Noor and I have been meeting to discuss The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman, and in the chapter on “Selection”, on how the Lord chose the disciples, he said, “One must decide where he wants his ministry to count - in the momentary applause of popular recognition, or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he is gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.”

And I believe that those who are seeking to please God rather than

men, are content to work knowing that their labor may not be seen at all by men, but will yield great fruit, and glorify the name of the Lord, in the future. Few may applaud them or recognize them, or even notice them, for this, but the Lord will, and so they will receive their reward from Him. Because they sought to please the Lord.

F. We please God by serving and giving: Heb 13.16 ...do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Phil 4.18 Paul said to the Philippians: ...I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

Giving is an acceptable sacrifice, a pleasing aroma. In both verses it said the Lord is well pleased by our sacrificial service and giving. Are you serving and giving to please Him?

G. Finally, we please God by doing all our labors with a humble, sincere heart, as to the Lord:

Col 3.22-24: 22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

When we work for our employers, or for those who hired us, or for our parents, we must remember we are serving the Lord our Master, and so we should not just serve well when being seen, but we should serve and work with sincerity of heart, fearing God who sees how we work; we are called to work heartily as if the Lord was our employer, as to Him, and not just as we would for those watching us, to please them.

Our standard for quality in our work is “as to the Lord”, and He desires all we do to be done skillfully with a heart to please Him, as

living sacrifices. He isn't expecting perfection, but a heart set on doing all things to please Him.

May the Lord keep us from outwardly rendering eye service to be seen and approved by men, rather than rendering service from the heart to be approved by God.

Eph 6.6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,
Work as though you were a slave of Christ! All you do, in study and work, is as a servant of the Most High God, and doing it poorly does not please Him or reflect well on your Master.

Practice of the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk, who worked in the kitchen, washed pots with a loving heart, as to the Lord. A mundane task, little outward recognition by men. He said the most excellent method of going to God "was that of doing our common (ordinary) business.....as far as we are capable, purely for the love of God."

He spent over 40 years basically doing the same "menial", mundane task, with the goal "to be always with God and to do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing which may displease Him, and this without any other view than purely for the love of Him, and because He deserves infinitely more.

I'd like to conclude with a prayer request. Would you pray specifically for your elders, and the elders of the CPC.

In an recent article titled, "The Failure of the American Pulpit" by Joel McDurmon of American Vision, he quoted AW Pink:

"The great enemy of God and man (the Devil) has ever sought to move (corrupt) leaders, both civil and religious, so to temper things to the depraved inclinations and popular opinions of the people, that true piety may be overthrown."

"...But the servants of Christ shun not to declare all the counsel of God, no matter how distasteful and displeasing it may be to the

natural man. They dare not corrupt the Truth and refuse to withhold any part of their God-given message. To glorify their Master and be faithful to the trust He has committed to them is their only concern.

Fellow Citizens of heaven, if our nation, our government at any level, makes speaking the truth a crime, if they make speaking against the atrocities of abortion a crime, or speaking against the depravity of same sex marriage and homosexuality, a crime. If they say that speaking about any of God's law is a crime, for example the death penalty, may your elders, and all of us, be bold and speak against all that is against the Lord and His word.

If we do not speak the truth of all of the word of God as it applies to all areas of life, and please God rather than men, "they" might come for us someday, like the German government did for Martin Niemoller, and there will be few to speak for us.

So may your elders, and all called by God, say with Paul, **as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.**

Pray: Father in heaven, thank you that by Your grace we can live to please You. We pray that we would more and more delight in doing so, and not be enslaved by seeking the approval of people rather than obeying You. Lord, whatever we do, may it be done heartily, as to You and not to men, knowing that we will receive our reward from You. Lord, make us complete in every good work to do Your will, work in us what is well pleasing in Your sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.