



Sermon – 10/30/2022
Phillip Bethancourt

Verses Covered

2 Timothy 2:1 – 4

James 1:2 - 4

Let me invite you to open your Bibles with me. We're going to spend our time in 2 Timothy chapter 2 this morning. 2 Timothy 2. And if you're a guest, whether you're in the room here or catching us by video, welcome home. To all of you, I want you to remember that next Sunday is our next new member workshop. And so if you're ready to take a next step in connecting to our faith family here, I want to invite you to begin that process during the response time by coming down here to the front. And as we turn our hearts to God's word, remember where we're at over the last couple weeks. We've been in this series called All In. We've been wrestling with the question, what would happen if all of us went all in with Christ. You'll notice on the screen, we put in a symbol up there at the start of the series of a gear.



And that gear showing the four different dimensions of what we need to characterize our life in if we're going all in with Jesus. That we're all in on the word. That's what we focus on last week that the Bible is the true story that changes lives. And we need to immerse ourselves in it as we find and follow Jesus. And this morning, we're going to continue that focus by shifting our attention to the next of those four items. To be all in on the work. That is the work of discipleship. Now, you'll remember a couple of weeks ago when we started this series, we had this table here with two bowls. And these two bowls that we had, we talked about how there are two different ways that each of us can choose to live. Remember this bowl is filled with rice representing the things that fill our day that vie for our attention. And there are other demands that we have to pursue. But there are these four foundational elements that we need to include and incorporate in our life. The word of God, represented by this Bible. The work of God, represented by this soldier as we fight the good fight of the faith. The way of God, as we embody the life of the church and the world as we live to serve and to share the love of Jesus. And remember, we talked about the danger of this first bowl kind of life, is everything else takes our focus and we try to fit these other things into it. And we can't fulfill our approach to these four dimensions in the way that we should. And instead we talk about this bowl two type of life where what would happen if we started with these as a foundation. And then took that rice, those things that fill our days, and put them around that firm foundation. And what we're going to focus on this morning is this soldier right here. Because in this text in 2 Timothy 2, it's calling us to a spiritual battle as we fight the good fight of the faith through the work of discipleship. This picture that we are all called to war, to stand for truth, and to live in a way that pleases God. And the question I hope you're wrestling with is, what kind of life are you living right now? Are you living a first bowl kind of life? Where the cares of this world dominate your attention and you fit God in where you can? Are you living a second bowl kind of life? The one where these four marks are foundational to you. You've gone all in with them and you trust that God will take care of the rest. You see, the with the first bowl type of life is so often we don't have time for the spiritual things in our own life much less to invest in the lives of others through discipleship. But Paul this morning is going to call us to a different way. A different path. A different focus. And we're going to see it now beginning in 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 1. Here's what he says.

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Let's pray together now.

Father in heaven, we're coming to You. God, we're coming to You with a desperation. There are so many things that compete for our mind's attention and our heart's affection. And we are desperate to experience a deeper sense of Your presence, a greater movement of Your Spirit. And I pray that it would be, He would be a work among us this morning: active, convicting, confronting, and conveying our hearts to You. So that we walk in the work that You've called us to. That work of discipleship. We pray it in Jesus name. Amen.

A few weeks ago, I had the chance to have lunch with a British pastor. He was coming to town to visit the Bush Library and a mutual friend connected us. And he wanted to get together, and said,

“I want to have lunch with you on one condition.” He said, “You gotta promise me you’ll take me to a good Tex-Mex restaurant.” He said, “We can’t get that kind of food in London and Oxford where I live and I need to have it.” And so, we met up. We grabbed lunch together and he was asking me about our church. And I said, “Man, I love Central Church. Let me tell you about it. We are a multi-generational church that’s right on the doorstep of a major college campus. And our heart for generations has been that every generation might reach the next generation. And we’ve been living that out for the last 97 years.” I said, “Well, tell me about your church.” And he said, “Well, we’ve got so much in common. My church is called Saint Ebbe’s Church and it’s in Oxford, England. We’re a multi-generational church right on the doorstep of a major campus.” And I said, “Well, that’s great. We’re so similar. How long have you been around? We’ve been around 97 years. How about you?” He said, “We’ve been around for 1,300 years.” They started back in the 8th century. If you do the math, they’re twice as close to the time of Jesus than they are today, almost. I mean, this is a church that in Oxford has been through the invasion of the Saxons and the Normans. It’s been through cholera outbreaks and the black plague in the 1300’s and later in the 1800’s. It had part of its building collapse in the 1600’s. In the, in the 1900’s it faced, just like churches in America, the Great Depression and World War II. And now in the 2000’s, it’s encountering a global pandemic. And as I heard pastor talk about this church, the way after 1300 years, it is still thriving in faithful Gospel ministry. You know what one question I’ve been wrestling with ever since? What would it take for Central to leave that kind of legacy in the future? What would it take for us to still be standing in 1300 years? To still be serving, to still be thriving, to still be making an impact on our community. If the Lord doesn’t return, how might He find our church faithful? And the answer to that as we’ll see this morning in 2 Timothy 2, is it comes through the work of discipleship? If you’re around our church for very long, you’ll hear us talk about being a church where every generation is reaching the next generation. Why? Because that’s another way to talk about the work of discipleship that Paul is speaking of here. Discipleship is that investment in the next generation so that they might see and savor Jesus Christ. And that is the work we are called to give ourselves to. And as Paul is writing this letter, remember what’s happening. 2 Timothy is his last letter we have on record. He’s writing to his protégé and in his final remarks, he’s trying to equip him. But what we might miss when we just pick up here in chapter 2 is what it is that is happening right before this. You see, Paul has been speaking about the churches in the area of Asia. And how many of them have abandoned the faith. That a hostile culture has led them astray from the call of Jesus Christ. Sound familiar? Living in an American culture today where so many are being pulled astray from the Gospel by a hostile culture. And what Paul is doing is he said, “When everyone in this region is turning away, how might we remain faithful to the work?” And the answer he gives us is through the call to discipleship. And here’s what we’re going to find this morning is if we want to be a church where every generation is reaching the next generation, then what’s going to happen is 2 Timothy 2 is going to show us how we need to continue to be All In on the work of discipleship in three primary ways. We’re going to notice the first one right here back in verses 1 and 2. Paul is calling us to disciple the next generation. Disciple the next generation. You’ll see on the screen a slide that was maybe familiar to you. We showed it 2 weeks ago. A summary of what it means to go all in with the word. This idea, this work of discipleship that we’re called to, we summarize it like this.

All In on the Work

Discipleship is the work. The good life is found in Jesus by taking next steps as we disciple, develop, and deploy our people.

Chains  Change

Discipleship is the work. The good life is found in Jesus by taking next steps as we disciple, develop, and deploy our people. So, what is discipleship? Well, at its most simple, the way I love to define discipleship is putting other people in a position for God to change their life. Discipleship is putting other people in a position for God to change your life. And that's precisely what we see Paul talking about to Timothy and to us here in verse 1. He is saying, if we want to disciple the next generation though, it doesn't start with what God does to them. It starts with what God's doing in us. Discipleship begins with deepening our faith. That's what we find in verse 1. He says,

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,

You see that word, be strengthened? It comes from the word in the original language for power. It means to be empowered, to be equipped, to be prepared. So, you know, when your cellphone battery is running down into the red and you plug it into that charger and that lightning bolt comes on. It's taking what was empty and now filling it. Or after you've sustained an injury and you walk into the physical therapy lab and they take those broken bones or those injured muscles and they begin to work them out. They are strengthening them. That's the image that is being evoked by this term. But notice, it's in the passive voice. This is not something we can do on our own. It's not on the basis of our own strength and willpower. It says, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That grace, that unmerited favor, getting what we don't deserve. Let that be your foundation. Let that be your strength. He says, if you want to disciple the next generation, it starts with you. Strong believers, foster strong believers. He says, deepen your faith. But he goes on in verse 2 to talk about how we need to also discover the faithful. So, what it says there in verse 2 is,

²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men.

So, Paul moves from the past to the future, from what we've learned to who we lead. And what are the types of leaders that he says we should look for? What's the characteristic? Right there in the middle of verse 2. He says, find faithful men. You can imagine him, asking him to find any type of person. You would expect on the face of maybe to find the most gifted. The most high capacity. The most competent. The ones with the greatest potential for impact. But what he says is, don't find the most famous, don't find the most fruitful, find the most faithful. It's faithful men and women just like you and me that are called to carry out the work of discipleship. This is not some task for the spiritually elite. This is what God is calling all of us to go All In on, to reach the next generation, to help them see and savor Jesus so that they might find and follow Him for the rest of their days. And when that is happening in our lives, it comes not just because we discover the faithful but also, as you'll notice at the end of the verse in verse 2, it's because we are discipling the future.

So, notice how he describes it there in the middle of verse 2,

[entrust the faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.](#)

So, once we discover the faithful, we need to disciple them. And the way he describes it is by using this word entrust. And in the original language, it has this image of a making a deposit or a commitment or an investment, coming alongside and equipping. It's like the business owner in our church who as he's getting older raises up a son, a daughter, or a coworker to hand the business off to the next generation. He teaches all the tricks of the trade to him. Or it's like the family in here who's raising young kids and soon they know they'll be out of the house as they go to school or go to work. And they're trying to invest in them and to entrust life skills that will sustain them for the future. That's the image that Paul is giving us here. Entrusting the truth of the Gospel to faithful men and women. Why? So that they may be able to teach others also. And so I want you to look back at the screen with me at the way that this plays out. You're going to see four circles on the screen as it comes up here representing the four generations that are pictured in this passage. Because when you look back at verse 2 as it talks about it, you have this pathway of discipleship beginning with Paul and Paul invest in Timothy. He discipled him. And now he's calling Timothy to invest in faithful men and you see that circle of impact beginning to get larger with him as he pours into multiple men in his in his area of influence.



And then from those faithful men, they're able to teach others also. And the circle of impact continues to grow. That's what happens when we go All In with discipleship. It has a force multiplier for the sake of the Gospel. And you might have seen that Elon Musk purchased Twitter this week. He's taking over one of the largest platforms in the world. But the pathway to transformation is not through the size of our platform. You might notice that in two Tuesdays from now, it's election day and important votes will happen. But what Paul is showing us is that the future of the church, the focus of the Gospel is not advanced through the size of our platform or the success of our politics, but the source of our discipleship. The Gospel of Jesus Christ. Men and women investing in men and women so that they may become men and women of God. And when that happens, it can take all sorts of different forms. So, those of you that have been here at Central for a while can remember our Adopt an Aggie program back when I was in school. Anybody remember that one? And so, you'd take on an Aggie. Welcome them into your their home. Uh feed them. Disciple them. Maybe do some laundry. Just be that family away from family. Well, the new version of that we've got right now is a mentoring program for our college students. And we've got dozens of them already connected with men and women in our church, investing one on one in them. If you're a student here who wants an older man or woman pouring into your life, you need to connect with our college team because they would love to empower you to do that right now. But it also happens in our discipleship ministries, in Re|generation on Sunday nights as we do Christ-centered recovery ministry and we pair each of those going through it with a mentor. Or it happens in our Zeal groups on Sunday nights in our student ministry as college students come around high school and middle school students and teach them to know and study the word of God for their own. And perhaps most significantly, it takes place in our life groups. Where we gather together in community for the sake of growing a deeper in our with God and with one another. Discipleship must continue to be at the heart of our church as we seek to reach the next generation.

So, Paul here is going to pick up now in verse 3 with the second reality that we need to cling to. We're not just called to disciple the next generation but also to develop the next generation. And let's notice how he talks about that back here at the start of verse 3 when he says,

³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

You see, the purpose of the work of discipleship is not just the transfer of information but the transformation of a person to develop who they are personally and spiritually. It's not just to know Jesus but to become more like Him. And that's the essence of what Paul is getting at here in verse 3 when he talks about sharing in suffering. He's giving us a glimpse of the two ways we need to help everyone develop as we disciple them. And the first one that he shows us is that we need to develop the next generation by strengthening their maturity. Strengthening their maturity. So where do we see that in the text? When he talks about their sharing in suffering. So, this picture is one where you're not on your own enduring the trials of life, but you are banded together in community and commitment to endure suffering together. You see, what we know about life in a broken world is suffering introduces yourself to who you truly are. You can be anything you want to be when things are going well. But when suffering knocks at your front door, it reveals who you truly are. And how you're going to sustain in those moments depends on who you're sharing that suffering with and how that community of faith is developing you for the moment. I look around the room and I just can't help but wonder how many of you are in a season of suffering right now? Maybe it's the loss of a loved one. The loss of a relationship. The loss of a job. The loss of a friendship. It might be an emotional issue. It might be a physical issue. It might be a spiritual issue. But you find yourself in this moment and if you're being honest, you're crying out to God and saying, why? Why me? How long, oh Lord, must I continue to suffer? And Paul and Timothy would have known exactly what that suffering looked like. And what we need to understand is the truth that James chapter 1 reminds us of about the purpose of why God allows suffering in our life. You'll notice it on the screen. James chapter 1, verses 2 through 4. Here's how he says it. He says, there's a connection between suffering and maturity, between suffering and strengthening. He says this,

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

So look on the screen, that word right there towards the end. Perfect. You see that word perfect? In the original language, it could also be translated as mature. The whole idea is something coming to the culmination of its intended use. To its intended end, it's reached the apex of what it was designed to be. And what James is reminding us of is that suffering is a pathway to sanctification. That if we follow a Christ who suffered persecution on this earth, even to the point of going to the cross and dying in our place. Why would we be surprised when we face that suffering as we seek to live out the work of discipleship? See, Paul is showing us that we need to develop the next generation to keep pressing on in the midst of suffering. To share in suffering in the way that Paul speaks of here. Knowing that if Jesus suffered in our place, we are following Him in faithfulness as we walk by the Spirit in the midst of the trials of life. God is refining you so that He can use you in even more faithful ways in the future. So think about this. We need to develop the next generation to strengthen their maturity. But we also see in the second half of this verse that we

need to develop the next generation to shape their identity. And look at the identity he speaks about there in the second half of verse 3. He says,

as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

So, we don't need to just reshape their perseverance as they grow in maturity, we need to reshape their perspective as they grow in their identity. And what is that identity? That you and I are called to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. That word good that we see there carries with it the idea of loyalty, of being blameless, of being committed. It's this idea of being All In in the spiritual battle that God has called us to. That's who we are. That's what we're called to be. You and I are a band of brothers and sisters together in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Called to wage spiritual warfare in the greatest battle that this world has ever seen. The spiritual battle between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. And not long ago, I came across a story of a man named Hiroo Onoda. And Hiroo Onoda was a Japanese soldier in World War II. And late in the war, in 1944, they deployed him to the Philippines. Where he was there to live and to implement Japanese rule on a small island. Well, not long after that, the war was won by the allies. And most of the Japanese army that was in the Philippines left to go back home. But he refused to do so. Refusing to believe that the war had actually been lost. Even when they dropped the leaflets from the air with announcements in Japanese language saying, the war was over. He was unwilling to leave. He kept trying to carry out his duties. Fighting a fight that was of no value. He spent the next 29 years in the Philippines. In the most strategic years of his life, fighting a war that didn't matter, refusing to be confronted by reality, living off the land, stealing from people. And it wasn't until 30 years later, in 1974, his old commanding officer returned to that island, found him, and commanded him to leave, relieving him of his duties. He went back to Japan and lived a life of disillusionment that ultimately culminated in an untimely death. And the reason that happened is because he lived his life for battles that didn't matter, that weren't significant. And I can't help but wonder as I look around this room, how many of us are pulled in that exact same way? We find ourselves fighting battles on a daily basis that don't matter. The battle for success, the battle for significance, the battle for status, the battle for satisfaction. We pour all our lives into these things that won't last. And it has the same kind of foolishness as the life that Onoda lived in the Philippines.

Well, Paul was calling us to a different way. When he says, be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He's reminding us of the reality that we are called to war. And if we're called to that war, it should reshape our identity. How we see ourselves. And that's part of what we're doing when we disciple the next generation is developing them to see the warfare that each of us are called to. And I just want to say a particular word to those of you in the room that are my age and older. I just turned 40. We're part of this generation that's seeking to reach the next generation. And I've had words ringing in my ears for a long time from my old boss Russell Moore. He wrote a book called Onward. And he put a challenge in that book that I just want to read over you this morning for those of you that in the older generation. He says, we face a choice and here's what it is. He says, the older generations in the church in every era must decide if they will respond to their successors as Saul did to David or as Paul did with Timothy. So, in David, Saul saw his own mortality and he seethed with jealousy and envy. Ending in the throwing of the spear. Instead, he should've seen God's goodness in keeping His promises to Abraham. Paul, on the other hand, spent his final moments shepherding and mentoring his successors, Timothy and Titus and others. Every generation has a choice. To go out like Saul or to go out like Paul. And that's the choice that

second Timothy is putting before us this morning. How will we live? How will we see the next generation? How will we go All In in developing them? Because once that happens, when we invest in them through discipleship and development, we're going to find that verse 4 tells us a third thing will take place. It says, we need to deploy the next generation. Look at this language of deployment in verse 4. It says,

⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

You see, the true mark of effective discipleship is not just development but deployment. Not just that we raise them up, that we send them out. We shape them and then send them. And that's the picture that Paul is giving us here. And if we're going to deploy the next generation to keep carrying out the work of the Gospel in our church, in our community, and around the world, Paul is showing us that there has to be at least two things that take place: freedom and focus. So, when you look back at the beginning of the verse there, it says, no soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits. Paul is telling us that we need to have a freedom from worldly entanglements. That we need to find deliverance from those things that seek to hold us down spiritually, to lead us astray. It's one of those reasons why, if you come back over here to the table with me. We've had this soldier sitting here the entire time. And part of what we talked about two weeks ago is that when we start with the things in life that fill it and we try to squeeze God's design into it, we might use as much force as we can but we can't go All In with that. And maybe that's the way you're pulled in deploying a next generation and investing in them. You find yourself just trying to force it in as best you can but not getting fully invested. What if we use a different way? What if we took those things that fill our lives and began to empty them. Those things that distracted us from devotion and we set them aside. And what if once we set them aside, we allowed the Lord to sift them. To root out those things in our life that as Paul says, are entanglements. Those things that hold on to us. They trap us. And after that has been sifted, we then put it back into the bowl of our lives. Well, now all of a sudden, we're All In on discipleship. It's been placed as a priority. We're fully invested in the work. See, when Paul speaks here of not being entangled. He's giving us the picture of a soldier on the battlefield who's too focused, too busy to be distracted by the past. I imagine that's the type of moment that a man by the name of Ray Gerst had back in 2018 when he was on his anniversary trip in Hawaii. You see, he'd gone to celebrate his 28th anniversary with his wife. He woke up on a Sunday morning in January of 2018 and they loaded up a bus to head out on a tour stop to visit a interesting tourist destination on the island of Oahu. And as they were on the bus pulling into the parking lot in that area, he got what you would think of like an Amber Alert. All the phones in his bus started going off at the same time. But this is what the message said: ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill. You can imagine this bus full of tourists just in total panic, unsure of what to do. Well, the locals hauled them off the buses and they pulled them into a concrete building and they waited in the longest moments of their life wondering if they would survive. What they didn't realize though is that somebody at the office of Hawaii Emergency Management had had a bad day. And they had made a big mistake. The supervisor had called for a drill to simulate how they would communicate with others if a ballistic missile was inbound. And instead of pressing the button that said test, he pressed the button that said send. And he notified the entire state of Hawaii of an inbound threat of a dangerous attack that didn't actually exist. But in those moments when they thought it was real, my guess is that Ray Gerst, all those on the bus weren't thinking, "You know what? I really could go back to the room and pick up a few things before we get to that

concrete bunker.” He wasn’t saying, “Hey babe, let’s stop over here. There’s a great spot. We can grab a selfie for our Instagram if we make it through the missile strike.” No. He left those civilian pursuits behind because he was under attack. And what you and I need to realize is this attack that Paul is warning us that we face is no mistake. It’s no joke. There is a spiritual enemy out to destroy your life and Paul is calling us to a warfare worldview where we leave behind those civilian pursuits and run after Jesus. To go All In on the work of discipleship as if life and death depended on it because spiritually, it does.

You look back at the end of the text, you also notice that if we want to deploy the next generation, we need to focus on eternal pleasure. Look at the reason why it is that we need to pass off these entanglements. You’ll see it in the second half of verse 4 when he says,

[since his aim is to please the one who sends him.](#)

This is a purpose statement. It’s giving you the reason why all these things matter and it might hit close to home for some of you that are hunters that are getting ready for the season. He says, make it your aim. Make it your target. Make it your focus to please the one who sent you. He says, if we want to deploy the next generation, if we want to raise them up and send them out, we need to raise up the kind of generation that doesn’t live to please itself but lives to please God. This word here to please means to satisfy, to honor. It’s a way that, another way of saying what we’ve been talking about for weeks of being All In. That Jesus is the central focus of our lives. That’s why I can’t wait for our time together in two weeks right here at Central. When in this room, we’re going to celebrate our Get in the Game weekend. And so on Saturday, we’re going to get together like we did last year and have a central family tailgate and enjoy watching the Aggie football game against Auburn and enjoy some time together in community on Saturday. Then, we’re inviting you to come back on Sunday morning during our normal time, but in a not normal way. We want you to come in wearing your favorite team’s sports gear and to represent them. Because what we’re going to be wrestling with is a challenge to get off the sidelines and to get in the game for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To go All In on the work, or as Paul says it here, to make it our aim to please the one who enlisted us. We’re going to take that step together, challenging one another to go All In on this work as we get ready to turn the clock to 2023. And here’s what I know. As we look at Paul’s command to live a life that pleases the one who sent us, it’s a reminder to us of the spiritual danger that’s lurking in every one of our lives. I don’t know if you’ve heard this phrase, it’s been thrown around recently in the media. It’s called quiet quitting. Have you ever heard this term before? Quiet quitting is a new term for an old practice. It describes the type of person who does the bare minimum that they have to do to get the job done and nothing else. They don’t go above and beyond. They just do the minimum. And so maybe that shows up in your workplace with you or somebody you know who just is there to get a paycheck. Doing the minimum they have to but nothing else. Maybe it’s for you who are students who, it’s not about what you can learn. It’s about getting the grade and the minimum work necessary it takes to get that. Or maybe if you’re being honest, that’s the truth in your family. Where you just want your family not to be a problem for you, rather than you deeply investing in its ability to thrive. But the most important question we should wrestle with as we come to this text this morning is the question, are you quiet quitting your faith? Are you living the kind of life where when people look at it from the outside in, they say, “Well, yeah, he believes in Jesus. Yes, she’s still committed to church. Oh, I see her active in doing things.” She has this appearance of pursuing God with all her heart. When really deep down, you’re doing nothing but putting on a show. That’s a different way than what Paul is

calling us to here. You see, Paul is calling us to a different path, the path where we go All In on the work of discipleship for the sake of the Gospel where we don't do the minimum. We give our all to be pleasing to the one who enlisted us. So, the question we're wrestling with is, am I going to live my life in one of two ways? Am I going to live it to please myself? Or to please God? And none of us should walk out of this room this morning until we've resolved to make a commitment to pleasing the one who sent us.

I've been thinking about that lunch with that British pastor for the last several weeks and one of the questions I asked him, I said, you know, in World War II, I know that they, the Germans did all sorts of bombing in England. Was your church or your city of Oxford damaged during those bomb strikes? And he said, hardly a scratch. Almost no damage. I was pretty stunned by that. Not knowing my World War II history any better than that. I said, "Why was that the case?" And he said, "It's because Hitler saw the University of Oxford as a crown jewel he wanted to keep for himself in his new empire. So he spared the city? He didn't want to leave it in ruins. He wanted to take it over so that he might use it for his purposes rather than its intended purposes." And what we need to recognize this morning is we face a spiritual enemy who is seeking to do the same thing in your life. Yes, he brings destruction in some areas. He brings you down. He leads you into sin. He leads you astray. But there are other spaces where he leaves those things standing, longing to convince you to use them in ways that distract you from the Gospel work rather than devote you to the Gospel work. And the challenge that Paul is laying before each one of us this morning is to go All In on the work as we disciple, develop, and deploy the next generation.

Let's take a moment to pray to that end right now.

Father, we know that there is a spiritual battle raging all around us. And I pray this morning that you would confront us again with that reality. That you would show us the urgency of our mission. That the men and women that are in this room would be known for one thing. Not their success in the world, not their significance in the eyes of others but their unwavering commitment to You. Their unyielding commitment to the next generation. Their unstoppable commitment to the work of discipleship You've called us to. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.