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Temple, How Will We Finish?

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Temple Baptist Church - 3-17-2024 Timothy 4:7? Introduction: A? March 22nd? will mark 37 years? that Barbara and I have been at Temple Baptist Church.? ? 1.? That is almost half of my lifetime!? ? Our children grew up here!? Laurens is our home!? Every day is a special day for this pastor when I walk through those doors and see our church family.? I often stop by the church while out visiting and many times just sit on the back pew where I can see the whole church or sit on the platform and look over the church.? I love to come here and sit and pray.? 2.? There has never been the slightest doubt? that this is where the Lord has placed me and never a time when I considered leaving or looking for another pastorate.? I am satisfied with God's amazing grace and providence that brought my family here so long ago.? I can still say that I love you better than Butter Pecan Ice Cream!? B.? We laughed and we cried!? Two special men went home to be with the Lord last year, Bro. Harold and Bro. Carroll!? What a loss for our church but what a gain for our heavenly home.? We will see them again soon.? C.? This last year, Barbara and I stood with you, and you have stayed with us.? ? I could ask for no more!? There have been good times and bad times.? There has been sickness and there has been health.? There have been fat times and there have been lean times.? There has been spring, summer, fall, and winter with times of growth and times of pruning.? Temple Baptist Church, you have proven yourself true and have positively affected this county and the world for Christ.? D.? Temple started right physically!? ? 1.? We started small but right!? Our faith was in the Lord and our foundation was in God's Word.? We were happy!? My family moved into the little house by the church, and it was home.? ? 2.? Today, we will eat? in a beautiful Fellowship Hall.? Then, we fellowshiped in the "hall"!.? We were happy because we were in the perfect will of God, and we could lay our heads on our pillows at night knowing that what we were doing and had done was scriptural.? ? God blessed.? We began to take on missionary families and made this church a safe haven for them.? We have always taken good care of these special people and God has blessed us for it.? I have not tallied the numbers, but my estimate would be that we have put 3 million dollars or more on the mission field.? ? 3.? We chose to stay? in our building and remodel it as needed instead of building a larger one and allowing our debt to dictate our missions giving.? I am not knocking churches that build when they need to build but the bible says to be content with such things as you have.? In God's time, we paved our parking lot.? Remember the days when we had to push cars out of the red mud when we outgrew our graveled lot?? Those were special days.? ? 4.? When it was time,? God gave us a Fellowship Hall with SS classrooms.? When it was time, God gave us one of the most beautiful Prophet's Chambers that missionaries and evangelists have ever stayed in.? Now we also have a beautiful, cozy, feel right at home Mission House for God's special people.? E.? We started doctrinally right!? 1.? We taught our Sunday School? from the King James Bible; we filled our pulpit with the King James Bible; our people treated this property with respect; our people treated the pulpit with respect; our people have treated this pastor with respect.? We got rid of the Church Constitution and voted in the King James Bible as our authority for faith and practice.? 2.? We maintained the Old Paths? of doctrinal purity and separation.? We believed the Word of God and honored its doctrines.? We culled out the preachers and missionaries who compromised the bible and held the ones that we supported to the same standard that the church had.? We have never been "in your face" with who we are but we also have never apologized or capitulated.? ? "The New Testament Church did not depend on a moral majority, but rather on the holy minority. The Church right now has more fashion than passion, is more pathetic than prophetic, is more superficial than supernatural. The Church the Apostles ministered in was a suffering Church; today we have a sufficient Church. Events in the Spirit-controlled Church were amazing; in this day the Church is often just amusing. The New Testament Church was identified with persecutions; today many of us are identified with prosperity, popularity, and personalities.""Why Revival Tarries", Leonard Ravenhill? F.? I have preached from this verse? over the years but want to make a spiritual application on Homecoming Day, 2024.? Paul is ending his race and is summing it up in three aspects: he fought a good fight, he finished his course, and he kept the faith.? That is all God expected from this great man of God and that is all that God expects from Temple Baptist Church!? 1. We must Fight!? ? The Fight is not over!? We have had to fight from the very beginning and have continued to fight through these years.? Their faces have changed but the fight is the same.? As a church, we have weapons: ? ? a.? ? The weapon of unity.? We must fight together.? When the enemies of God's Word begin their work of division, we must band together.? We are a "Band of Brothers and Sisters" here.? Too many churches have failed because people will not "answer the bell" for each round.? Most people do not like to fight and, unfortunately, most heretics or religious devils love to fight.? b.? ? The weapon of prayer.? The Lord is on our side because He loves the church more than we love it.? The church is His and we need to saturate our problems in prayer.? Pray and fight.? ? c.? ? The weapon of righteousness.? ? Our cause is just!? We war to keep our church right with the Lord.? We war to keep our church a nest in which to raise our young.? We war to keep our church's mission's outreach vibrant.? ? 2.? We must Finish!? We started right but it is possible to finish wrong or not to finish at all.? The bible does not say to finish "big" or to finish "popular." ? We are to finish our race with our spiritual integrity intact!? Today's mentality is "bigger" means that God is blessing, but many churches are "bigger" because they have allowed their churches to be worldly places for worldly people.? Starting right is great but finishing right is even greater.? 3.? We must keep the Faith!? We do so by maintaining or contending for: ? ? a.? The Word of God.? ? The unending battle for Truth will continue as liberal theologians constantly undermine the foundation of our faith.? If the foundations can be destroyed, then what can the righteous do?? b.? The Old Paths.? The old ways are now being forsaken and mocked as liberal churches contend for our young people with the straw man of bridging the generation gap.? I find no place in the bible for a generation gap as the youth are to walk in the paths of their fathers!? ? c.? Separation from the world.? Church needs to be treated like church.? I, as a pastor, never come to this pulpit without a coat and tie on.? Do I wear a coat and tie all week?? I am a denim shirt and blue jeans man!? I believe it is right for the pastor to follow the old ways instead of the open shirt, casual dress of many.? When the church becomes casual, the worship will become casual!? The respect for God's house will be gone and it just becomes another building.? Conclusion: Temple, we started right—we have remained right—let us finish the task that God has given us right!