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Presentation Transcript
Spiritual Mentoring
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Good afternoon to all of you! It's good to see you today. About eight years ago I went back to school to study counseling and toward the end of my program I had to do one last practicum. I decided to apply for an elementary school because I'd always been involved with teenagers, and I didn't know how to work with that younger age group. So I went to the elementary school when the day appointed came, and I met my trainer, Bob. You've heard about Bob before because Bob's now one of my best friends. And I remember that he was very warm and enthusiastic. We talked and I found out that he was six years younger than I was and that he'd been a school counselor for twenty years at that point. He also had a private counseling practice, which he conducted after school in the afternoon, which was the same plan that I wanted to employ for my career, too. I learned that Bob knew a lot. He hadn't been sitting down for twenty years. He'd been learning.

I remember one afternoon, just before school was out, we were sitting in his counseling office sort of debriefing the day, and the secretary buzzed into his office. Apparently the principal was off sight and a substitute teacher had intercepted a note written by a fifth grade girl in which she had called the sub a _____ – you can fill in the blank – and would Bob please talk to her. He sighed and said, “Send her down.” He said to me, “They know I don't like to do discipline, because it taints the therapeutic relationship with the kids.” So this little girl comes into the office, and she's so anxious that she's shaking. She's quaking in her boots. She's terrified. Bob says to her, “Have a seat.” She sits down and she's just kind of like a deer caught in headlights. He said, “So the sub's a _____” – he uses the word she used. She looked up at him very surprised. And he said, “Well, you know, some of them are and some of them aren't.” She just kind of ducked her head at that point. He said, “Tell me what he was doing.” She said, “He was yelling at everybody and he wouldn't let us do anything.” He said, “Why do you think he's acting like that?” She said, “I don't know.” He said, “Nevertheless, you have to come up with an answer.” So she thought for a minute, and she said, “He's afraid the class is going to get out of control.” He said, “Oh! He's afraid. What could you do to help him not feel so afraid.” She says, “I don't know.” He says, “You have to think of something.” So she thought for a minute, and she said, “I could write him a letter and tell him I was sorry.” He said, “Okay, good. That would help. Go do that.” And she looked at him. She looked

at him with this look – this giant question mark on her face – that said, “You mean I get to live?” And he said, “Yes, go. Go write that letter before the bell rings.” So she left. And he looked at me and said, “I’m not into punishment. I’m into education.” After that I knew I had come to the right place. That situation – the way he handled that child – reminded me of Jesus with the Pharisees and the woman that they had taken in adultery. As far as Jesus was concerned, it was all about helping her get on the right track, and not do anything else to hurt herself.

Sometime after that training was completed – it lasted six weeks – I realized that Bob had been a mentor to me – only the second one I’d ever had in my life. His positive effect on my counseling career and my life has been a powerful one. We’re still friends to this day. He still helps me when I get in over my head in counseling situations. In fact, just recently, I went to Grand Rounds at the university and had lunch with him afterwards. We stay in touch that way. So this powerful, positive experience that I had some years ago causes me to wonder about how we, as Christians, can use the concept of mentoring to strengthen our congregations and our young people. It causes me to think about how I should go about mentoring others.

If we stop and think about it, mentoring could be considered a doctrine of the church. If a doctrine is a teaching, then we can, because in the Bible, while there is no command that says, “Thou shalt mentor,” there are examples of people mentoring those who are younger in the scriptures. But we haven’t really thought much about that, have we? You may never have heard a sermon about the doctrine of mentoring. You’ve probably heard about the doctrine of the Sabbath, the doctrine of obeying the Ten Commandments, or what we believe about heaven and hell, and things like that. But why should we talk about some things and not others in the Bible? So that’s what I want to talk about today. I want to talk about mentoring.

What is mentoring? The person, Mentor, was actually originally a figure from Greek mythology. When Oedisius left for the Trojan War, he placed an older man, Mentor, in charge of his son and his palace. Then, in 1699, a French writer, François Fénelon, used the character, Mentor, from Greek mythology, as a lead character in his book called *The Adventures of Telemachus*. This book was very popular during the eighteenth century. So that’s where the word came from that we use today to define a relationship – a trusted friend, a counselor, a teacher, usually somebody older or more experienced.

Now today, some professions use mentoring programs to teach the newcomers what to do. That’s why I was paired with Bob in my master’s program, and also two other people in two other practicums – to learn from them first-hand, in a hands-on way, how to be a counselor. Quite frequently today, mentors provide their expertise to less experienced people in order to help them advance their careers, enhance their education, build their networks. Many of the world’s most successful people have benefited from having a mentor. There are mentoring programs where people are assigned to teach and help those who are less experienced. An example would be Big Brother/Big Sister. Everybody’s heard of that program. And there are also informal mentoring relationships, where people

just take on someone who is younger to help them navigate whatever experience they are going through together. Usually mentors are older than their protégés. Protégé is the other side of the relationship. Though that's not always true. Bob is younger than I am. He was still my mentor because he had twenty more years experience in counseling than I did. I was starting a second career, and he'd been at it for twenty years.

Generally, mentoring relationships are same sex relationships, though that's not always the case. Also, while I was doing my master's program, I had an instructor – a woman who was somewhat older than I am. To this day I keep bumping into people from that program – who have gone through it since I have – and they always talk about this lady – her name is Julie – because she's such a standout instructor. She always tried to teach us how to express empathy to people. She's the very epitome of that. She knows how to do what she teaches others. She was such a good example of what she taught. I remember after I graduated, when I was trying to get a job with the school system in Albuquerque, I called her up because I knew she worked as a school counselor, too. I asked her how to go about getting a job. She said, "Well, the best way to do it is to write a letter to the principals of the schools where you would like to work." So I wrote a letter to every principal in every elementary school in Albuquerque – thanks to "Mail Merge." We can do things like that these days. After I did that I got a call from a principal, but it was after school had already started. I had pretty much decided I wasn't going to get a job. But a few days into the school year, I got a call from this principal at one of the schools, and he had not hired anybody yet. So I went over there. I interviewed with him. When I got home I called Julie, my lady mentor, and she talked to her principal, who in turned called this principal I just interviewed with. And a day later, I was hired. It was interesting to me that later on, Anthony – that was the principal that hired me – told me that the principal from the other school had called him up and told him that it was a miracle that I was still available, and if he didn't hire me right away, somebody else was going to snap me up because I was so good. Well, I'd never met that other principal, and I'd only met Anthony once, so you had to know where that came from. It came from my friend, Julie. That really astounded me, because I had no idea that she had enough confidence to lay her reputation out on the line that way. And it every more astounds me that the principal that had never met me would say something like that on my behalf. What that means is that this principal had huge respect for Julie and her ability. That's an example of networking really paying off, isn't it?

When you are in your fifties trying to learn something new at that age, after doing something else all your working life, it's difficult – or at least it was for me. So her support, which came just when I needed it most, really meant a lot to me. It's interesting, too, that I now share an office with her. So our relationship continues on and she continues to mentor me to this day, because I'll never know as much as she knows about counseling. She's been at it so much longer than I have. So she is still supporting me in that. When I get in over my head I can call her and she gives me that solid advice that comes from doing what she's done for so long.

One of the things I've learned from that – and I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, but I want to mention – is sometimes people who are mentors advocate strongly for the people they mentor – for their protégés – as she did for me.

Let's look at some mentoring in the Bible. I said it was a biblical teaching, though there is no command. Let's think about Jesus and the disciples. Let's go to Matthew 4 and begin there.

Mt. 4:18 – It says, *Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." And they immediately left their nets and followed Him.* Now, we don't know all the disciples ages, so we don't know whether He was older or younger – probably about the same, actually. But He did know more than they did. That's why they called Him, Teacher. So they were following His lead and learning from Him. So we see that mentoring was the way God caused the disciples to have faith and to be equipped to transmit the faith to other people. They learned it from a person who knew more about it than they did. That is the definition of a mentoring relationship.

1 Pt. 2:19 – *For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God, but how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and enduring it? But if you suffer for doing good, and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps.* We all claim to want to follow Christ, don't we? So, if Christ mentored, then that just points to the fact that mentoring is a way that we can also teach other people who are younger than we are about the things that we know.

V-22 – He says, *He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth, and when they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate. When He suffered, He made no threats. Instead He entrusted Himself to Him who judges righteously. He Himself bore our sins in His body on a tree so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness, and by His wounds you have been healed. For you are like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and the overseer of your souls.* So Jesus was watching out for the disciples, and teaching them, and helping them, and guiding them. He was a mentor to them. And He is a mentor to us, too, through the pages of the Scriptures and through His activity in our lives.

Let's look at another example of mentoring that is mentioned in Titus 2.

Titus 2:3 – Paul says, *Likewise teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. They have nothing bad to say about us.* One of the things I learned from this is that mentors have to set a good example of what they are trying to

teach. Paul understood that the younger women were going to naturally learn more easily from older women about the things of women.

I know, for myself, when I think about the younger people I know – whom I am mentoring – it makes me want to be a better person. It makes me want to be a better minister. It makes me want to be a better Christian for *them*, because I know they are counting on me to some degree. I also think that there is an element among the young people in the church who tend to gravitate toward those who are older and who set a good example. I also think that these are the ones that we want to work with.... I know when I was in elementary school, I learned there are some children who lacked adult attention in their lives because of poor parenting or other circumstances. They had the ability to attract the attention of adults to get what they needed. I've seen this same thing among some young adults and teenagers in our church. They are sort of spiritually smart, if I can use that term. They know how to find the people that will help them advance spiritually. I think those are the ones that are open to it and that we can work with.

We were talking some time ago about how God looks to that person that knows that God knows more than we do. Usually the people that I encounter that want to be mentored have that approach. They know there are things they don't know, and they want support, and training, and knowledge that comes from those who have been at it longer than they have.

But perhaps the best example in the Scriptures of mentoring would be the example of Paul and Timothy. I took a quick peek at Wickypedia, the online encyclopedia, and it mentioned in its article on mentoring Paul and Timothy – probably one of the best examples in literature of mentoring.

1Tim. 1:1 – So in I Timothy 1, Paul says, *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior, and the Lord Jesus Christ our hope, to Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.* This is a letter written to Timothy. And we can see that Paul feels really fatherly toward this young man – even though he's *not* his father. “A true *son* in the faith.” He also feels responsible to take care of him in his ministry. So, here, he gives Timothy far-ranging advice on a lot of different subjects. He must have had confidence that Timothy wanted to know what he had to tell him. So this is a really great example – covering two books in the Bible – 1 and 2 Timothy – about the relationship between this older man, who was an apostle of God, and a younger man, who was a minister.

Let's take a look at this relationship and learn something about how we can mentor in the environment of the church. I want to go to Philippians, the 2nd chapter, and verse 19.

Philp. 2:19 – It says there, *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests and not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel.* So here's a powerful

advocacy for this young man by this older man, commending him to the Philippians. It also points out to me that, if a person is going to mentor someone who is younger, they must have respect for them. Certainly, what kind of a statement is this, when he says, “I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. Everyone else I know is looking after themselves. But this young man is looking about God and God’s people.” What a statement! Paul lived to take care of the church and to spread the gospel. So when he says that about this young man, you have to know that his respect for him was profound. He’s worth teaching, and taking care of, and writing these long letters to, isn’t he? A true son in the faith.

In Acts 12, and verse 25, there’s an interesting story here.

Acts 12:25 – It says, *Barnabas and Saul* – that would be Paul – *returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry. They took with them John, whose surname was Mark.* He was the younger man. Now you probably haven’t found that scripture, but it’s already time to go to Acts 13:13 and continue with this story.

Acts 13:13 – *Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John departed from them returning to Jerusalem.* Okay, we pick it up again in Acts 15, and verse 35.

Acts 15:35 – *Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord with many others also. After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing. And Barnabas was determined to take with them John, called Mark. By the way, that was his younger cousin. But Paul insisted they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.* Paul was always about doing the work. So he was disappointed by this young John Mark, and didn’t want to have anything to do with him anymore – didn’t have respect for him apparently.

V-39 – It says, in verse 39, *The contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. So Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.* So Paul wasn’t going to mentor John Mark – didn’t want him around – because he didn’t have respect for him, because apparently he thought he was whimping out on him earlier on.

But Barnabas took Mark with him. You might say, “Blood is thicker than water,” but it’s also interesting to note that Barnabas’ name means *encouragement*. He might not have been as hard on John Mark as Paul might have been. I think Paul was probably pretty crusty – pretty A-type in his personality, pretty hard-driving, pretty impatient with people that aren’t going to measure up to his high standards. Barnabas took John Mark on and mentored him. There’s a lot of supposition in what I’m saying – we really don’t know all the ins and outs of them – but the two of them didn’t seem to get along too well. The point I want to make from that is, it’s really important to have a good *relationship* with

the person you are going to mentor, because that's what causes the mentoring to take place. It happens in the relationship. So that would also mean that we can't mentor everybody, because we don't click with everybody. Not everyone can be a mentor to everyone else. We have to work with the ones that God sends us, and that are open to us, and that we are open to. If we do that, then that's good enough. There was somebody else for John Mark to mentor him, wasn't there.

2 Tim. 1:3 – Paul says, *I thank God, whom I serve as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.* So one of the things that mentors do for their protégés is, they pray every day for them – night and day. It's a commitment that you make. I talked some time recently about how hard it is to pray for someone every day. And yet, Paul certainly was doing that for his young friend. So we have to respect them and we have to pray for them if we're going to mentor them.

V-4 – He says in the next verse, *Recalling your tears, I long to see you that I may be filled with joy.* He'd helped Timothy through some rough times – and I think Timothy might have helped Paul through some as well – and he craved to be with him. That's the relationship that they had. With some people we know, if we see them, fine, and if we don't, we don't miss them that much. This wasn't like that with his protégé. Paul longed to be with Timothy, he liked him so much. He longed to be present with him. When he wasn't with him, it was painful. “Recalling your tears, I long to see you.”

I've noticed, too, that when people go through rough times with each other, that draws them closer together. Whether it's a young person in the church, or a client in my private practice, I always come away with respect for their struggles – feel closer to them. In my private practice right now I'm dealing with a little eleven-year-old girl, who is from a divorced family, and both of her parents are very inconsistent. They don't keep their word to her, to each other, to me. There's a lot of chaos in the family. She's very angry. Over the months that I've been working with her, I've drawn very close to her, and her to me. It's just so obvious that she's hurting so deeply about all of these things. I got word from her mother the other day that she was tired of bringing her all the way, and didn't have the gas money, so they were going to terminate counseling. I advocated for the counseling, and I advocated for the girl. I told the girl, at our last session, that her mother was ending the counseling and we would gradually phase it out. She told me, “I'm going to miss you.” That was just about an ice pick in the heart to me because I've grown so respectful of her and the hard life that she has to live and doing as well as she can in the environment that she's in. I think I can feel that same kind of feeling for Paul about Timothy. He went through some rough times.

I'm reminded that a lot of people avoid relationships because of difficulties. But every relational problem is just an opportunity to build a bridge between two hearts, if you know how to do it. Of course, the other person has to want to do that. There has to be a mutual desire for that – and a respect – but where we have that, then the problems can turn into good relationships. I said earlier, Paul was kind of crusty, but here he's so completely soft, isn't he, and open, and expressive, and vulnerable before us about his relationship.

One of my younger friends called me with a problem, and I said, “I wish I could be with you.” Not that my being there would change anything, but my friend was hurting and I just wanted to be present there for support and encouragement. There’s a sense of responsibility and care and connection that comes with this. I think, for those who are younger than I am, it helps to know that someone older cares enough to want to be there and to be a part of things – to be involved in their problems and to help if possible. Sometimes we can’t really do that much to help, but sometimes all we really need is a cheerleader. So when we can do that, it is encouraging.

I remember when I was working with Bob, he assigned me my first case – this little girl. She was the smallest girl in the first grade. She was this cute little girl blondie with great big blue eyes, and she was upset, because her daddy had moved out. After our first session, I had taken what they call process notes. I wrote down everything I said and everything she said as best I could through this session. I read my process notes to Bob, and he looked at me after I read them, and he said, “You can *do* this work.” He was excited about it. He’d found somebody that had potential, I think, is how he was taking it. Because he was my teacher, and because I knew he knew so much more about it than I did, that really meant something to me. I wasn’t really sure I *could* do that work. When somebody like Bob says you can do it, then that really helps you believe you can do it if you hang in there with it.

I think that is what Paul is telling Timothy here. “I have confidence in your upbringing, your family, your parents, your training, and all that is such a solid base for your success. *You can do this work.*” What is that? Well, that’s encouragement, isn’t it? That’s one of the other things that mentors do for protégés. They encourage them.

What are the points we’ve covered so far. Well, we respect them. We pray for them. We have a kind of relationship where we like to be with them. We can encourage them. “You can do this work.”

Let’s go to verse 5. 2 Timothy 1:3 and 4.

2 Tim. 1:5 – Then he says in verse 5, *I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother, Lois, and in your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also.* So he’s expressing his confidence in his family, his conversion and his faith. That is what you say to a minister when you want him to know that he can *do* that work, because that’s what you need. You need a background. You need history. So he’s expressing to this young man that he has the tools that he needs to do the work – that he has been well-trained by his mother and his grandmother, that he comes from a long line of converted, dedicated people, and that he’s picked that up from them. Paul can tell that. “You can do this work.”

V-6 – He says in verse 6, *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying of my hands.* Paul continues to encourage him, and tell him that he has a gift from God. He knows he does, because he was there and laid hands

on him. He also tells him that he wants him to do something. He wants him “to fan into flame the gift of God.” Now he’s doing something else. He’s using the relationship as leverage to cause him to move to action, isn’t he? *For God did not give us the spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.* So he’s using the force of their connection to encourage Timothy to do something good. He doesn’t really tell him what to do. He just points out that he can *do* whatever he needs to, and he shows him how to do it. Then he leaves the choice of what is to be done up to him. He lets the encouragement move in him in the way that God is going to take him.

When our relationship with someone younger causes us to want to be better people, it causes them to feel the same thing. They want to be better people for *us*, too. Both people are getting something from the relationship if it’s working. So that’s what Paul is trying to do here.

There’s one other thing that we could talk about in this. It’s not here in the Bible, but it’s talked about in society today. When we talk about mentoring, sometimes you here the acronym BOOM – becoming one’s own man. In the business world, when there’s mentoring, a lot of times there’s a breakdown in the relationship at some point, when the protégé learns enough to go out on his own, and the controlling mentor doesn’t want him to. He wants to keep control of him. And usually the relationship goes BOOM. That’s what they’re talking about. Sometimes the mentor kind of resists the application of information that he taught the protégé, but applied by the protégé in his own new, creative way. So the relationship sunders. I was thinking about that and how there’s none of that here in the example of Paul and Timothy. Paul was not trying to control Timothy. He just loved him. I think, maybe, we just need to be friends with them.

I keep talking about this church in Kansas City – this independent congregation. They keep doing things that are so astounding to me. They had a youth retreat and instead of inviting old guys, like me, to come as the guest speakers, they invited some young adults that they had met at the Lexington Winter Weekend to come and interact with their young people. They invited a twenty-four-year-old single young woman and a young married couple that they thought were just outstanding in their enthusiasm and in their dedication to God. They asked them to talk to their kids and to interact with them. I was talking to the young woman, and she mentioned that she found a “mini me” at the activity. She said, “She’s just like me!” She was so excited to meet this thirteen-year-old girl that had so many of her own traits. And I was talking to the married couple about how they had built strong connections with a number of the young people at that activity. I was thinking about how much easier it is for someone who is thirty to make friends with the teenagers than it is someone my age. I mean, I don’t even speak the same language anymore. I don’t even pay attention to the clothes they wear. And I would certainly, probably, never wear anything like that if I did. But they are always very much aware of the kind of clothes other people wear. I was thinking about that and realizing those people who are twenty-four and thirty, they dress a lot like the kids. And they know more about the music that the kids listen to. They are just much more connected to them – easily and naturally. So I thought it was such an insightful thing that this congregation of older people would invite young adults to their teen activity to talk to them – to mentor them.

To avoid the BOOM, we need to be friends with them, and to lead them by example, and when asked for advice, perhaps maybe, instead of giving so much of that, just ask questions so that they are prompted to think for themselves about what they need to do – not to try to force anything. I know that's easier said than done. And I also know that the more we care for them, the harder it is to let go and, also, the more likely we are to make mistakes. But the thing that I keep learning over and over again is, that God wants me to learn to control *myself*, not other people – that we can encourage and inspire and love and help one another, but if we *really* love somebody, we'll let them make most of the choices, because that's how they learn what they need to learn about life and God.

So I'd like to take a little bit different tack now. We're almost done. I'd like to talk about one of our great problems as older people in the Church of God. We love to listen to tapes and CDs, but we're not used to *doing* anything with the information we receive. We've actually been taught *not* to do anything. Nobody's ever said that to us, but the message is clear. You have no gift. You have no ordination. You have no skills. You have no authority. You have no responsibility. Somebody else is going to take care of you. Your job is to pray, pay and obey. Your job is to sit and listen while somebody else makes all the decisions and takes all the action. So, that's what we've done. We've sat and we've listened, and we've listened, and we've listened. Now that many of us are older, we are so used to doing nothing, it's hard to do *something*. It's hard to do *anything*, except listen. Some of us are so spiritually weakened, we can't do anything that we're not already doing. We can't entertain anything new. That's a sad thing. The thought of doing anything else is too difficult to consider, so we're already doing precious little. Worse than sad, it's dangerous.

Who is younger than you that you can take care of? Who is younger than you that you can get to know better, talk to, make friends with. Well, our groups are so small there may not be anybody younger in some places. At least, we can be mindful. Then, if God walks somebody by us at some point in the future, and gives us an opportunity, we will know what to do. We'll recognize the opportunity when it comes to us.

We were at Lexington. There were some meetings for people who wanted to work cooperatively in the church. I think that's such a great thing to try to get together and work together, but at the time those meetings were scheduled, there were also things going on for young adults, and I promised to be involved with them. So I chose to go to those events rather than the leadership meetings. That choice was noticed by my roommate – another elder. He said, "I see that you have a personal ministry with young people." I never thought about what I do that way, but the fact is, that all of us – if we're in the church – we've all been given a gift, and we're to use that to minister to other people. So *everybody* is supposed to have a personal ministry. We're all supposed to be taking care of somebody. Well, maybe nobody. Maybe somebody. But we can all be mindful of our responsibility, so that when God presents us with a chance, we can be ready.

I was interested to learn that Jeb Bush, the brother of the President and the governor of Florida, has been mentoring a young man for the past six years. We have traditionally

stayed out of politics. We've looked down on politicians. But we should ask ourselves, "Who in our community of faith have we mentored for six years?" It's easy to criticize and hard to do the good thing, isn't it? Hard to do the work. Paul said that the Old Covenant was getting old and ready to vanish away. Some of us fit that description as well, don't we? Time is growing short for some of us.

I was thinking the other day about how when I bought a house years ago I used to think in terms of thirty-year mortgages, and now it's more like fifteen. And those of you who are my age understand what that's all about, don't you? So, it's time to wake up! It's time to get busy. And it's time to stop thinking down the same track and to start thinking about new things that we've never thought about before. It's time for us to ask of ourselves, when I pass, what will be my relational legacy in God's church? And who am I going to encourage spiritually? Whose lives will I have changed and touched? To whom will God give the faith through me?