

**Sermon Series: Rooted in Fellowship**  
**Sermon Title: “Not Just Me”**  
**Biblical Passage: 2 Timothy 4:1-8**  
**Guest Preacher: Rev. Dr. Timothy E. Tyler**

**Passage Background and Summary**

The passage begins with Paul giving the people a charge. He tells them to “Preach the word,” and always be prepared to do so. He warns of a time when rather than seek out sound doctrine, the people will seek out what sounds good. The people will “turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” Still, they must do the work they are called to do. Paul offers this encouragement alongside the message that his time of ministry is coming close to an end. He ends with that which would offer hope to all: “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

**Sermon Points**

The sermon begins with the discussion of an article entitled “[Christianity Is Not About a Personal Relationship with Jesus](#).” In the article, the writer emphasizes the communal aspect of Christianity. Believers are a part of a community. As such, our Jesus is not personal but public. When Jesus is personal and not public, Haitian refugees can gather on a bridge, then be gone, and no one questions it. When Jesus is personal and not public, we can watch a nation put women’s health in danger by eliminating their reproductive rights. When Jesus is personal and not public, we refuse to wear a mask that would work to protect ourselves and our neighbors. Pastor Warnock has exemplified in some ways what it means to have a public Jesus and move being the personal Jesus. Personal Jesus may make us feel good, but we are not called to be a personal Jesus people. We are an African spirituality Jesus people. We are an ubuntu Jesus people. We have to live into our history as it relates to understanding a Jesus that is communal, not just personal.

In this scripture, Paul helps us to understand the difference in personal and community. He uses a lot of personal pronouns to get at the personal. Paul says, “For I am already being poured out” and “I have fought the good fight.” It teaches us that sometimes you have to celebrate yourself. Today, we celebrate the work of Pastor Warnock. Yet, Paul goes on to say, “and not only to me.” The best preachers are those who know they did not get here by themselves. Thanks be to God for the 16 years of the pastor and the people from funerals and baptism to marching and protesting to deacon meetings and mission activities. All of it has shaped Pastor Warnock. He didn’t do it alone. The work of Ebenezer is rooted in the relationship between the pastor and the people. God has a way of bringing us together to bring about change. Still, we can look past

the pastor and celebrate Jesus. As pastor and people, as we celebrate each other, we celebrate Jesus.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. If Christianity is not about a personal relationship with Jesus, what is it about?
2. What are examples of a personal Jesus in society and culture? What about a public Jesus?
3. Where in the Bible do we see this public Jesus?
4. How is this idea of a relationship with Jesus present in the work of Ebenezer Baptist Church?
5. Have you ever had to celebrate yourself? Was it an accomplishment you completed alone or with the help of those in the community?
6. What is the relationship between the pastor and his people or those in his church?
7. What can we do together to celebrate Jesus?