

A Good Minister Of Christ Jesus

"If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed unto now" (1 Tim. 4:9).

The standard by which men may view a "good minister" and how God views a "good minister" is sadly not always the same. Men often view a "good minister" based on his ability to speak well, hold people's interest, get along well with brethren and people in the community. In God's estimation, these factors must, at best, take second place or no place at all. Some viewed Paul's bodily presence and speech scornfully. Certain Corinthian brethren said of him, *"His bodily presence is weak and his speech is contemptible"* (2 Cor. 10:10). When one looks at the most popular ministers today, one would characterize none of those as some Corinthians styled Paul.

With Paul, however, it was of little importance to him how man regarded him. He was primarily interested in pleasing God and he knew that so far as men were concerned that sometimes he could please them and sometimes he could not. He knew, that given the fickle nature of man that which might please man at one given time would displease him at another time, but he also knew there was constancy with God: he was certainly that what pleased God at one point would please him at any other given point. Thus he counseled Timothy that he would be a *"good minister of Christ if he put brethren in mind of these things."*

The things Timothy was to remind brethren of consisted of all Paul had written him; particularly it related to the *"falling away"* Paul had said was certain to come. It related to the fact that identifying features of that *"falling away"* would be that such ones would forbid to marry and command to abstain from meats. It consisted of the truth that all creatures are good for food; sanctified to our body's use by God's word that *"all meats are clean"* and by our personal giving of thanks for the food we eat as we partake of it.

The good minister of Christ Jesus is one who reminds brethren of the things of God. Peter also spoke of the importance of remembrance for he wrote, *"This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you and in both of them I stir up your sincere minds by putting you in remembrance that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Savior"* (2 Pet. 3:1f). Remember, the words of Christ are *"spiritual life," "truth," "seed,"* and *"bread"* (Jn. 6:63; 17:17; Lk. 8:11; Mt. 4:4). Through their entrance into the heart,

understanding is produced (Ps. 119:104). They are a lamp to our feet (Ps. 119:105). They are able to save our souls (Jam. 1:21).

To remind brethren of "*these things*" it was necessary that Timothy be nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which he had been constant to follow. Paul does not mean Timothy was steadfast in two different things: the words of the faith and the good doctrine are synonyms of each other -- and both are the gospel of Christ. Timothy had to be nourished -- fed -- in the faith. It sustained his spiritual life and sustains our spiritual life if we feed thereupon. the "*good minister*" in the Lord's sight, is he who continues to remind brethren of the Word of God.

May we, as God's children, be good Christians. May it never be true of us, as it was of Israel of old, that we shut our eyes and ears to the Lord's word. May we ever have the spirit to say, "Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life," may we never tire of hearing but always ask, "Tell me the story of Jesus. Write on my heart every word. Tell me the story most precious. Sweetest that ever was heard"!

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