



Faith Baptist Church of Cabot, Arkansas
Pastor's Mid-Week Bible Study
December 16, 2009

Lesson Thirteen – A Good Minister
1 Timothy 4:6-11

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach.

Introduction

What makes a good minister? How one answers that question hinges on whose minister he is perceived to be – minister of the culture, the community, the church or Christ. If he is a minister of Christ, he will have a ministry to the church, the community and the culture. Being a good minister of Christ means he will minister according to Christ's requirements regardless of the personal cost in the church, community and culture. Any other equation may make him an acceptable minister in the eyes of the church, community and culture but will make him no servant of Christ leave him with no Kingdom reward.

Exegesis

❖ A good minister of Jesus Christ instructs the church (6)

- Supplying the brethren

“Instruct” comes from a word meaning “to place under”. Timothy is to put the brethren under everything Paul is teaching him. This instruction is tied to being a “good minister of Jesus Christ”; while doing this you will be a good minister. What then of a man who would forsake so instructing his church?

- Nourishing one's self

While instructing the church, Timothy would be nourishing himself in the words of the faith and the good doctrine. Timothy has followed in this faith and good doctrine since his childhood days as he was taught by his mother and grandmother. He has shown himself faithful in ministry with the Apostle Paul. But he continued to need spiritual nourishment. Being a good minister who instructs the church is necessarily connected to the minister's own spiritual health. How shall he provide to the brethren that which he, himself, does not possess?

❖ A good minister of Jesus Christ focuses on the profitable (7-9)

- Rejecting the profitless

By refusing profane and old wives' fables, Timothy would not waste his time and energies wrangling over the issues of the false teachers in the Ephesian church. (1:3-4) This does not mean he is not to address those issues as instructed in the first chapter, but rather that he is to address them definitively and authoritatively by rejecting them. In so doing he will not waste his energies in profitless and distracting arguments. Rather than spending time debating fables, Timothy was to spend his time developing holiness.

➤ Pursuing the profitable

Paul wants Timothy vigorously exercising his mind toward godliness, a proper understanding, view and reverence for God that will shape how he thinks, lives and ministers. Bodily exercise profits a little for a little time; godliness profits a lot for a long time. What we are physically will be buried and rot. Who we are spiritually lasts forever. Where then should the priority be?

“This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.”

❖ A good minister of Jesus Christ suffers hardship (10-11)

➤ Living to godliness

Living with a view to godliness meant for Paul and Timothy toilsome effort and significant struggles, both in mortifying the sinful urges of their own flesh (Romans 7:21-25) and in dealing with the opposition of sinners (2 Timothy 3:12). A whole hearted pursuit of genuine godliness will generate internal fleshly opposition and external worldly opposition.

➤ Living by hope

How then was Timothy to boldly pursue godliness and courageously command and teach these things? By the hope born of his trust in the living God, the God who has provided salvation to all men through Jesus Christ and is experienced by all men who believe in Jesus Christ.

Application

1. Let your ministerial expectations be shaped by the One to whom the minister belongs. From this passage, that kind of minister is:
 - A faithful teacher who is himself growing spiritually.
 - A man focused on what matters, namely godliness, and rejects distraction from it.
 - A man passionately pursuing godliness through toils and struggles.
 - A man who displays trustful hope in the living God.
 - A man who holds out the salvation from God through Christ Jesus.
 - A man not afraid to command and teach the truth of God.
2. Let your life be shaped by the teachings of Christ through a minister who belongs to Him.
3. Let your passion be toward godliness.