

PUT INTO THE MINISTRY BY THE LORD

TEXT: I TIMOTHY 1:12-20

INTRODUCTION:

1. I am going to speak tonight on being put into the ministry (1:12).
2. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who puts men into the ministry (1:12).
3. According to Scripture, "ministry" means "service."
4. When I was a young man, several of my friends enlisted in the military. People would say, "They went into the service," meaning they were serving their country.
5. We are in the Lord's service. We have been saved to serve.
6. Therefore, all Christians should be involved in "ministry," not just those in what we call "full time ministry," like pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, etc.
7. Paul says in I Corinthians 16:15, that the house of Stephanas "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."
8. God calls all Christians into some ministry (going out soulwinning, cleaning the church, etc.), but some are called into what we call "full-time Christian ministry."
9. Some people leave full-time ministry and go into secular work because of financial problems. If more Christians obeyed the Bible this would not be a problem (cf. I Cor. 9:7-14).

I. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MINISTER (1:12, 13)

1. The apostle Paul recognized that his conversion was for a "pattern" (1:16) or an example of the grace of God and the power of God to transform a sinner into a saint (1:13).
2. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said it is an error to think that "the conversion of the apostle Paul was an uncommon and exceptional event, and that we cannot expect men to be saved now-a-days after the same fashion...He was a model convert, and is to be regarded, as a type and pattern of God's grace in other believers...All conversions are in a high degree similar to this pattern conversion. The transformation of persecuting Saul of Tarsus into the apostle Paul is a typical instance of the work of grace in the heart."
3. The Lord transformed Paul and the Lord put him into the ministry. Paul says in Galatians 1:15 and 16, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

4. In I Timothy 1:12, Paul says, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me..."
5. This divine enabling is essential for successful soulwinning and preaching (cf. I Cor. 15:10).
6. Before his conversion, Paul was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1:13). But by the grace of God (1:14), he was called to preach the Gospel. It was the Lord who "ordained" Paul (I Tim. 2:7).

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE MINISTER (1:14, 15)

1. Our message is the message of God's grace, which is "exceeding abundant" (1:14).
2. Our message is a message of faith (1:14). Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
3. Our message is a message of love (1:14). "For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16).
4. Our message is a message of salvation (1:15). This verse summarizes our message! It also explains the incarnation, why Christ was born, the purpose behind Christmas, etc.
5. The "chief" (1:15) of sinners has already been saved, so there is hope for all. D. Edmond Hiebert says Paul "considered himself the foremost of sinners. It is a striking confession of his own sense of sinfulness, and that at the end of his illustrious life. Such language is not to be discounted as mere rhetoric. It is a straightforward statement of his inner conviction" (*First Timothy*).
6. I appreciate what Dr. Hiebert said about how some discount Paul's statement as "mere rhetoric." Unfortunately many people do that with certain Scriptures (cf. Romans 9:1-3).
7. Our message is a message of grace, a message of faith, a message of love, a message of salvation, and a message of mercy (1:16). Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
8. The message of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" was committed to Paul's trust (1:11).
9. The message is a doctrinal message (1:3, 10). Paul was ordained (appointed by God) to be a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles (2:7).

10. Bible preachers and teachers must preach and teach "sound doctrine" (1:10b). This is the message of the minister.
11. Paul says in I Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying..." This formula is peculiar to Paul's three Pastoral Epistles.
- First Timothy 3:1 says, "This is a true (same Greek word translated "faithful") saying..."
 - First Timothy 4:9 says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance" (cf. 1:15).
 - Second Timothy 2:11 says, "It is a faithful saying..."
 - Titus 3:8 says, "This is a faithful saying..."

III. THE CHARGE OF THE MINISTER (1:18)

1. The word "charge" (1:18) is a military word and it means, "an urgent command handed down from a superior officer" (cf. 1:3; 5:7, 21; 6:13, 17; II Tim. 4:1).
2. Another military word used in I Timothy 1:18 is "warfare." The Bible teaches we are war with the world, the flesh, and the devil.
3. By rejecting faith and a good conscience, "some have made shipwreck of their faith" (1:19).
4. Paul gave his first charge to Timothy in 1:3 and 4. The charge was to rebuke false teachers. In verse 20, two trouble-makers are mentioned by name.
5. Alexander may be the same man referred to in II Timothy 4:14. Perhaps Paul added "the coppersmith" in II Timothy 4:14 to distinguish him from the blasphemous Alexander in I Timothy 1:20.
6. "Delivering them unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1:20) refers to church discipline. Impenitent false teachers and trouble-makers were to be put out of the church.
7. We see similar language in I Corinthians 5:5, where the man guilty of committing fornication with his stepmother was to be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh."
8. Paul says to the church in Corinth, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:13).
9. First John 5:19 says, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." "The whole world lieth in wickedness" means the whole world is under the power and control of Satan. He is "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4).

10. God has established the local church for the safety and protection of God's children. Outside the local church, "the whole world lieth in wickedness."
11. Impenitent fornicators, blasphemers, false teachers, and troublemakers are to be put out of the local church and "delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1:20). This is very important because today most churches are not practicing church discipline.
12. First Timothy 1:18 refers to "prophecies" (cf. 4:14). There were prophecies in the apostolic church. Acts 13:1 says, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..."
13. However, there are no prophets in the church today. Ephesians 2:20 says churches today are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."
14. Ephesians 4:11 and 12 says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
15. Therefore, apostles and prophets were part of the apostolic church, but now that the foundation has been laid, there are no more apostles and prophets.

CONCLUSION:

1. The Bible teaches that this world is the realm of Satan. He is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4).
2. Troublemakers are to be put out of the church and handed over to Satan (I Tim. 1:20).
3. It is very sad to see Christians enamored with the world. James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."