

THE MINISTER OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

I Timothy 4:11-16

II Timothy 4:1-8.

As I attempt to speak about the Minister of a New Testament Church, I want to mention six things: --

I. His Pre-requisites.

Pre-requisites are the things that are necessary to accomplish an end or object.

1. An ability to preach.
2. An experience of grace.
There is no substitute for it. No man has any business in the ministry without it.
3. An assurance of salvation.
Know it beyond peradventure of doubt.
4. A good reputation.
Reputation is what others think and say about one. It is a great asset.
5. A good character.
Character is what God knows that you are. Your character will be greater than your work. Dr. W. H. Davis contrasted character and reputation as follows:

The circumstances amid which you live determine your reputation; the truth you believe determines your character.

Reputation is what you are supposed to be; character is what you are.

Reputation is the photograph; character is the face.

Reputation is a manufactured thing, rolled and plated and hammered and brazed and bolted; character is a growth.

Reputation comes over one from without; character grows up from within.

Reputation is what you have when you come to a community; character is what you have when you go away.

Reputation is made in a moment; character is built in a life time.

Reputation grows like the mushroom; character grows like the oak.

Reputation goes like the mushroom; character lasts like eternity.

A single newspaper report gives you your reputation; a life of toil gives you your character.

If you want to get a position, you need a reputation; if you want to keep it, you need a character.

Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor; character makes you happy or makes you miserable.

Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone; character is what the angels say about you before the throne of God.

Reputation is the basis of the temporal judgment of men; character is the basis of the eternal judgment of God.

6. A call from God.
It is a life-long tragedy for any man to presume to be a minister of the gospel without having a call from God. No one ought ever to try to preach without it. If a man enters the ministry for any other reason, while in it he will conduct himself as he wants to and go out of it when he wants to; but if he realizes that he has been placed there by the call of God, he will try to please God while in it, and he will stay in it as long as life lasts.
7. A heart of Compassion.
Must love people -- all kinds of people. So sympathetic that can suffer in every sorrow that comes to his people and rejoice in every joy that comes to them. Usefulness to a great extent depends upon capacity for sympathy. Sympathy is "Two hearts tugging at one load."
8. An eagerness to learn.
Learn by listening to the great spirits of the past in literature, to the words of the wisest and the best men of own generation, and to the Word and voice of God. If one think he knows so much that it is not worth his while to give attention to anyone else, then he is a hopeless prospect for the future. Learn the truth from every possible source.
9. An unquestioned sincerity.
The means to be free from pretense. Sincerity is an absolute necessity.
10. A spirit of optimism.
A minister ought to be the happiest, most hopeful and most optimistic person. A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty. If not optimistic, one misrepresents Christ. Cheerfulness is contagious.
11. A dedicated life.
God does not demand a beautiful vessel for His work, but He does demand a clean one. If one is not clean and consistent in his life, the more he keeps his mouth shut about Christ the better it is for Christ and His cause.
12. A willingness to sacrifice.
The ministry demands it. "Endure afflictions." Ministry was never intended for tenderfoots.

II. His Preparation.

A call to preach is a call to prepare. Preparation is necessary. It largely determines the degree of one's success and usefulness. Two phases of preparation: **

1. The preparation of the man.
Physical, mental and spiritual. Proper care of the body. Adequate preparation of the mind. A minister needs an education. Do far more and better work with it than without it. This age is calling for a trained ministry as has no other age of Christian era. The New Testament standard is that of a trained ministry. Jesus took time to prepare and get ready. He took thirty years to prepare Himself for a three year ministry. He took time to get ready, ripen His thought, and deepen His experience. We can't improve on His example. He gave the apostles special training. The Bible does not put a premium on ignorance. A called man who fails to prepare stands in his own light, and in the light of those to whom he tries to minister, and by his failure to

prepare says the biggest and holiest task in the world is not worth getting ready for.

The preparation of the man includes a faithful cultivation of the soul, meditation upon His Word, devotion to Jesus Christ and a complete surrender to the Holy Spirit.

2. The preparation of the message.

In this preparation one must intelligently select a subject or a text, reflect on the purpose of the sermon --which is to arrest attention, arouse interest, give instruction, convince the intellect, stir the feelings, influence the will or inspire action -- pray for Divine guidance, faithfully study and work hard.

III. His Problems.

Many think the life of a minister is simplicity itself; that all he has to do is to be able to draw his breath, an inference, a crowd and his salary.

1. Physical.

A good sound body is to a preacher what a good foundation is to a house. The physical man must be strong. A minister is subjected to a nervous strain which is continuous and sometimes terrific. He is subject to call day and night; exposed to every type of weather and disease. The sounder the body the more effective will be his preaching.

2. Spiritual.

He is apt to become so busy in answering calls for service that he neglects his own spiritual life. He has the tendency to think in terms of others and become professional. When he reads his Bible he thinks of others instead of self; looking for sermons. He cannot lead others where he has not gone.

3. Intellectual.

Mental must be alert as well as physical be strong and the spiritual be true. He must cultivate studious habits. He must feed his mind with truth. Others things being equal, a preacher should have some sense. He actually needs brains. Study. He can preach only what he knows. He knows what he learns. He learns by study. He has to keep up with his age intellectually. He can't preach to it from behind. People will listen to a man that knows more than they do. A minister has to fight for time to read, think and study. A mind that is constantly giving must be constantly receiving. There never was a great preacher who wasn't a great and diligent student. It is easier to move a little box of sermons than it is to dig down and fill up a new box. That is one reason why some change pastorates so often.

4. Moral.

He must be morally straight. He has to serve all classes -- moral and immoral. He must guard his personal honor with utmost vigilance.

5. Social.

He has to guard against cultivating too intimate friendships. How large a part should a minister take in public affairs? There are insistent calls for public service. He must learn to say "No." Things need me -- yes, but the Lord and church needs me more. Speak on moral questions; but never for any politician. He will betray you.

6. Financial.

He must go respectably well dressed. His home must be a credit to himself and his church. He must support his family, entertain, lead in contributions, build library and subscribe for papers, meet his obligations and settle his accounts promptly. Most church members think there are just two qualifications for ministry -- humility and poverty. They are determined that they will keep him poor if the Lord can manage to keep him humble.

IV. His Perils.

1. Prayerlessness.

No ministry can be a spiritual one without prayer. God's greatest preachers have all been men of prayer. The mightiest preachers in prayer are the mightiest in the pulpit.

2. Studyness.

When we cease to grow mentally we cease to glow spiritually. Persistent, honest study fertilizes, fructifies, generates, refreshes, and stimulates vigor and alertness.

3. Laziness.

One can easily allow himself to be drawn into petty performances of little or no value.

4. Anger.

When any man loses his temper in the pulpit he also loses his influence.

5. Selfishness.

It is ruinous for any man to think and act in terms of self only.

6. Self-pity.

A minister has a hard time. If his hair is grey he is too old. If he is young he has not had experience. If he has eight or ten children he has too many. If he does not have any he is not setting the right sort of an example, and should have. If he uses notes he is a bore; if he speaks extemporaneously he is not deep enough. If he studies he does not mix enough; if he is seen on the street he ought to be at home getting up a good sermon. Whatever he does someone can tell him how to do it better.

7. Second best.

The Lord commands our best, the work deserves our best, the world needs our best, and we owe our best. In fact our best is not good enough.

V. His Product.

It is a high privilege to hold the highest office from Him Who sits on heaven's throne. His life is filled with many high hours -- fellowship with God's good people, experiences with them in joy and sorrow, touch with those whose lives are blighted and broken by sin -- high hours. The highest hour is when he stands behind the pulpit ready to preach the Gospel. The congregation is looking up to him for guidance and help. Those rich in Christian experience have come for fresh vision of the crucified one. Struggling ones need help to strengthen them in the Christian race. Lost ones are appealing to the preacher to point them to the Lamb of God. What a tremendous task, what a pressing responsibility to God and man.

1. Preparation of the sermon -- both man and message.

2. Purpose of the sermon -- move the will and bring it into tune with the will of God.

3. Preaching of the sermon -- prayerfully, dependently, objectively, earnestly and expectantly. Must preach Christ -- His virgin birth, victorious life, vicarious death, victorious resurrection and visible return. The sermon should be scriptural, simple, sincere, sympathetic and short.

VI. His Privileges.

The preacher must be a versatile man -- He is expected to be a bureau of information and a walking encyclopedia. Administrator; pastor -- know names, dispositions, habits, and needs of people; prophet of God -- speak to God for people; evangelist; teacher; leader -- moral and religious.

1. Being a real Christian gentleman.
2. Being a highly respected citizen in the community.
Win respect by upright ways and useful service.
3. Being a good example to others.
4. Gaining the confidence and love of others.
Come to you with personal problems, family difficulties, factions, crimes, etc.
5. Acquiring a large number of friends.
6. Being Christ's representative in the world.
He enjoys a privilege not granted to the angels to speak and teach for Him.
7. Being God's fellow-worker.
8. Helping people to get right with God.
9. Helping saved people to live victorious lives.
10. Being an interpreter of Christ.
11. Being useful.
This he does by giving counsel and rendering service, speaking with the burdened, comforting the sad, encouraging those striving to live the Christian life. It is a real joy to draw forth from the fountains of revealed truth, things new and old, which will heal hearts, quiet fears, renew courage, strengthen faith, and rekindle hope.
12. Increasing the population of heaven.
By winning souls to Christ.
13. Being happy in his work.
The preacher's joy is in the Lord and doing His will.
14. Holding forth the Word of Life.
Declare the living Word, echo the thoughts of Jesus, point men to the wickest gate, and feed souls of redeemed.

If I had a thousand lives, I would give them all to Christ in the ministry.

God help me to be a good man and a good minister of Christ.