

THE CALLING OF A GOOD MINISTER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson aim: To follow a good minister who is not fearful, but has power, love and sound judgment.

Suggestion: The teacher lesson will call attention to some important truths to teach. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, several years after his first letter, some things had changed. (1) Paul was no longer a free man, but now he was waiting for his execution by Nero - 1:16-17; 4:6. (2) Paul had alerted Timothy to the false doctrines being taught at Ephesus - 1 Tim 1:6-7, but now some members embraced these false doctrines - 2 Tim 1:15; cf. Act 20:29-30. (3) His first letter was more official, but this one was personal, encouraging Timothy to be a good minister of Christ by the calling of the Spirit dwelling in him reminding him that "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7).

How did Paul show his love for Timothy? 1:3-4

Paul showed his love for Timothy by praying for him as the pastor of the church in Ephesus. He prayed for him from his prison in Rome during the night before he would go to sleep and when he could not sleep. He prayed for him during the day while he waited for the day of his execution. He prayed for him when he thought about the spiritual life of the church at Ephesus where he had labored for the Lord for three years. He knew some members had accepted the doctrines of false teachers. This problem was evident to Paul from what he had told the leaders of this church on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38) and from what he wrote in his two letters to Timothy. Timothy needed to be strong in the Lord to know how to deal with these members because he was prone to be timid. He needed help to keep the church strong and pure with fervent love for the Lord. Paul also showed his love for Timothy by the joy he would have to see him once again before his execution.

How did Paul deal with Timothy's timid spirit? 1:5-7

Paul told Timothy he was convinced his faith was genuine, like that of his grandmother and mother. Such faith is needed to conquer fear. Then he reminded Timothy to rekindle the fire of God's gift that he had received from Him by Paul. God's gift was not the spirit of fear (timidity). Instead, God had given him the spirit of power (Acts 1:8), so he could be bold. God had given him the spirit of love (*agape*), the highest kind of love (Gal 5:22), so he could love sinners and give them the Gospel. And God had given him a sound mind (sound judgment), so he could know how to deal with those that opposed and threatened him.

How did Paul help Timothy not to be ashamed of witnessing for the Lord or of those that did so? 1:8-12, 16

It was against the law to witness for the Lord, so believers were ashamed to witness for Him lest they suffer in prison or even be executed. They even felt it was dangerous to be associated with those that did witness for the Lord (cf 1:15). That is why Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord or of him as His prisoner, but he commanded Timothy to suffer for the Gospel relying on the power of God to care for him. Why should he be willing to suffer? He was saved and graciously given a holy calling in Christ Jesus without any works of his own. Also, Christ took the sting out of death and gave him life and immortality through the light of the Gospel (2 Cor 5:1-8; 1 Cor 15:51-57). Paul reminded Timothy that he suffered for the Gospel, but he was not ashamed. Why? He knew and believed in Christ and he was persuaded that He would keep whatever he committed to Him, both his soul and the Gospel. Finally, he gave Timothy the example of Onesiphorus, who was not ashamed to be associated with him, but diligently searched for him and found him in the Roman prison.

What were the two commands that Paul gave to Timothy regarding the Gospel? 1:13-14

First, Timothy was to firmly hold to the form (pattern) of sound doctrinal words that Paul used in presenting the Gospel. Second, He also was to keep (guard) the Gospel from error by the power of the Spirit dwelling in him.