

Counted Faithful

1 Timothy 12:12-17

I. Christ Made Paul a Minister

A. Paul attributed his call to Jesus. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (1 Timothy 1:12)

B. Someone with a genuine place in Christian leadership will point to God as the source of that leadership. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. (John 5:23)

C. Eventually everyone will acknowledge Christ is the Lord of Providence.

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:11)

D. Great or small, what believers accomplish comes from God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

E. The prospects brighten with God as a partner. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13)

F. The ultimate focus in the ministry is the fulfillment of Scripture.

Whereof

I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (Colossians 1:25)

II. Paul's Calling Illustrates the Power of Grace

A. Paul did not start out looking like leadership material. Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (1 Timothy 1:13)

B. Saul harassed believers. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. (Acts 8:3)

C. Paul incited others to abuse God's people. And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, (Acts 9:1)

D. Even Jesus called Saul a persecutor. And he said, Who art thou,

Lord?

And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (Acts 9:5)

F. No one had any doubts—Saul was bad news when God called him. Then

Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (Acts 9:13)

G. It is precisely because Saul was so unattractive that his usefulness to the kingdom stood out so brightly. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. (1 Timothy 1:16)

III. Position in the Church Reflects Grace over Ability

A. All the hope believers have displays itself in the substitutionary atonement of Christ. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

B. Believers actually are new people in Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

C. Considering the implications, act on grace when it comes, not at your potential convenience. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7)

D. The believer's contribution to life is always overshadowed by God's part. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)