

GOD'S MANDATE FOR MINISTRY

Sunday, August 14, 2011

Acts 5:12-42

INTRODUCTION:

The great 19th century preacher B.B. Warfield had this to say about the ministry!

“A minister must be learned, on pain of being utterly incompetent for his work. But before and above being learned, a minister must be godly. Nothing could be more fatal, however, than to set these two things over against one another. Recruiting officers do not dispute whether it is better for soldiers to have a right leg or a left leg: soldiers should have both legs.”

B.B. Warfield, quoted in [Credenda Agenda](#), Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 16.

For the early church the true test of ministry was just beginning. There would be test after test and trial after trial to try and dissuade men from following their calling in service to God. This has not changed in two thousand years, there is the ever present temptation to abandon the call of Godliness, and the temptation to abandon the work of God. For the disciples they were being put to the test, not occasionally, but daily. Satan will always make sure there is ample temptation to forsake the call of God and for one to follow the world or their flesh.

At this early stage of the churches growth it was imperative that there was a boldness as well as a clear sense of vision for what lay ahead. There could be no turning to the left or the right, but moving straight forward with a singularity of calling and purpose.

Let me take a few moments to outline what this new move of God was going to look like and how it would manifest itself in the ages to come. Remember that we hear often times the call to be New Testament in our ministry, well what should that look like?

MINISTRY OF THE WORD—INSTRUCTION THROUGH . . .

(1) Preaching ([Ezra 6:14](#); [Neh. 8:8](#); [2 Tim. 4:1-3](#)). The Word of God must be faithfully preached from the pulpit: (a) inductively, (b) exegetically, and (c) expositionally.

(2) Teaching (Ezra 7:10; Acts 20:20; Col. 1:28). The Word of God must also be taught in both large and small group settings. This involves questions and answers, and practical dialogue together around the Word with practical applications that hit people where they live.

(3) Training (2 Tim. 2:2-4). Believers must be trained in such practical aspects as how to study their Bibles, how to pray, how to witness, how to walk in the power of the Spirit, etc., that they may, in turn, be able to train others.

(4) Exhorting (Col. 1:28; 3:16). The church must be exhorted to positive decisions for Christ that promote commitment and Christ-like values and living.

MINISTRY OF WORSHIP—EXALTING GOD BY . . .

(1) Giving Praise and Thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15; Col. 1:12; 3:15-17). Believers need to be taught and challenged to live by praise and thanksgiving as they share together in the riches of Christ. To encourage this, the church needs some public opportunity to express its adoration to God individually as well as corporately.

(2) Singing and Making Melody (Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). As with all other aspects of worship, music must be the product of spirit-motivated expression to God and should be designed to encourage and unite hearts together in adoration of Him.

(3) Baptizing (Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism is to be a public demonstration of a believer's faith, understanding of his or her position in Christ with its ramifications, and this includes commitment to walk with Christ in newness of life.

(4) Taking Communion (1 Cor. 11:23-24). As a public act of worship, the communion service should be designed to promote soul searching, evaluation, and reflection on the Savior and what He means to our life.

It is a **Redeclaration**, a testimony of one's faith in Christ in both His first and second advents, a **Remembrance**, an act of worship by which we remember and count on the person and work of Christ as the source and means of life, and an expression of the **Relationship** of harmony and oneness of mind in love, values, and commitment that should exist in the body of Christ.

MINISTRY OF FELLOWSHIP—SHARING TOGETHER BY . . .

(1) Encouraging ([Heb. 10:24-25](#)). Believers must be challenged to encourage one another in the practical areas of the Christian life. A key part of this could be small groups which provide for individual sharing, encouragement, and accountability.

(2) Counseling ([Rom. 16:14](#); [1 Thess. 5:14](#)). As believers within the body are built up in the Word, trained for ministry, and exercise their gifts, they should naturally be able to meet many of the counseling needs within the church.

(3) Disciplining ([Matt. 18:15-20](#); [Gal. 6:1-4](#)). Because of the clear mandates of Scripture, church discipline is not an option. It is vital for the purity, power, progress, and purpose of the church. Without this restorative ministry, conditions continue which defile, weaken, hinder, and divert the church from its holy calling. However, discipline must be carried out with biblical attitudes, motives, and goals.

(4) Sharing, Giving ([Acts 2:42](#); [1 Cor. 16:1-2](#); [2 Cor. 8-9](#); [Gal. 6:7](#); [1 John 3:16-17](#)). The church must be taught the principles of grace giving, eternal priorities, and encouraged to sacrificially meet the needs of the ministry of the church and others through words, deeds, and gifts of love.

(5) Laboring Together as a Team ([1 Cor. 12:4-11](#), 14f; [Phil. 1:27](#); [1 Pet. 4:10-11](#)). Recognizing the body concept and learning to work together as a team with every believer knowing and using their gift(s) is critical for the proper and effective functioning of the body of Christ.

(6) Helping ([Rom. 15:1-3](#); [16:2](#); [Phil. 2:4](#); [4:3](#); [1 Thess. 5:14](#); [Tit. 2:14](#); [3:1](#), [8](#), [14](#)). As members of the body of Christ, we need one another and we must learn to care for one another. Another dimension of a healthy church is taking interest in those who need help, being zealous and ready for every good deed in order to meet pressing needs.

MINISTRY OF PRAYER—CALLING ON THE LORD BY . . .

(1) Confession (1 Cor. 11:28; 1 John 1:9; Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:13). Believers should be encouraged to keep short accounts with God in order to keep a conscience void of offense and stay in fellowship for the purpose of God's glory, effective prayer, meaningful worship, biblical understanding and growth, and effective ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Adoration (Eph. 3:20-21). Believers need to be challenged to make every aspect of their life an act of worship to God by which they count and act on the glories of God's person and grace. Unless this is true, the Sunday worship service becomes mere lip service, an exercise of self-worship by which people seek to satisfy selfish ends while they manage to keep their hearts from God (Isa. 29:13).

(3) Intercession and Petition (Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:2-3, 12; Phil. 4:6-7; 2 Tim. 2:1f). Effectual prayer for others, for oneself and family, for the nation and its leaders, and for the ministry of the church is crucial to all that the church is and does.

DOING GOOD—OUR WALK—MODELING THE WORD (*Titus* 3:1, 8, 14)

(1) Making Friends (Matt. 22:39; Luke 10:33; John 4:4f; Gal. 6:10a; Tit. 3:14). Believers must be taught and encouraged to build bridges and develop relationships with the lost. Penetrating society for contact is vital to evangelism. People must learn to help their neighbors, show mercy, and, according to their ability, give to those in need to demonstrate the love of Christ and build bridges for the gospel.

(2) Preserving (Matt. 5:13-16; 2 Thess. 2:6-7). The calling of the church is not to control the political process at local, state, or national levels, but to seek genuine political and moral reform by spiritual renewal through prayer and reaching our society for Christ because it is impossible to effect genuine political reform through legislation without spiritual reformation.

SHARING THE GOSPEL – OUR TALK – GIVING OUT THE WORD (COL. 4:5-6; 1 THESS. 1:7-8)

(1) **The Means—Personal Witnessing** (Rom. 10:17; Luke 10:2). The church must be involved in an active ministry of sharing the gospel to the lost. This should involve an outreach to all ages and groups in order to fulfill the great commission.

(2) **The Methods—Sharing, Refuting, Reasoning, Persuading, Demonstrating, Proving** (Acts 9:22; 17:17; 18:4, 28; 19:8-9; 1 Pet. 3:15). While only the Spirit of God can illuminate a person's heart to the truth of the gospel, God still uses the witness of the believer.

What we discover from the text this morning is that these men had a Godly determination to fulfill the Great Commission that had been entrusted to them by Christ. So we find that they were.....

EMPOWERED FOR MINISTRY - Vv.12-16

¹² And **through the hands of the apostles** many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

¹³ Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.

¹⁴ And **believers were increasingly added to the Lord**, multitudes of both men and women,

¹⁵ so that **they brought the sick out into the streets** and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

¹⁶ Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

IMPRISONED BECAUSE OF FAITHFUL MINISTRY - Vv.17-21

¹⁷ Then **the high priest rose up**, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation,

¹⁸ and **laid their hands on** the apostles and put them in the common prison.

¹⁹ **But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors** and brought them out, and said,

²⁰ “Go, stand in the temple and **speak to the people all the words of this life.**”

²¹ And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning **and taught**. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

IMPRESSED TO CONTINUE IN MINISTRY - Vv.22-32

²² But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported,

²³ saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!”

²⁴ Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, **they wondered what the outcome would be.**

²⁵ So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are **standing in the temple and teaching the people!**”

²⁶ Then the captain went with the officers and **brought them without violence, for they feared the people**, lest they should be stoned.

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them,

²⁸ saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, **you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine**, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”

²⁹ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: **“We ought to obey God rather than men.”**

³⁰ The **God of our fathers raised up Jesus** whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

³¹ **Him God has exalted** to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

³² And **we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”**

IMPACTED AS THE RESULT OF MINISTRY - Vv.33-42

³³ When they heard this, **they were furious and plotted to kill them.**

³⁴ Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.

³⁵ And he said to them: **“Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves** what you intend to do regarding these men.

³⁶ For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

³⁷ After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.

³⁸ And now I say to you, **keep away from these men and let them alone;** for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;

³⁹ but **if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it**—lest you even be found to fight against God.”

⁴⁰ And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.**

⁴² **And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.**

CONCLUSION:

The great purpose of the church is to be to the praise of God’s glory and grace ([Eph. 1:6, 12](#)). The praise of God’s glory occurs when people come to Christ and become conformed into His image. Saving sinful people and making them like God’s Son manifests the glory of God’s divine essence (His love, grace, mercy, power, goodness, sovereignty, and holiness). In this primary purpose, the church is to be used of God to bring people to Christ and see them transformed to His character ([Col. 1:28](#)). This is exactly what the apostles were busy doing!

col.1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.