

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Six : A Good Minister of Christ

I. Overview:

First Timothy 4:6 says, "If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching..."; if we would minister Christ to others, we ourselves must be nourished. A good minister of Christ sacrifices himself and puts himself aside in order to keep the absoluteness of the truth. A good minister of Christ ministers life and serves the saints according to the principle of the tree of life. When we minister the word of God, our concern must be whether we have God's speaking; in order to have God's speaking, the one who ministers the word must have a burden. Those who minister the word must bear people's condition before God to know what God wants to speak; without a burden, all our activity will be dead and ineffective. In order to be a good minister of Christ, we must have the organic characteristics; loving the Lord to the uttermost to be filled with Him, maintaining our victory in Christ by having a revived living and a labor in shepherding, to be praying persons, dealing with our sins thoroughly, to be filled with the essential Spirit inwardly and with the economical Spirit outwardly, accumulating the experiences of Christ, and keeping a rich storage of the Lord's word.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. State what things before the brothers as a good minister of Christ should lay.

By these things in 1 Tim. 4:6, Paul means that all he has covered thus far in this Epistle. Just as a steward lays different courses of food before guests at a dinner, so a good minister of Christ should lay "these things" before the believers. Furthermore, Paul's use of the term being nourished indicates that his concept is that of supplying life to others.

B. Expound the saints in the churches must be nourished richly.

My burden is to produce groceries for the local churches. If the leading ones in a local church lay before the saints the riches contained in the Life- studies, the saints will be abundantly nourished. I simply long that the churches feed on the spiritual riches the Lord has given us, and present the saints the riches, the groceries, that the Lord has shown us from the Word.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the meaning of the good words in 1 Timothy 4:6 and its application.

The words of the good teaching are the sweet words that contain and convey the riches of Christ to nourish, edify, and strengthen His believers. Actually, the words of the faith and the words of the good teaching refer to the same thing. If we would teach others, we ourselves must first follow these words closely. Following them closely and being nourished with them, we will then be able to feed others.

B. Fellowship what we should do in receiving the believers to live the church life.

We need to be of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus so that with one accord we may glorify God in receiving the believers to live the church life. Whenever we are in one accord, we speak the same thing; we speak with one mouth. The only way to be with one accord and with one mouth is to allow Christ the room to be everything in our heart and in our mouth so that God may be glorified. We have said that God is the New Jerusalem.

Day 3 —

A. Fellowship that in learning to do God's work, one must be absolute for the truth.

No truth in the Bible should be entangled with man's condition. Truth is absolute in itself. We have to realize that the condition of an individual has nothing to do with God's truth. If truth is affected by man, the truth is no longer the truth. If the truth is not something absolute for you, you do not know God, and you do not know God's word.

B. Expound First Timothy 3:15 speaking of the pillar of the truth.

Why does it say the pillar of the truth? It is because a pillar is something immovable. This is a great test. A man must stand on the side of the truth to oppose himself. Only by this can he maintain the truth instead of himself.

Those who have never been dealt with do not know what the truth is. Only those who have dealt with themselves are able to maintain the truth.

Day 4 —

A. Explain the meaning of the prophet and how he serves.

A prophet breathes God, lives in God, and is joined to God. A prophet serves as God's spokesman and God's expression; hence, his words are God's words. A prophet's ministry and his words are to call people to enjoy God. A person who ministers as a prophet enjoys the tree of life so that he can call others and lead others to also enjoy the tree of life to lead people into enjoying God in Christ as their life.

B. Expound what the messages of life are.

God wants to be mingled with man to become man's element and to be everything to man. The tree of life has become our yardstick for measuring every message. Any message that is apart from God coming to be man's life is a wind of teaching in Ephesians 4:14. Messages that lead others to live in Christ and to enjoy Him as their life are called messages of life and give people the supply of life.

Day 5 —

A. Explain what to do in order to have the ministry of the word.

Revelation and light come first. This is the starting point. Yet revelation and light alone do not constitute the ministry of the word. One must be renewed in his mind and understanding. When God shines again, he will then be clear about the content of the revelation. Yet even if our mind is clear, we still may not be a minister of the word because we still do not have the proper words.

B. State the ministry of the word and having a burden.

The greatest problem in the ministry of the word is not having a burden or, we can say, not receiving a burden or not paying attention to a burden. Whether the saints some are not yet saved, we should receive a burden to bear their souls by the Lord's grace in order to sow the seed of salvation into them. If they are saved but do not love the Lord, our burden should be for them to love the Lord.

Day 6 —

A. Fellowship needed to speak Christ to all people daily in season and out of season.

This indicates that we should pick up the burden for the preaching of the gospel to such an extent that we would speak to whatever is around us. To be a speaking one, we need the inward filling. Then we have the content. We also need the outward filling. Then we have the power and the authority. When we speak in the meetings, our speaking should be full of the exercise of the spirit.

B. Expound how we should understand the human spirit.

Regretfully, due to the fall, men have not only overlooked and neglected the human spirit but also have even refused to admit that man has a spirit. As Christians, our spirit has been regenerated. God's life and God's spirit...have been added into our spirit. We have a regenerated and reinforced spirit, a very strong spirit, with a companion. This companion is the Triune God.

III. Conclusion:

The goal of the life-study message is to produce food for the local churches so that each local church will be a well-stocked supermarket full of all kinds of nourishing food. If we first digest, assimilate, and allow the riches contained in the life-study to saturate us and then remind the saints of them, the saints will be richly nourished. In this way, we will be good ministers of Christ. At the same time, we must also exercise ourselves unto godliness, that is, exercise our spirit to live out Christ in our daily life. We need to be nourished inwardly, and outwardly we should have godliness. We should be nourished by Christ from within, and then we should have a life that expresses God. When our service becomes a duty, it shows that our service has fallen. True service is not a matter of responsibility; it is a matter of burden.