

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Seven : The Pattern of the Apostle Paul

I. Overview:

Paul was a pattern to the believers of living Christ, magnifying Christ, and ministering Christ as the Spirit in his spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ. The Lord appeared to Paul to appoint him as a minister and a witness both of the things in which Paul had seen Him. Paul lived a life that was fully dignified, with the highest standard of human virtues expressing the most excellent divine attributes, a life that resembled the one that the Lord Himself had lived on the earth years before. He was determined to gain the honour of being well pleasing to Christ in all things. He was constrained by the love of Christ to no longer live to himself but to live to the Lord. Paul is our pattern in his being Body-conscious and Body-centered, doing everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body. The best way to shepherd people, to cherish and nourish them, is to give them a proper pattern; Paul fed his spiritual children with his own living of Christ. We need to follow the pattern of the apostles to pay more attention to life than to work. The apostles were neither found with flattering speech nor with a pretext for covetousness and did not seek glory from men. The apostles cherished the believers as a nursing mother and as fathers in exhorting them to walk in a manner worthy of God.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound Paul in Act's 27 living out a life of the Lord's.

On the sea in the storm, the Lord had made Paul not only the owner of his fellow voyagers, but also their life-guarantor and comforter. All during the apostle's long and unfortunate imprisonment-voyage, the Lord kept the apostle in His ascendancy and enabled him to live a life that resembled the one that the Lord Himself had lived on the earth years before.

B. State what in Acts 26:16 spoke for the testimony.

When the Lord Jesus appeared to Paul, He commissioned him, appointing him as a minister and a witness. A minister is for the ministry; a witness is for the testimony. In Acts 26:16, "I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you." Here, this verse speaks of the things in which Paul had seen the Lord and of the things in which the Lord would yet appear to him.

Day 2 —

A. Describe apostle Paul being an ambassador of Christ.

The apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ. An ambassador is one who represents the highest authority. The highest authority in this universe is God, and God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ. God has appointed Christ to be the King of kings and the highest authority. For this highest authority there is the need of some ambassadors on this earth who are qualified to represent Him.

B. Explain as an ambassador of Christ, whatever he is and has being mortal.

Paul realized that whatever was within him, whatever he was, and whatever he had was mortal. Our wisdom is mortal, and our ability is mortal. This is why we should not have any trust in what we are. We are mortal beings, but God has wrought into us something which is eternal, something which will never die, something which will last forever.

Day 3 —

A. Expound Paul's life showing a pattern.

Paul gives a strong testimony of his living among the Thessalonians. He emphasized it because he was presenting a pattern of a proper living to the young saints. I hope that all the elders and leading ones will see from Paul's example that we must be a pattern to the saints. In every local church there must be some patterns, some models, for others to follow. The proper way to foster the young ones is to show them a pattern.

B. Explain Paul using his lives to foster the spiritual children.

Caring for children is ninety percent a matter of feeding and ten percent a matter of teaching. This also should be our practice in caring for new believers. Feeding involves the presenting of patterns either from the Bible or from

church history. By reading the biographies of saints throughout the ages, we nourish ourselves and experience a kind of fostering. The point here is that the best way to feed others and foster them is to give them a proper pattern.

Day 4 —

A. Explain what the word approved in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 implies.

The word approved in 1 Thessalonians 2:4 implies being tested. God tested the apostles before He approved them. Based upon this approvedness, God entrusted them with the gospel. God did this in a careful way, for He knows our hearts. However, when we are put to the test, we will see what we really are and discover that in ourselves we are not honest, faithful, or trustworthy.

B. Expound that God will use the young people, but He would test them first.

I have the assurance that God will use the young people. But God's using of them will come after His testing of them. God cannot entrust anything to us until we have the approvedness that comes from His testing. God's entrusting is based on our approvedness. But we cannot approve ourselves. Only after God has tested us will He grant us approvedness. Then He will entrust something to us and begin to use us.

Day 5 —

A. Explain that seeking glory from men is a real temptation to every Christian worker.

Many have been devoured and spoiled by this matter. To assert authority, dignity, or right in Christian work damages that work. The Lord Jesus, while on earth, gave up His dignity, and the apostle preferred not to use his right. The fall of the archangel was due to the seeking of glory. According to the New Testament, anyone who seeks glory from men is a follower of Satan.

B. Expound the words in First Thessalonians 2:6, and how to apply them.

First Thessalonians 2:6 indicates clearly that the apostles did not stand on their authority as apostles of Christ. They had to forget that they were apostles and serve God's people as slaves. They were not to remind others of the fact that they were apostles of Christ. Instead, they were to keep in mind that they were brothers serving believers. In the local churches, we are not dignitaries, but slaves serving one another.

Day 6 —

A. Explain needing to nourish the new ones with the words in 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

The word yearning in 1 Thessalonians 2:8 indicates being affectionately fond of, affectionately desirous of, like a nursing mother affectionately interested in her child whom she nourishes and cherishes. This was what the apostles did with the new believers. The apostles not only imparted the gospel of God to the Thessalonians; they also imparted their own souls. These are the prerequisites for infusing others with the salvation conveyed in the gospel that we preach.

B. Expound the words in 1 Thessalonians 2:11, and how to experience them.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:11 the apostle was strong in stressing what or how they were, for what they were opened the way to bring the new converts into God's full salvation. In cherishing the believers as their own children, the apostles considered themselves as nourishing mothers. In exhorting them, they considered themselves fathers.

III. Conclusion:

Our pattern to the new believers and young brothers and sisters is to water, supply, nourish and cherish them.

What we should learn caring for children is ninety percent a matter of feeding and ten percent a matter of teaching. Raising up includes giving examples from the Bible or from the history of the church. When we read the biographies of the saints through the ages, we nourish ourselves and experience a kind of fostering. The point here is that the best way to feed others and foster them is to give them a proper pattern. I have the assurance that God will use the young people. But God's using of them will come after His testing of them. God cannot entrust anything to us until we have the approvedness that comes from His testing. God's entrusting is based on our approvedness. But we cannot approve ourselves. Only after God has tested us will He grant us approvedness. Then He will entrust something to us and begin to use us. After this, we are to imitate Paul, who was to endeavor with an ambition to please the Lord all the time, and who was constrained by the love of Christ to live no longer to himself but to the Lord. Paul wanted to please God, who tests our hearts, and never seek glory from men in the Lord's work.