

Putting Me into the Ministry

First Timothy 1:8 – 18

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is eavesdropping by looking over the shoulder of Paul the apostle as he writes his first letter to his spiritual son, Timothy. We are crossing an extremely important section of Scripture in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God; because this is the warning against preaching unsound doctrine, and instructions for dealing with those who purvey lies; as well as how to pray for, and lead men and women who have been carried away by mystery religions to the Lord Jesus Christ. To be sure, we're not speaking of apostasy; we're talking about those who had some wild religion, but have never been properly introduced to Christ. All of that combined with rank idolatry was a big problem in Paul's day – so, imagine how exponentially the problem has grown today.

These people in Ephesus, where Timothy was at the time in which we are studying, were relegating the Old Testament to a myth; treating it as an endless genealogy, rendering it meaningless. The polytheistic man in the Roman Empire was teaching that nothing had changed when Jesus came and died on the cross – and that Israel was just another religiously deceived nation attempting a metamorphosis into what the apostles were now calling a church. The other extreme was the Judaeizer who was teaching that the Mosaic System had never changed, that the law was the means of salvation, and that only keeping the law could bring about sanctification; and they denied Jesus as the prophesied Messiah – just as they continue to do to this very day.

Well, the law serves a very definite purpose, of course, but it was *NEVER* a means of salvation in the Old Testament. No Old Testament saint was saved by keeping the law. The Ten Commandments only revealed that man was a sinner who needed a Savior; and an animal sacrifice in the temple was required to cover the sins of the Israelite. The law can only either correct or condemn a man, friends. If you keep all the laws in your community today, the mayor won't send you an award for being a perfect law-keeper; however, if you break just one law, the police may come knocking on your

door to take you away. The law is a ministration of death and condemnation. The best man in the world is utterly destroyed by breaking the slightest law – like lying, for example. A false witness was stoned to death under the Mosaic system. If you want to tell me you have never told a lie, then you are a liar – it’s just that simple.

By contrast, the worst lost person in the world today can be justified; if he will believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, and was raised again for our justification. No sinner will be saved by good works; but our works will be judged to determine our reward in Heaven. In this flesh, it is impossible to please God. I feel like I need to bear down on these points until the pencil lead might break – so, I’m going to; because modern-day Christians have adopted an erroneous misconception that they are able to please God in and of themselves. It is a heresy absolutely contradicted by the entirety of Holy Writ. We do not meet His standards by our so-called good works; because we are not able to produce good works. Therefore our so-called good works can never produce salvation; and they can never produce anything God even needs, wants, or will use, either, by the way. It’s just impossible.

On the other hand, salvation can – and *WILL* – produce good works. We are saved *UNTO* good works – not by them. We do not do good works to be saved, we do good works because we are saved. Paul said, “... *for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” — Ephesians chapter two beginning at verse ten. So, with that axiom of truth understood and accepted, we can pick-up where our last report left off; and if you have not read our first three reports from first Timothy, I suggest you go back and do so now....

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

~ The Christian today who has been saved by grace and, therefore, made righteous in Christ Jesus, having been justified before God by His Son, is called to a *MUCH* higher level of living than the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. The law is now for the lawless. The religious zealot who insists they

keep the Sabbath, for example, are *A-L-W-A-Y-S* lawless individuals in all of their dealings. Frankly, they live like children of the devil – because that’s what they are. They give lip service to God one day each week, but they’re of the world the other six days of the week. The Seventh Day Adventist cult plays church one day each week; and denies Christ the rest of the week. See, the man who doesn’t want to hurt others but who, rather, truly desires to help people, doesn’t need a law to tell him “... *thou shalt not kill.*” Only the man who is a murderer in his heart with no regard for other people needs a controlling law.

Likewise, the man who rests in the redemptive work of Christ doesn’t need a law that says “... *keep the Sabbath*” – because they rest in Christ’s Sabbath rest of grace every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year of every decade of their lives. The law is only there to control the natural man. That’s the purpose and function of the law. The man who is faithful to his wife, and a wife who is faithful to her husband, don’t need a rule that says “... *thou shalt not commit adultery.*” Why don’t we get real and come to reason in common sense with the mind of Christ Jesus today in the Word of God? Only when we can process, believe, understand, accept, and agree together on and with these principles as sound doctrine – which this Spiritual Safari is setting forth from Scriptural tenets of truth – can we call ourselves the children of the family of God; where the emphasis is on love, my beloved....

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

11 According to the Gospel of glory, our Blessed Hope, from our blessed God, which is committed to my trust.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 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.

17 Now unto the Lord Jesus Christ eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God reading Paul's reveal of a most personal aspect of his life to Timothy. Make sure you read this super-duper carefully. The Lord Jesus Christ is to be exalted first – and lifted up foremost. Christ came into this world to save sinners. That simply must be the mode of functionality for the local church. The "testimony" that tells the world how wonderful YOU are in your accomplishments and successes is blaspheme. Only Christ and His plan and purpose is important – not you – not the things of you – only the things of Him; forever and ever. Period. Full stop.

That makes the word "ministry" one greatly misunderstood and recklessly misused word today. All believers are in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any genuine child of God is in some sort of ministry of and for God. However, the office of missionary, deacon, elder, and pastor – and that of Bible teacher – are all very, very different in form and function. Very few – and I do mean VERY few – self-appointed "pastors" are called by God. Even fewer are genuine Bible teachers. Moreover, the Bible teacher's proper function is to teach ALL of those disciplines – even the pastor.

If you label yourself a Bible teacher, but do not dedicate one hundred percent of your time to learning the Bible properly, correctly and completely, then you need to stop calling yourself a Bible teacher; because that's not what you are. There is NO WAY to walk with one foot in this world and be a Bible teacher – NO WAY – impossible! If you are a missionary, deacon, or an elder – and even a pastor – then you may likely need a secular job to support the man who teaches the entire Word of God to the entire world in sound doctrine. Further, missionaries are to support their church – not the other way around – just so you'll properly understand the chain of command. That support is your obligation, too, by the way, my dear readers. What I teach is the truth. I not only teach the truth, but I am a living example of it. What I teach is what the Word of God teaches; irrespective of whether you believe it, accept it, understand it, agree with God, like it – or not....

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare ~

