

A GOOD MINISTER

Paul declared at least one trait of all who would be “good ministers of Christ Jesus” in 1 Timothy 4:6:

If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now.

Let us briefly analyze this verse.

1. Paul described Timothy as a “minister of Christ Jesus.” The Greek word for “minister” here is *diakonos*, from which we get “deacon” (Phi. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8–13). However, Timothy was not an “official” deacon in Ephesus. *Diakonos* (servant, attendant, or minister) is the most common New Testament term for any servant (e.g., a ruler, Christ, Phoebe, Paul, et al. [Rom. 13:4; 15:8; 16:1; 1 Cor. 3:5]). We pervert the word *minister* when we capitalize it and equate it with “preacher” or “evangelist.” The New Testament never uses the word this way. Paul was simply telling Timothy what he must do to be a good **servant** of Christ in his work.

2. Timothy must “put the brethren in mind of these things.” What “things”? The preceding 5 verses give a vigorous, explicit warning of an approaching apostasy. Only if he warned the brethren of this tragedy would he be a good servant of Christ. What does this say of those today who pretend to be blind to the digression all around us in the church? What does this say of those who are leading and reveling in the apostasy now upon us? What does this say of those who label as “negative” and “prophets of doom” those who dare warn of the alarming departures that are rapidly growing? What does it say of those who no longer respect the Bible doctrine of fellowship? What does it say of those in the pew who stop their ears and refuse to hear such warnings when faithful

men issue them? Such are not good servants of Christ, yet this attitude seems to prevail.

3. Warning the brethren would be proof that Timothy was “nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine.” Had Timothy failed to sound the warnings he would show his failure to feed on the faith and the good doctrine. Those who love and cherish the doctrine of Christ and who feed upon it cannot be silent about the rampant digression in our midst. Knowledge of and love for the Truth force us to sound the warnings. Those who will not sound or receive such warnings prove that they feed upon and delight in the doctrines of men rather than in the “good doctrine.”

There is more to being a good servant of Christ than sounding warnings of error and sin, but those who refuse to do this necessary work surely fail to serve Christ well, be they preachers or any others.

—Dub McClish

Denton, TX