

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

(Overcoming Life Essay)

by

Doug Woolley

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As Christians mature by spending time with the Lord and His Word, they will become "overcomers" in this life. Once they have attained a certain level of maturity, and thus a certain level of "overcoming", they can then work in the ministry in a greater degree. The word "ministry" actually means "the act of serving." Everyone can serve, but when we have "overcome" life to a certain degree and we are filled with God's Spirit, we can serve to a greater degree. We must minister in the power of the Spirit as well as in the power of the Holy Spirit. As ministers we will be setting the captives free and proclaiming the "Good News" of Jesus. With any work, such as ministering the gospel, there are qualifications that must be met before engaging in the activity. Lastly, it is important to be sensitive to the needs of the people as we are ministering to them.

Ministering in the Power of the Spirit

God places within the believer His Spirit, which gives the believer ability to become an effective minister, or servant. As ministers we are to proclaim the kingdom of God to all creation and to establish this kingdom on earth while casting out the demonic forces and their wicked influence in the people on this earth. In order to be great in the kingdom, we need to use the gifts and talents that God has given us to serve Him, and thereby serving others. With God's grace and Spirit within us, we can preach Jesus Christ as Lord with the power of God, and contribute in bringing this world into conformity with God's will. To aid us in our ministering, God has given us nine fruits, which can be developed: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Along with the fruits of the Spirit, God has also given us "gifts" of the Spirit.

Ministering in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Today, believers in Christ can minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that we would do greater works (in number) than He did because He would go to the Father, and thus send the Helper (the Holy Spirit) to us. With the baptism in the Holy Spirit, a believer can then, and only then, receive potentially nine gifts, which can be put into 3 particular groups: The oral gifts- prophesy, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues; the revelation gifts- word of wisdom, word of knowledge, distinguishing of spirits; and the power (action) gifts- faith, gifts of healing, effecting of miracles. The scriptures exhort us to desire spiritual gifts, especially prophesy. Prophesy is meant to edify, exhort, and console other people, as well as to convict the unbeliever and disclose the secrets of his heart. The gifts of the Spirit are very helpful in ministering to others.

Setting the Captives Free

With the power of the spirit, we can minister deliverance to those who are in captivity to demonic spirits and bad habits. As overcomers filled with the Holy Spirit, we are exhorted by God

to take authority over the works of the enemy. People are enslaved to sin by giving in to the desires of their flesh over and over again, or they can be held in bondage as a result of the iniquities of their fathers'. In addition to these, we can be brought into captivity as a result of being either slothful or a workaholic. After a man repents and is delivered from captivity, he must not yield to the sin again, otherwise the demonic spirits that held him in captivity before will come back with seven other spirits more evil than him. In order to be delivered, the captive must walk in love and forgiveness, confessing his sins in order to be healed. Then the blood of Jesus will cleanse him and break the power of the sin over the individual. After being delivered, the person must constantly cleanse himself with the washing of the water of the Word of God and to walk in it "in a spirit of worship and victory." As believers, we have authority to cast out demonic spirits that hold people in captivity, whereas non-believers do not have this authority. If people were to accuse us of casting out the demons by Satan's authority rather than God's authority, then we could prove the contrary. If Satan started to defeat members of his own group, then his kingdom would soon be destroyed, but obviously Satan is smarter than this. As believers with power from "on high", we can bind things on earth and they shall be bound in the spiritual realm. This "power" also makes us effective preachers of the Gospel, or "Good News."

Your Responsibilities as a Minister of the "Good News"

We also have a responsibility of ministering the "Good News" of Jesus. The great commission commands us to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all of Jesus' commands." We are to boldly speak the Word of God without fear, as people who desire to please God rather than men. Prophets are the oracles of God and must stand in God's council continuously in order to speak as God desires them to speak. God desires that we speak every word that He gives to us and to speak it truthfully without fearing what men will think or do. God's spoken word through people will never contradict His Word, but the words will be like fire or like a hammer which shatters a rock. God despises people who speak their own words and claim that God told them to speak it. In order to guard against speaking against God's will, we must diligently study God's Word of truth and avoid idle chatter and youthful lusts. As we continuously loose ourselves from the entanglements of the affairs of this life, we will maintain pure devotion in the Lord's service and be God-pleasing ministers of the Gospel.

The Character and Qualifications of Ministering the Gospel

In ministering the most important message in the world, we must abide by certain guide lines and attain certain qualifications. True disciples are willing to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, since they are not overly concerned with the cares of this life. These disciples are blameless and pure without any lie in their mouths. There are called, chosen, and faithful servants. A great minister, such as Paul, will not regard his life as dear to himself; but he only desires to complete his mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave him to do, which is to declare the Good News about the grace of God. Ministers should be able to endure persecution, slandering, and suffering, and return good for all the evil done to them without giving any offense. When presenting a message, they must: be truthful (free from error), be pleasing God rather than men, not seek glory for themselves, be gentle and behaved, and be encouraging. Ministering, or serving, is also referred to as being an "ambassador for Christ", "fishers of men", and "soldiers of Christ." Along with a bold confession of our faith, we must be sensitive to those receiving our message.

The Importance of Being Sensitive to People's Needs

There is a great importance in being sensitive to people's needs. The prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2, which pertains to Jesus' ministry, has now been passed down to the church in order to restore a hurting society. In order to minister to those hurting, we must be sensitive to find out who is hurting and why they are hurting. It takes much involved work to minister to someone, but the results of seeing them "rise above their circumstances, get the victory, and overcome," should be worth the investment. When we are willing to look after people for their welfare, then we have taken the position of being watchmen in the city of God. When we see danger approaching certain individuals, it is our duty to warn them. If they listen to our warning then all is well. If they do not listen, then they are responsible for their own ignorance. However, if we fail to warn them when we should have, then the responsibility for the disaster rests on the watchmen. As we lay down our lives in love and give of ourselves and our materials, then we as servants will receive a double portion and everlasting joy.

The WORK OF THE MINISTRY is accomplished by those individuals who meet the qualifications of a minister. To effectively minister, or serve the needs of the people, we must be empowered with the Holy Spirit. The nine fruits should be manifested when ministering and so should some of the nine gifts of the spirit. With the aid of the Holy Spirit and the name of Jesus Christ, we can set the captives free from demonic oppression. With the power of the Holy Spirit we can be bold preachers of the "Good News" of Jesus. With Christ's character dominating us, we will also be sensitive to the needs of the flock and minister to them appropriately in order to restore them and society.