

## Why I Minister As I Do

- I. This sermon will take on a personal aspect.
  - A. I want to set forth the biblical basis for N.T. ministry.
  - B. I want to set forth what drives me in this work and what my goals are.
  - C. I want to set forth some personal reasons for ministering as I do.
  - D. A challenge that I have faced in pondering this topic is a matter of self-examination: am I seeking to explain myself or justify myself?
  
- II. I am totally persuaded that I have the preserved word of God at hand and that it is the ultimate authority in all matters of conscience, creed and conduct. **PSA 119:128; 2TI 3:16-17.**
  - A. If I am not thus persuaded, what business do I have proclaiming myself a minister of the word of God?
  - B. The words of men do not profit as does God's word. **JER 23:32; 1TH 2:13.**
  - C. As such, I do not sit in judgment on God's word; it sits in judgment on me. **JAM 4:11.**
  
- III. Ministers are called to be faithful ministers of Jesus Christ. **1CO 4:1-4.**
  - A. Those that are called to be faithful ministers of Christ are enabled by Jesus Christ Himself. **1TI 1:11-12.**
  - B. The ministry they are given and for which they are enabled is a New Testament ministry. **2CO 3:5-8.**
    1. They do not sit in Moses' seat (**MAT 23:3**) but stand and proclaim Jesus Christ the Lord. **2CO 4:5-6.**
    2. Therefore, if I in ministry do not make Christ the center and proclaim Him above all men, I am not performing my duty and am at odds with God the Father Who has given Him preeminence in all things. **COL 1:18-19.**
    3. When I teach you things from the O.T., I strive to never displace Christ thereby but rather relate such to Christ Who fulfilled the Law's righteousness, shadows, types and prophecies. This is lawful use of the law. **1TI 1:8.**
    4. Because Christ and His work deserve all honor and glory (**REV 5:11-13**), I reject:
      - a. all assimilation, adoption and imitation of pagan religious concepts or elements for the service of Christ and for relating to God. **2CO 6:14-18; MAT 6:7.**
      - b. all man-made doctrines and traditions of religion for they diminish the word of God, nullify worship, and assume that the true order of God which Christ lived and died for is deficient. **MAR 7:6-13.**
      - c. all corruptions of biblical ordinances like baptism and communion which should properly portray Christ's one-time, all sufficient work of salvation by His death, burial and resurrection from the dead. **ROM 4:25; 6:10.**
      - d. all insinuation that the works of sinners must be added to the work of Christ to bring sinners to God in glory so that men could boast. **EPH 2:8-9.**
      - e. all forms of artificial or super-holiness that are ultimately more "holy" than Jesus Christ Himself (**COL 2:20-23**), Who could become angry because of zeal for God's house, angry at hard-hearted hypocrites, angry at His own disciples, curse a fig tree, show mercy and patience to publicans and harlots, call a king "fox" and cut through the dung of high-minded elitists with plain doctrine which the common man heard gladly. **MAR 12:37.**
  
- IV. The Apostle Paul is the example and pattern for N.T. ministry.

- A. The Holy Spirit selected Paul's epistles to be 14 of the 27 books of the N.T.
- B. He is especially the apostle to the Gentiles. **ROM 11:13.**
- C. He gives the most prolific instruction to N.T. ministers (three pastoral epistles) concerning proper government of the church. **1TI 3:14-15.**
- D. N.T. ministers should emphasize Paul's teaching. **2TI 2:2.**
- E. With a minister preaching Paul's gospel and a church following Paul's gospel and example, brethren can be spared from following the wrong shepherds unto destruction and also enjoy the company of the God of peace. **PHIL 3:17-19; 4:9.**
- F. Paul was bold in ministry and sought prayer for the same. **1TH 2:2; EPH 6:19-20.**
  - 1. He was bold towards the gainsayers. **ACT 13:45-46.**
  - 2. He was bold towards his converts. **2CO 7:4; 10:1.**
  - 3. His was not a namby-pamby, "yes and no" kind of ministry. **2CO 1:17-20.**
  - 4. I preach with authority also (per my Lord, **MAR 1:22**), authority of divine origin and delegation (**MAT 28:19-20**), out of conviction that God is true when all men are liars (**ROM 3:4**) and to save my own skin (**1CO 9:16**), none of which makes any sense unless I am persuaded about the inspiration and supremacy of Scripture.
  - 5. My intent is to make you argue with God, not with me (for my opinion is as worthless as yours).
- G. Paul knew that he was nothing outside of God's grace and mercy.
  - 1. That he was made a minister was owing to grace and mercy. **1TI 1:12-14.**
  - 2. His diligent labors were by the grace of God. **1CO 15:10.**
  - 3. He knew his sinfulness: he did not presume to paint himself purer than other men because of his extensive knowledge. **ROM 7:18, 24; 1TI 1:15.**
  - 4. I minister to you from the same footing. I know what I was, what I am yet by nature, and how undeserving I am of salvation or the ministry.
    - a. I therefore minister to you accordingly as one whose heart is as yours. **PRO 27:19; 2CO 11:29.**
    - b. I am painfully aware of the fact that every time I point a finger, three fingers are pointing back at me.
  - 5. Like Paul, I know I have the treasure of the gospel in an earthen vessel (**2CO 4:7**), subject to cracking, leaking, failings, insecurities, fears, etc. but the word burns within me and I must speak it regardless. c/w **JER 20:9; 23:29** c/w **ACT 18:5.**
- H. Paul was gentle and parental in ministry. **1TH 2:7-8, 11-12.**
  - 1. He instructed ministers to do likewise. **2TI 2:24-26.**
  - 2. I freely admit that I look upon you as my children (**GAL 4:19**) whom I sincerely love with tender regard and discipline, and I suspect that this parent-child relationship is often reciprocal.
  - 3. One of the battles I fight personally is determining when I as a preacher-parent should step in and regulate your lives or let the good Lord and bruised shins instruct you.
  - 4. I can tell you that I certainly do NOT desire to be an all-powerful surveillance pastor who doesn't just watch for your souls (**HEB 13:17**) but over every aspect of your lives like your personal business, jobs, choices, preferences, intimacies, etc.
    - a. I deem it better that indifferent matters and matters of personal foibles be supervised and corrected personally by God. I strive to differentiate between questionable conduct that is imprudent and that which is perilous.
    - b. God Who knows the hearts of all men (**1KI 8:39**) knows best when hidden things of darkness should be brought to light and He will do so. **1CO 4:5.**

- V. Here is a random list of other motivations and explanations for my manner of ministry.
- A. A Pauline minister should be a studier. **2TI 2:15.**
1. More than any other writing, I study Scripture for perfection (**2TI 3:15-16**): if I had no other study book but the Bible, I would have enough and plenty for the work.
  2. There are plenty of books to weary my flesh (**ECC 12:12**), and not all of them are profitable for me or for you.
  3. I may flavor my teaching with extra-scriptural knowledge as Paul did (**ACT 17:28**) but it is doctrine that saves us both. **1TI 4:13-16; 2TI 4:2-3.**
  4. I am persuaded that God is more concerned about my knowledge and presentation of His words than the words of men.
- B. A Pauline minister should be a man of prayer, praying for your spiritual well-being above other concerns. **2CO 13:7; COL 1:9; 2TH 1:11.**
1. I am not indifferent to other concerns like health, family, jobs, etc., but Scripture and experience have taught me that the prime directive must be what is best for your souls. **MAR 8:36 c/w PSA 119:67, 71-72.**
  2. I truly desire your success in every other good thing God provides the sons of men but not if such enables your folly. **PRO 1:32; DEU 32:15.**
- C. I encourage wisdom, prudence, diligence that you may take advantage of available resources for the supply of your needs, duties and even your enjoyment. **ROM 12:11; EPH 4:28; 1TI 6:17.**
1. I reject the notion that Christians should be slackers or only eke out a minimalist existence as if relief of the genuinely needy should be somebody else's job.
  2. I do not want to lay a guilt trip on anyone who is striving to advance in the stuff of this life unless their doing so is confounding their spiritual well-being. **LUK 12:16-21.**
  3. I do not want to lay a guilt trip on anyone who isn't well up the ladder in earthly success. Not everyone has been given the same natural abilities or opportunities but all are expected to use what they have been given. **MAT 25:15; LUK 16:10-11.**
  4. We should pursue diligence but flee covetousness. **1TI 6:9-11.**
  5. I do not want to be greedy of filthy lucre (**1TI 3:3**) but neither do I discourage your financial support of my ministry.
    - a. A personal note here: I have seen both the error of "prosperity ministry" and the error of churches which seem to think it best that their minister be poorly compensated. The labourer is worthy of his reward. **1TI 5:18.**
    - b. As I have done throughout the years, I take to heart my Lord's command to be a friend of the mammon of unrighteousness (**LUK 16:9**) and work side jobs as needed. **ACT 20:34.**
    - c. This job is weird, hour-wise. Sleep can be elusive and there is a lot more to ministry than putting a sermon together and preaching it on Sunday.
  6. A word of encouragement to all: Be faithful and upright in heart and God will bless you in due season (and the season may be late in life). Avoid the Victim card or the Giants and Grasshoppers card. **NUM 13:33; PRO 22:13.**
- D. I am persuaded that my authority over you is to be just and in the fear of God. **2SAM 23:3.**
1. You are God's flock, not mine. I am only an under-shepherd. **1PE 5:3-4.**
  2. My power is to be for your edification, not your destruction. **2CO 13:10.**
  3. As such, I have made it a point to limit our worship services to once per week and consider attendance to Bible studies as optional for your benefit. I do not desire our

- religion to become toxic to your reasonable family and individual needs and goals.
4. I strive to balance my rebukes and reproofs with the oil of gladness of grace, mercy and longsuffering. I, like you, need both corrections and comforts.
  5. I do not expect your flawlessness and I very much take into consideration the weaknesses, burdens and fears that you have.
  6. I deem it more important to build you up in faith, hope and charity to inspire your desire to serve God than to impress upon you only a master-slave obedience to God. Duty without will, desire or cheerfulness does not impress God.  
**2CO 8:12; 9:7; ROM 12:8; PSA 100:2 ct/w DEU 28:47.**
  7. I count it an honor and great blessing to minister to the likes of you who want to serve God from the heart (**ROM 6:17**). Why, therefore, would I want to hurt you by uncaring, self-centered stupidity?
- E. I strive to be harmless, as my Lord. **HEB 7:26.**
1. I hate myself (and have begged mercy of God and you) for the times when my “me-ness” overruled good judgment and I said or did something that hurt one of you without cause.
  2. I want to be able to stand with Samuel at the end of my ministry. **1SAM 12:3-4.**
  3. I am repulsed at the idea of violating the trust you place in me to be the minister of Christ to you and your children.
- F. I know that I am blunt, unsophisticated, vulgar, “unprofessional,” etc.
1. vulgar: The common or usual language of a country; the vernacular.
  2. Paul was *base* (low in the social scale, plebeian) and *rude* (lacking in elegance or polish). **2CO 10:1; 11:6.**
  3. I must preach the whole counsel of God (**ACT 20:27**) which of necessity includes timely addressing of “delicate” issues like sex, anatomy, bastardy, eunuchs, eliminatory functions, circumcision, etc. I do, though, promise that if I should teach the entire Song of Solomon, that I will not use visual aids.
  4. I reject pasty-white Pharisaism which is holier than God or His word (which is entirely and VERY pure, **PSA 119:140**).
  5. Have you ever earnestly read the gospels and paid attention to WHAT and HOW our Lord spoke?
  6. I desire to impress God’s people of the difference between sin (with its inroads) and the foibles and realities of the human condition.
- G. I come across sometimes as flippant, lacking soberness or gravity (per **1TI 3:2; TIT 2:7**).
1. Full disclosure: I admit I am a bit of a ham.
  2. I may sprinkle some levity in a sermon to help make a point or give you a little mental break.
  3. But I will not treat sin with lightness as if it were a thing to be mocked at.  
**PRO 14:9.**
  4. I will not treat our duty in service to God with lightness as did the Corinthians who turned the solemn memorial of Christ’s sufferings into a party. **1CO 11:20-22.**
  5. I will *reverence God’s sanctuary* (**LEV 19:30**) by not corrupting its God-given order for pure worship as did Aaron’s sons (**LEV 10:1-3**), nor turning it into a den of commercial thieves (**MAT 21:13**), and by entering His courts with gladness.  
**PSA 100; ACT 2:46-47.**
  6. I do not intend to go through life under a pall of joylessness, afraid to laugh or enjoy what God has provided (**ECC 3:11-13**) and pretend to bind myself or you with a faulty burden of guilt for living godly, freely, happily as we plow through this veil of tears waiting for the redemption of our bodies. **ROM 8:23.**