

AN UNDENIABLE CALLING

1 Tim. 1:18-19a
February 24, 2008

INTRODUCTION: This passage is one where Paul is saying to Timothy, **“Be true to your name.”** Timothy is composed of two Greek words: (Timotheos); *time*, which means honour and *theos* which means God, and so means honour to God. Timothy had a call from God on his life: first to God Himself; secondly, to serve the Lord’s church. This passage serves as a commentary on the seriousness of the call to serve.

I. THE CALL FROM WITHOUT. 18

A. A COMMAND TO OBEY.

“this charge I commit” – (this command I entrust); this is used for a military order. It is not a suggestion and it is not open for discussion. It is a mandate to be carried out obediently.

Paul was serious about God’s call on his life and passed the same charge on to Timothy. We are duty-bound to obey the Commander.

2 Timothy 2:4, “No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Jesus expressed the importance of duty.

Luke 17:7-10, “And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'”

Again, Paul was confident of his commitment to his calling. Note his witness before King Agrippa.

Acts 26:19, "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision”

Also note his conviction –

Acts 20:24, “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

1 Corinthians 9:16-17, “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.”

Paul recognized that he was under divine obligation to use his gifts and fulfill his calling.

Every servant of the Lord is duty-bound to carry out his ministry.

B. A COMMISSION TO FULFILL.

“This charge I commit to you” – entrust; refers to committing something of value to another. Speaks of putting a deposit in a bank. Paul had given Timothy a valuable deposit, *God’s truth*.

2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

This was a treasure he was to guard diligently.

1 Timothy 6:20, “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust.” It always implies that a trust has been reposed in someone for which he will be called to account (a sacred trust).

C. A CONFIRMATION TO LIVE UP TO.

“according to the prophecies previously made concerning you”

Paul reminded Timothy that God had chosen him for his ministry. Apparently some of the prophets in the local assemblies had been led by the Spirit to select Timothy for service. Prophets in the New Testament spoke the revelation of God’s will to the early church.

NOTE: Acts 13:1-3

“previously made” – leading the way to. It implies that a series of prophecies had been made *concerning* Timothy in connection with him having received his spiritual gift.

1 Timothy 4:14, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”

The prophecies, then, were those that specifically and supernaturally called Timothy into the ministry.

Pastors are no longer called to the ministry in such a dramatic fashion.

1 Timothy 3:1, “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”

The call to ministry rises from inside through *desire* rather than outside from *revelation*. That desire is then to be confirmed by the church. The church, by observing a man’s life and service, can confirm whether he gives evidence of being called by God to the ministry. That call by God and confirmation by the church should keep us going when the battle is fierce.

Note with me the call of the great Scottish Reformer John Knox-

“John Knox had been teaching in St. Andrews. His teaching was supposed to be private but many came to it, for he was obviously a man with a message. So the people urged him ‘that he would take the preaching place upon him. But he utterly refused, alleging that he would not run where God had not called him... Whereupon they privily among themselves advising, having with them in council Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, they concluded that they would give a charge to the said John, and that publicly by the mouth of their preacher.’

So Sunday came and Knox was in Church and John Rough was preaching. ‘The said John Rough, preacher, directed his words to the said John Knox, saying: ‘Brother, ye shall not be offended, albeit that I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are present, which is this: In the name of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of these that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not his holy vocation, but...that you take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as you look to avoid God’s displeasure, and desire that he shall multiply his graces with you.’ And in the end he said to those that were present: ‘Was not this your charge to me? And do ye not approve this vocation?’ They answered: ‘It was: and we approve it.’ Whereat the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day till the day that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any sign of mirth in him, neither yet had he pleasure to accompany any man, many days together.’

John Knox was chosen; he did not want to answer the call; but he had to, for the choice had been made by God. Years afterwards the Regent Morton uttered his famous epitaph by Knox’s graveside: ‘In respect that he bore God’s message, to whom he must make account for the same, he (albeit he was weak and an unworthy creature, and a fearful

man) feared not the faces of men.’ The consciousness of being chosen gave him courage.

“that you may wage a good warfare” – without a call, it is so easy to quit when the going gets tough.

II. THE CALL FROM WITHIN. 19a

“having faith and a good conscience” – this speaks of two weapons.

A. FAITH.

Is a reference to the Christian faith, the Gospel, the Word of God.

“having faith” (keeping); means holding fast to that revealed truth. Timothy remains loyal to God’s truth; remains unwaveringly devoted; guard it (**6:20**), nourish yourself on it (**4:6**), and preach it (**4:13**;
II Tim 4:2)

B. A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

This is the result of a pure life; maintain a blameless conscience.

The conscience is a God-given device in every human being that reacts to that person’s behavior. It either accuses or excuses (**Rom 2:14-15**)

1. When Behavior Is Good.

It produces feelings of well-being, peace, contentment, and calmness.

2. When Behavior is Bad.

It produces guilt, shame, remorse, fear, doubt, insecurity, and despair

Its purpose is to warn the person of the fact that he is sinning. What a blessing to have such a warning device. (Sometimes I want to remove the battery)

It is to the soul what pain is to the body. Pain warns that something threatens the well-being of the body. Guilt warns that something threatens the well-being of the soul.

Paul so desired to have a good conscience.

2 Corinthians 1:12, “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.”

CONCLUSION: Doctrinal purity must be accompanied by purity of life.

Sound doctrine and godly living are the *twin towers* guarding the purity of the church.

1 Timothy 4:16, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”