

AUTHENTIC MINISTRY

Characteristics of a Wholesome Ministry in The Local Church
Colossians 1:23 - 29



The Ministry and It's...

- ◆ Honor
- ◆ Attitude
- ◆ Cost
- ◆ Goal
- ◆ Power

**“To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy,
which so powerfully works in me”. (Colossians 1:29).**

Bill Kirk

“AUTHENTIC MINISTRY”

Text: Colossians 1:23-29

Subject: Characteristics of **Authentic Ministers** and **Ministry**

Introduction

1. Paul wrote Colossians (from prison) to combat two doctrinal errors:
 - ◆ One was a form of ascetic legalism (2:14-17)
 - ◆ The other was a type of unsound mysticism (2:18-23)
2. Paul combats both errors by exalting Christ and His supremacy.
3. Paul ends (Ch.1: v. 23) with the word “**minister**”.
4. This triggers Paul’s thoughts for the next section (which describes what local church ministry is all about.
5. I call it **truth that produces healthy (authentic) ministers and ministry for God’s glory:**

I. The Entrance Into Ministry Is “A Sacred Privilege”!

“I, Paul have become a servant; I have become its servant by the commission God have me to present to you the Word of God.” (v. 23, 25)

Question: How does Paul describe himself in v. 23?

Answer: A “servant” of the Lord (which is)...

- ◆ Someone who **advances others** at the expense of themselves,
- ◆ **Cares less** who gets the credit,
- ◆ Doesn’t need to be “**thanked**” for their service, and
- ◆ Takes up their cross **without complaint** in following Jesus.

Question: Who made Paul (and you) a servant in the local church?

Answer: “*By the commission God gave me.*” (v. 25)

- ◆ The word “commission” is the Greek word (oikonomia) which means: “To be a steward of someone else’s possessions.”

Paul is saying here...

- ◆ It is God who has called you into the ministry and your commission is a sacred responsibility to serve His church.

In other words...

- ◆ Our spiritual gifts have been given to us to help us minister to others (and)
- ◆ The anointing is not for us to feel good – it is for us to help somebody!

II. The Fragrance of Ministry is “Deep Joy”!

“Now I rejoice.” (v. 24)

Question: What kind of attitude should characterize the spirit of ministry?

Answer: An attitude of joy in the depth of our hearts.

Question: What is the “joy of the Lord”?

Answer: A deep seated confidence that God is in control at all times.

I Believe Three Wells Fuel Our Joy:

1. **Humility** – which protects us from becoming self-centered.
2. **Gratitude** – which protects us from a grumbling and murmuring spirit.
3. **Integrity** – which allows us to enjoy the power of a clear conscience.

III. The Cost of Ministry is “Personal Sacrifice”!

“I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.” (v. 24b)

- ◆ Paul says here that he is willing to sacrifice to build and benefit the local church.
- ◆ Paul is willing to pay the price and suffer injury for the sake of Christ’s body.
- ◆ Paul is willing to make any sacrifice necessary for the sake of the church moving forward.

In Plain Vanilla

- ◆ Paul flat out loves the Lord and His church more than himself.

Remember:

- ◆ If Calvary is not enough to motivate me where I am, nothing else will ever be enough where I may go!

IV. The Message of Ministry is “Jesus Alone!”

“The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages but is now disclosed to the saints...which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory.” (v. 26, 27)

Question: What is the “mystery” or “message” of Paul?

Answer: *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* (Which means):

- ◆ Only Jesus can bring peace and joy now and later on, eternal blessing and life everlasting.
- ◆ Only Jesus gives us hope now and hope for eternity.

Which Means:

- ◆ Let’s keep Jesus the centerpiece in all that takes place in the church (and forget all the exaggerated sensationalism and hype).

Question: What is hype?

Answer: Energy without sincerity!

(Three Ingredients of a Gospel Service)

1. **Proclamation** of truth that points to Jesus!
2. **The Presence** of God that melts the human heart!
3. **Persuasion** to act upon the truth just heard!

V. The Goal of Ministry is “Spiritual Maturity”!

“We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.” (v. 28)

Question: What is the goal of all local church ministry?

Answer: “To present everyone perfect (mature) in Christ.” (v. 28)

1. We “proclaim” (katangelo) which means “to publicly declare the truth”.
2. We “admonish” (noutheteo) which means “to warn in view of coming judgment”.
3. We “teach” (didasko) which means “to impart the Word which builds the spiritual life of the listener.”

Fact: The purpose of the church is to **build people** (who will reproduce their lives in others).

- ◆ Our goal is not how big, how loud, how entertaining!
- ◆ Our goal is how healthy, how fruitful and how effective is bringing lost people into the kingdom who become disciples.

VI. The Strength of Ministry is “Divine Energy”!

“To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.” (v. 29)

- ◆ The word “labor” (kopiao) means, “to work to the point of exhaustion.”
- ◆ The word “struggling” (agonizomai) means, “to agonize and give maximum effort.”

Question: How is it possible to “labor” and “agonize” in the ministry?

Answer: *“With His energy which powerfully works in me.” (v. 29)*

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Christ steps in and infuses power into our beings!
- ◆ Our resources to do God’s will come from God and not from us!

How Sobering That...

- ◆ If we accomplish anything of lasting value in ministry, it is because God gives us the energy and power to get it done!!!
- ◆ And this energy and power will be commensurate (equal to) our time with God in prayer!
No prayer – no power!
Little prayer – little power!
Much prayer – much power!

“Lord help us be authentic, transparent and genuine as we serve You and Your local church and help us remember...”

1. The **Entrance** into ministry is a “**Sacred Privilege**”!
2. The **Fragrance** of ministry is “**Deep Joy**”!
3. The **Cost** of ministry is “**Personal Sacrifice**”!
4. The **Message** of ministry is “**Jesus Alone**”!
5. The **Goal** of ministry is “**Spiritual Maturity**”!

6. The **Strength** of ministry is “**Divine Energy**”!

Amen!
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