

Christ Shining Through Our Sufferings



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) July 7, 2020

No one on earth can place you in ministry. You may be given a diploma by a seminary, ordained by a bishop, or commissioned by a denomination. But Paul reveals the only source of any true call to ministry: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Timothy 1:12).

What does Paul mean here when he says Jesus enabled him and counted him faithful? Three days after the apostle’s conversion, Christ placed Paul in the ministry — specifically, the ministry of suffering: “For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). This is the very ministry Paul refers to when he says, “Therefore, since we have this ministry” (2 Corinthians 4:1). He continues, “As we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.” He is talking about the ministry of suffering and he makes it clear that it is a ministry we all possess.

Paul tells us that Christ pledged to remain faithful to him and enable him through all his trials. The Greek word for “enable” means a continual supply of strength. So, Paul is saying, “Jesus promised to give me more than sufficient strength for the journey. He enables me to remain faithful in this ministry and because of him, I won’t faint or give in!”

By his own admission, Paul was not an eloquent speaker. He had cast aside all his worldly training and his own human brilliance. He said he preached through weakness, in fear and trembling. Even Peter said Paul spoke things that were hard to understand (see 2 Peter 3:15-16). His ministry was the outshining of Christ — which was produced in him through great sufferings. This great apostle impacted his age incredibly and continues to impact even our generation by the way he responded to his trials.

Paul often spoke of “Christ in me” by which he meant, “You see a human being standing before you. But God has led me through great trials, and those sufferings have produced in me the character of Christ. That’s what you see shining from my life. Only the faithful enabler can produce this in a life; only he can give his servants a song and a testimony in the midst of every trial.” Hallelujah!

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