

OLD UNION MINISTERS SCHOOL 2018
OLD UNION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MARCH 28th

ELDER JERRY R. MILLER

LESSON TITLE: **ABLE MINISTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

SCRIPTURE TEXT: 2ND CORINTHIANS 3: 1-6

Key verses: *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

INTRODUCTION: This congregation here today is made up of preachers. As I stand before you today and try to share the lesson thoughts God has placed upon my heart, I'm aware that I'm not addressing an assembly of self made ministers, and during these three days you will not be hearing devotionals and lessons from self made ministers. **God has made us what we are.** We didn't choose to be preachers; God called us and put us into the ministry.

Revelation 4:11, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

AIM OF THE LESSON: To show that for any good thing accomplished as a result of our work in the ministry, all recognition, all praise, all honor and glory belongs to God. **ALL OF IT.**

Psalms 29:2: Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. If we take even a fraction of it, we took too much.

We should look at our ministry in light of the words recorded in Psalm 115: 1: *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

Matthew 4: 18&19, says: *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will **make you** fishers of men.*

In Romans 1:1, Paul started this epistle by saying; *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.*

I won't reference all these scriptures in this lesson, just look in your Bibles at the beginning of Paul's epistles. Notice how often he would begin by stating that he was an apostle because he was called of God, or, it was the will of God. It seems that when he would begin to write it was important to him "right out of the gate", to make it clear unto those to whom he was writing, that he did not make himself an apostle, God did.

Isaiah 64:8, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand.*

In 1st Corinthians 1:26-29, Paul wrote concerning the type of men the Lord generally calls.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (The next verse tells us God's reason for this.) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

In 2nd Corinthians 2: 14-17, *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. **And who is sufficient for these things?** For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. Within those statements Paul made he inserted this question, *who is sufficient for these things?**

In the lesson text from 2nd Corinthians 3:5 he said, *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God!*

Perhaps you have preached the gospel and thought, well, there were lost people here but they just didn't respond, not one of them sought the Lord for salvation, or even seem concerned. I just didn't do a good job; I'm a failure as a preacher. Did you really think it was going to be you that would reach them? Now had it turned out just the opposite, and you got up and preached, and every sinner in the house fell down before God, and cried out to Him and got saved, you didn't do that, it was the work of God! I want to share this statement from a book I have read several times entitled; To the Golden Shore. On page 53 you can find an account when around the year 1807, a missionary by the name of Robert Morrison was making arrangements to go to China, and the owner of the ship on which he was to sail commented skeptically, "And so, Mr. Morrison, you really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese empire?" To which he replied, "No, sir, I expect God will."

Consider Paul's statement found in 1st Corinthians 3: 5-7. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

In John 15: 4&5, of Jesus said to His disciples *Abide in me, and in you. As the*

branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Again, in Paul's writing to the church at Corinth, in 1st Corinthians 15: 9&10 he wrote: *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the **grace of God** which was with me.*

1st Timothy 1: 12-14: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Though our individual testimony is not exactly the same as Paul's was here, the same holds true for all of us, What were any of us before God did His work in our hearts?

Before moving on from this thought, let's consider 1st Corinthians 2: 1-5, and 1st Thessalonians 1: 5. 1st Corinthians 2: 1-5 says: *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing word's of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

1st Thessalonians 1:5: *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye may know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

When we preach, we better be much more concerned about the power of the Holy Spirit than well polished words. B. H. Carroll once wrote: I have oftentimes seen a great sermon fail to convict because it was too ornate, too delicate, too polished. It did not deal directly with the naked souls of men!

Now I believe we all appreciate those who encourage us as preachers; however, we must be careful to never allow compliments from those to whom we preach to have a negative effect on us. Be careful!

I want to again reference something recorded in the book: To the Golden Shore. And to be honest, it was the third time I read the book before this really caught my attention. On page 382 of this book there is an account of a time when Adoniram Judson, after laboring many years as a foreign missionary, working tirelessly to preach the gospel, and translate the scriptures into the native tongue of those he was trying to reach, and after

suffering so many things, loss of family, much persecution, prison, poor health due to his living circumstances and little medical care, this man began to question the motives of his own heart. He began to ask himself, have I really done all I have done for the glory of God, or have I been driven by some desire for self accomplishment, perhaps even to be one day known and remembered as a great missionary.

When we do the work of the Lord, when we labor in the preaching of His word, and in the carrying out of any ministerial duties, we are only doing that which is our duty. In Luke 17:10, Jesus said when we have done all we have been commanded to do, we are to say we are **unprofitable servants**, we have done that which was our duty to do.

1st Thessalonians 2:4: *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*

* Can you imagine preaching without greatly depending on the aid of the Holy Spirit? Honestly many of us, perhaps most of us, and quite possibly all of us don't have to imagine it, because we've probably tried it.

Now after all I have said to remind us that we simply cannot do anything without the help of the Lord, let's consider what we can do with His help. Looking back at the lesson text, Paul said we are not sufficient of ourselves, but he also said we are sufficient in God. **He has made us able ministers!**

Isaiah 55:10&11: *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

1st Timothy 1: 12: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*

Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!!*

2nd Corinthians 10:4- *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, **but mighty through God** to the pulling down of strong holds.*

Proverbs 3: 5&6: *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

In closing, remember what God told Moses when he was sending him to back to Egypt with a very difficult assignment: Exodus 3:12, **Certainly I will be with thee!!!**