

Strength for the Journey

by David Wilkerson

Jesus enables and counts us faithful for ministry, giving us the strength to remain faithful in the midst of suffering and trials.

Scripture: Acts 9:16, 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 6:3-5, 2 Corinthians 6:10, 1 Timothy 1:12

Topics: "Divine Calling", "Strength in Suffering"

Description

David Wilkerson emphasizes that true ministry is not conferred by human authority but is a divine calling from Jesus Christ, who enables and strengthens believers through their trials. He reflects on the apostle Paul's conversion and the ministry of suffering that all Christians are called to endure, assuring that Christ provides a continual supply of strength for this journey. Wilkerson warns that those who neglect spiritual growth will struggle in times of hardship, while those who focus on Christ will be transformed and equipped to shine hope amidst suffering. Ultimately, he encourages believers to reflect the hope of Christ, making others curious about their peace and strength in adversity.

Transcript

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 the apostle Paul reveals the only source of any true call to ministry: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that 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? Think back to the apostle's conversion. Three days after that event, Christ placed Paul in the ministry--specifically, the ministry of suffering: "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). This is the very ministry Paul refers to when he says, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry..." (2 Corinthians 4:1). He continues, adding, "...as we have received mercy, we faint not." He's talking about the ministry of suffering. And he makes clear it is a ministry that we all have.

Paul is telling us Jesus gave him a promise for this ministry. Christ pledged to remain faithful to him and enable him through all his trials. The Greek word for enabled means "a continual supply of strength." Paul declares, "Jesus promised to give me more than sufficient strength for the journey. He enables me to remain faithful in this ministry. Because of him, I won't faint or give in. I'll emerge with a testimony."

A transfiguration is taking place in all our lives. The truth is, we're being changed by what obsesses us. We're becoming like the things that occupy our minds. Our character is being influenced and impacted by whatever has hold of our hearts.

I thank God for everyone who feeds his mind and soul with spiritual things. Such servants have fixed their eyes on what is pure and holy. They keep their gaze fixed on Christ, spending quality time worshipping him and building themselves up in faith. The Holy Spirit is at work in these saints, continually changing their character in Christ's. These believers will be ready for the hard, explosive sufferings to come. Slothful, lazy, prayerless believers will suffer heart failure or breakdowns. They'll be crushed by their fears, because they don't have the Holy Spirit at work in them, transfiguring them. When the hard times come, they simply won't make it.

Here is Paul's final word on the matter: "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments.... As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich" (2 Corinthians 6:3-5, 10). How do we "make many rich"? By outshining the hope of Christ in the midst of our sufferings. We offer true riches when we cause others to ask, "What's his secret? Where does he find such peace?"

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