

The Making of a Minister

by Eli Brayley

The sermon emphasizes that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who decides, chooses, and sets apart men for His purpose, and that human qualifications do not make a minister.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7, Acts 26:13, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Galatians 1:1, Galatians 1:9, Ephesians 4:22, Philippians 3:5, Philippians 3:7, 1 Timothy 1:13

Topics: "Ministerial Calling", "Divine Appointment"

Description

Eli Brayley preaches about the true qualifications of a minister of the gospel, emphasizing that it is not based on human achievements or outward appearances, but on being chosen and set apart by the Lord Jesus Christ. Using the transformation of Saul to Paul as an example, he highlights that God looks at the heart and calls individuals according to His purpose, not man's standards. The sermon underscores that true ministry is a calling from God, not a career choice or based on earthly credentials.

Transcript

"As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." - Galatians 1:9-12

The Pharisee, Saul, was an amazing man. I speak from a human perspective: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:5-6) If any man would be deemed qualified for the work of the ministry, our church boards today would vote unanimously. A brilliant scholar of the Scriptures, zealous, ostensibly spotless in godly piety... in modern Christian credentials the parallel might have appeared as such:

- born into a goodly Christian home
- son of a long line of pastors
- a "Christian" of "Christians"
- as touching the Scriptures, fundamental

-concerning zeal, active in numerous church programs

-touching Christian behaviour, puritan

Wouldn't such a man certainly be qualified for the ministry of the gospel? He would indeed in man's sight! When Samuel visited the home of Jesse searching for a king who would lead God's people, he took one look at handsome and tall Reuben and said in his heart, "Surely this is the one!" But God saw otherwise. We learned from this story that God sees what man does not see, and that God will choose whom He will: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7) It is not brilliance, talent or outward excellence that God is looking for in a man.

But wasn't Saul chosen by the Lord? Yes indeed, but hear the words of the new creature, Paul: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung..." (Philippians 3:7-8) He can rightly speak from experience when he says to the brethren at Ephesus: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:22-24) Paul was a new man in Christ Jesus, having been given a new mind to see spiritual things; a man chosen to be a minister before the Lord.

What then makes a minister, and what then should we think towards men filling this office? Do we look for university degrees, or even fiery Christian zeal? These things are commendable and beneficial, but they in themselves do not make a minister. They certainly didn't for Paul. So what then is the qualification? Our Lord Jesus is the dictation:

"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister..." (Acts 26:13-16)

"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose: to make thee a minister!" This is what distinguishes the seminarian from the summoned, the career from the calling. It is the the Lord Jesus Christ who decides, chooses and who sets apart men for His purpose. "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:1) It is not men that make ministers. Not of men or by men; only Jesus can do this.

It takes the Lord Almighty to make a Paul out of a Saul, a fearless pastor out of a fearful Peter, a courageous general out of a cowardly Gideon, a stalwart king out of a shepherd kid...

Did the Lord use Paul's abilities? Yes. His keen intellect? Absolutely! But we have now a new man: broken, humbled; and called not because of his great skills, not because of his great zeal, but because of the mercy and grace and sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ given towards this once ignorant man (1 Timothy 1:13). Paul was made a minister, and received the heart of a minister. Only then could he say:

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)

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