

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

"REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET." PROVERBS 22:28

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COUNTED FAITHFUL

by Greg Dunham

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry." 1 Ti 1:12.

It should be a clear thought in our minds and hearts that the work of the ministry is not a matter of personal choice but a distinct calling from God. The same Apostle Paul that is writing to Timothy had a specific calling placed on his life, on the road to Damascus, when God said, "But arise and stand on thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Act 26:16. This calling is still necessary today for a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Upon receiving this calling, Paul was quick to enter into the work. In Acts Chapter 9, having had the visit from Ananias, and taking time to regain his strength, we find in verse 20 that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." This shows us that a man with a calling from God, can at the very least preach about Jesus, and what better subject could there be? He did not go to seminary. He did not confer with the apostles. He stood and boldly proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God. Surely if God has called a man to go, he can go.

These ideas show the strength of the scripture we are considering when Paul said that Christ "hath enabled me." The ability to stand and proclaim the gospel is a gift that God bestows on men as He will. The latter part of the verse states that Christ counted him worthy, putting him in the ministry. The worthiness was not in Paul. He talks in various places of how he wasn't meet to be called an apostle, because He persecuted the Church of God (1 Co 15:9), and how he counted his life that he had lived (which is where he was when Christ saved and called him) as dung. Phi 3:8.

A further consideration of the Greek word

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BIBLE WINE

by M. A. Brawner

One of the challenges faced by followers of Jesus Christ is what stand they should take on the topic of drinking alcohol as a beverage. To be clear, the topic here is referring only to the use of alcohol as a beverage rather than for medical purposes. The questions we face are questions such as, should followers of Jesus Christ drink alcohol at all? Would it be alright for them to just have one drink in private to relax after a long day? Is it acceptable to have one, or no more than two beverages, in a social setting with family or friends who drink on a regular basis? Do we believe the Lord would be alright if one of His followers were trying to form a relationship with a lost person by sipping a beverage while visiting in a social setting? These are the types of questions which challenge many of the followers of Jesus Christ in this day where drinking alcohol as a beverage is common place.

As a young, God-called preacher, I remember a number of situations where these types of questions came up. While I was an active-duty military member, it was a common practice for co-workers to "hang-out" together after work. Hanging-out took place at one of the establishments on base where alcohol was readily available. I remember being invited to come hang-out with everyone else. After expressing my appreciation for being invited, I explained that it was easier for me to relax in a different setting than at a "hang-out." I was asked if part of what kept me from attending was the presence of alcohol. My response was that alcohol did indeed contribute to why I chose to avoid that setting. A frequent comeback related to the occasion where the Lord turned water into wine. The comeback was often worded this way:

It seems odd that a follower of Jesus Christ would find it difficult to enjoy a setting where alcohol is being consumed. After all, in the Bible we read of a gathering when Jesus Christ Himself was present where alcohol was being consumed. When they ran out

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HOLY SPIRIT PLACED PASTORS: A VANISHING BREED

The following was presented before Old Union Ministers' School by Eld. Calvin Perrigo.

The church by Christ Jesus is in the world today to fulfill an honorable commission as ordered by Jesus Himself. The Father and the Son are now seated in an exalted position as described in the scriptures. The Holy Ghost is that distinct divine Person of the one God that relates to the church in this age. See John 7:39; 14:26; 16:7. Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, and 22.

Any divine direction, leadership, or advice that helps the church to reach its goal (do the work required by the commission) will come through and by the Holy Ghost. In too many cases the Holy Spirit is expected to do things that were originally designed for man to do. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is accused of things that He is not guilty of directing or causing to happen. The need for this lesson has been prompted by the continued intervention of man into a very important phase of the work that was assigned to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Ghost had the privilege and responsibility in the New Testament age to have the final say when the church made selection of filling the office of apostle or pastor. The title of this lesson implies that this privilege and responsibility of the Holy Ghost may be in danger of becoming extinct. It is being replaced by an inferior and ineffective force: unconcerned attitudes, personal desires, and church politicians.

Come now, and let us reason about some common, present day methods and trends and then be honest with one another and with our Lord. How are we handling the placement of pastors in the Lord's church today? Is it really in harmony with the New Testament pattern?

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Act 20:28.

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COUNTED FAITHFUL

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rendered counted (*hegeomai*) reveals that the figurative meaning is to deem, which Noah Webster defines as “an estimate.” When we look at the meaning of the Greek word *logizomai* we find it means to estimate. *Logizomai* is the word that is consistently translated in the New Testament as imputed. Therefore we conclude that Paul’s “counting of faithfulness” by God to set him in the ministry was essentially equivalent to him being imputed as worthy of the ministry. With this conclusion, all sense of pride and superiority should quickly blow away as chaff in the wind, nay, even a deep sense of humility and unworthiness should overwhelm those called of God to the ministry.

Paul further settles this thought in Ephesians 3:7 by saying, “whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.” I conclude that all who have truly been called of God to preach have this same grace given to them. So the question arises, why are some imminently effective in the work of the ministry, while others seem to flounder and never really accomplish the things they are called of God to do?

Returning to Paul we find that after his separation by God to the work of the ministry and his initial preaching in Damascus, the Jews took counsel to kill him. Acts 9:23. In Galatians 1:17, we find Paul going into Arabia for three years. While very little is known of this time, it certainly played a crucial role in Paul’s subsequent ministry. I am persuaded that at this time Paul was living out the advice that he later gave to Timothy and Titus. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Ti 2:5. “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” Tit 2:1.

The necessity of personal study and consideration of the doctrines of the Bible cannot be minimized. There are many who are genuinely called of God to preach, and yet they never seem to edify the Church or saved people. They are good at repeating clichés that we all agree on but never challenge us to do more in the cause of Christ. Perhaps, they would do well to ‘go to Arabia’ and study.

Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians 12 of knowing a man in the Lord above 14 years ago, and how that man was caught up into paradise where he heard unspeakable words that were not even lawful to utter. I am persuaded Paul is referring to himself and the abundance of revelations which he received of God. The scriptures not yet being written, God spoke to men, and revealed His counsel to men, who then wrote those things as the Holy Ghost gave them utterance. You do not live in those days. To understand the scriptures, you should pray and seek direction from God, but you will not declare that which you do not know. The Holy Bible is our rule of faith and practice, and a minister of God must be intimately acquainted with the same.

To stand and declare your opinions is to do despite to the Word of God. God has preserved the scriptures for us to this day, and we should declare that which is written. The Bible itself states in Romans 3:4, “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” The truth of God is that which should be declared. When we interject our opinions it questions the sufficiency of the revelation of God. When the truth is declared through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, it is quick and powerful. Without the Spirit, it is like a dead letter. A minister then must be acquainted with and lean on the direction of the Spirit, as well as being versed in the scriptures, to effectively preach the Word.

Moreover, our personal lives should be a consideration when we look at the ministry God has given us. Many a man have began this journey with good evidence of God’s calling on his life and have quickly made shipwreck of their ministry due to sin. 2 Timothy 2:6 instructs us that “the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.” If you plan to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, meaning instruct others of the life they should live, you can not fail to keep your own body under subjection. If you falter at this point, you will rightly be called a hypocrite, and your ministry, no matter the calling on your life, will ultimately fail in the sight of God. There are many that take the old adage of do as I say, not as I do. This is a shame and embarrassment to the cause of Christ. Jesus has provided us a means to prevent sin from overwhelming us in our life and ministry, as pointed out in 1 Corinthians 10:13. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” With such a promise, we are called to holiness and should be an example to those who would run the race.

Additionally a minister must be acquainted with presenting the word. Paul’s advise in 2 Timothy 4:2 was to “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.” This is not left to some mere whim of when you desire to preach, but when it’s convenient (in season) or inconvenient (out of season) a man of God is to be preaching. The constant and consistent exercise of standing and preaching will develop, and encourage you to improve, your ability to declare the whole counsel of God. A minister should actively pursue opportunities to preach and take advantage of times that may present themselves unexpectedly.

Brethren, we are counted faithful by God when He calls us into the ministry. What a humbling thought it is that God imputed worthiness to us and separated us to the work. I ask then, have you walked worthy of that calling? Are you truly searching the scripture for the truth in them or just to prepare a sermon? Are you regularly and consistently searching out the direction of the Spirit of God in your life and ministry or just going to and fro where you are comfortable? Are you diligently taking stock of your life and conduct and assuring that no egregious sins have control of your walk?

Brethren, let us all consider our ways and be certain that our labors are not in vain. Let us be diligent that we are conducting ourselves in a manner that the ministry be not blamed and God may not be falsely charged because of the confidence placed in us.

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BIBLE WINE

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of alcohol, He made them some more by changing water into wine. So then, if you profess to be a follower of Jesus Christ, why would you avoid a setting where alcohol is being consumed? As a matter of fact, you might even consider having one drink with us which you might find relaxing too.

Those were the challenges I faced then and such are the challenges faced today. How should we respond in such situations? What would be pleasing to the Lord and the most beneficial to those who ask us such questions? Let us take some time to consider this subject.

Does God make a big deal about drinking alcohol? First, we notice that God has forbid drunkards from being in His Kingdom. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. In those verses we find, "...be not deceived: neither fornicators...nor drunkards...shall inherit the kingdom of God." What God has to say about "drunkards" is extracted here to help us focus on the topic. According to these verses, God does make a big deal out of consuming alcohol. The unrepentant drunkard shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. More will be said about the specifics of being a "drunkard" later.

Second, we notice that the Lord instructs His Church to restrict who is invited to the "Supper" that He entrusted for His Church to administer. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. In these verses we find, "...I have written unto you [Church at Corinth]...if any man is called a brother be a... drunkard...with such an one no not to eat." So then, here again, the Lord makes a big enough deal out of drinking alcohol that He instructs His Church "with such an one no not to eat" which means "do not serve them communion" which we commonly call the Lord's Supper.

Third, the instructions for the Church regarding "drunkards" is extended beyond what has already been noticed. These additional instructions go into the realm of when the Church is to exclude unrepentant members from the body. When people have yet to learn the difference between being in the family of God verses being in the Lord's Church, they get really confused on the topic of "excluding members for unrepentant sin." Yet, the subject is clearly presented in 1 Corinthians 5:13. There we find the second sentence in that verse to read, "Therefore put away from among

yourselves that wicked person." A Church obeys these instructions from the Lord by excluding that unrepentant person from among the membership. Much could be said on the subject of excluding and recovering members, but that is material for another article. Let's end here by agreeing that God uses very clear language to point out that He sees the condition of being a drunkard as a big deal. God didn't make man so that he could be a drunk. He is against it. Drunkenness needs to be repented of immediately and forsaken. God is willing to help drunkards escape the awful snare of alcohol and stay away from it, but drunkards need to take God's opinion on the subject. Followers of Jesus help in this matter by likewise adopting the opinion of God on the topic of drinking alcohol as a beverage.

Did the Lord turn the water into wine that had fermented into alcohol? Let us think about some of the specifics of this situation found in John 2. This was a wedding feast. There was a mixed crowd of people present of various ages including family and friends. When it was called to the Lord's attention that the "wine" was running out, He asked for pots to be filled with water. They used water pots which contained 2 to 3 firkins of liquid. One firkin is right at 9 gallons. These water pots held 2 to 3 firkins each which comes to somewhere between 18 and 27 gallons. There were 6 of these filled with water and the Lord changed them to "wine". This means that there was somewhere between 108 and 162 gallons of "wine" produced. It should be exceedingly hard to imagine God to take the stand He does on being a drunkard, tell the churches to not serve them in the Lord's Supper, to exclude them from the Church body, and then change enough water into alcohol to get a large number of people drunk. I'm unable to see it as being consistent with His teachings.

The word "wine" is used in the Bible to refer to wine which has no alcohol and wine which has fermented into alcohol. The words translated from the Hebrew of the Old Testament and Greek of the New Testament show this to be true. Additionally, when referring to wine which has changed from juice into alcohol, a negative teaching is predominately connected to it. On the other hand, when wine in the state of juice is referenced, it is associated with blessings and positive results. A good study of the truth of these

statements are contained in a book written by William Patton titled *Bible Wines or the Laws of Fermentation*. This book is readily available in PDF online as a free download, or it can be purchased in book form from such sources as Amazon. The serious student would do well to add this material to their library.

What is a drunkard? If we look at the condition of being drunk, we conclude that a person who is drunk has consumed "too much" alcohol. Followers of Jesus Christ need to get settled on "how much is too much." It is tragic to hear reasoning on this question begins with whether one container is too much or if two containers is excessive. Followers of Jesus should start with whether one sip is "too much". Is any at all too much? We all agree that a person who is drunk has consumed too much alcohol.

How much alcohol is too much? It seems that most all have heard the use of the word "buzzed" associated with consuming alcohol. There was a commercial that used to come on TV around the holidays from the Tennessee State Troopers. They reminded us that "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving." I asked what this meant and was informed that a person who drank alcohol and "felt it" needed to stay out of the driver's seat of a car. They said, "feeling it" is being "buzzed" and being "buzzed" was being "drunk." Buzzed driving is drunk driving, and buzzed drinking is how a person becomes drunk. God knows when a person "feels it" and has made very clear statements about being in that condition. A person who is "buzzed" by drinking has drunk too much. In my honest opinion, the purpose of drinking is about getting "buzzed." It is rare to hear of how someone plans to "drink to stay sober." This is why a designated driver is used. Would followers of Jesus Christ be more wise if they took the designated driver approach to a life of following Jesus?

Let's think about what it looks like to other people when they see us have one sip of alcohol. Does that person know if that is our first, second, third, or fourth glass of alcohol? This person just walks past the table where we are sitting. All they know is we have alcohol in our hand, and we took a drink. At that moment, are we supporting what God wants for the drunkard, or are we working against Him? This is a question we should take to the Lord in prayer. May God help us all come to the same conclusion.

HOLY SPIRIT PLACED PASTORS

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Perhaps the position of a pastor is not recognized in the proper light in this age. How important is the work of a pastor according to New Testament guidelines? The church by Christ Jesus belongs to Christ. It is His by ownership: He paid for it in full, with His own blood, having given Himself for it. Act 20:28 & Eph 5:25. This one truth alone puts a great value on the church. The assigned work of the church adds to the true worth of the body of Christ.

Jesus gave the gift of pastor to the church when He ascended to the Father for the perfecting of saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of His body left on the earth. Eph 4:8-11. As a feeder of God's flock, the pastor holds a very important position in the structure and function of the Lord's church. Without proper nourishment and care, all living things will become weakened and must eventually die.

The Lord's lambs and sheep are to be fed the word of God by the pastor. The pastor has been given that privilege and responsibility by the Lord Himself. The Holy Spirit placed pastor will give his life for the sheep before he will allow them to go hungry and suffer from malnutrition. Pastors that have been placed by other methods may react differently—the hireling may flee—providing for himself instead of the flock. The Holy Spirit placed pastor will provide food from a menu prepared and supplied by the Lord and will serve it in a way so that it will be taken and digested for proper growth and service.

Let us consider some common methods used when a church is faced with pastoral changes. One of the most common questions asked when a pastoral vacancy occurs is: "Who can we get?" Another question is heard frequently during the early hours of the vacancy: "Who is available?" Many church members spend time with thoughts or questions such as these. "Who could we find that would move on the field?" "Who is financially able, so it would not work a hardship on us or him?" "We can't afford him." "He is too young." "He is too old." "He would never give up his present work." "He is happy where he is." "Is he happy where he is?" "We have a lot to offer a pastor." "We will have to get one without any experience." "We must have an experienced pastor."

Some churches employ the services of a 'pulpit committee' when looking for a pastor. This committee is chosen by the church from the church. The purpose of the pulpit committee is to relieve the church of the responsibility of the small details that are always present when looking for a pastor. These details include: contacting prospective applicants, arranging appointments for trial sermons, recommending or rejecting certain applicants. The pulpit committee may invite church members to submit names of preachers they feel would take the church or make them a good pastor. The pulpit committee may seek outside information on candidates for the office of pastor. The pulpit committee can push hard for their favorites, and they can play down those second or third choices. Pulpit committees may recommend one or more men to the church for their consideration. Do churches call a pastor that the pulpit committee would not recommend? It would be a rare circumstance indeed.

Some churches use opportunities as a method to attract a preacher. Young preachers are often contacted with this enticement: Pastor our church and get some experience; We will consider going full time if you will take our church; We are small but you have to start somewhere; It may be the opportunity of a lifetime (a now or never proposition); We will change our meeting time if you will come. The preacher may entertain these and similar reasons as he ponders the approach of some church member toward his pastoring their church.

Churches (or members of churches) often turn to former pastors or other influential preachers for advice, recommendation or guidance in the selection of a pastor. Questions often go in this direction: "Can you recommend someone?" "What do you know about Bro. ____?" "Would he make us a good pastor?" "Do you think he would leave his present work?" "Would you put in a good word for us?"

Personal preferences are very common and are a strong influence in the selection of a pastor. It would probably be the last method to fall under the Holy Spirit's influence. My personal feelings are often expressed in the following statements: "I want Bro. ____ for pastor." "I feel led (makes little difference by what)." "We had a good meeting when he helped us." "My dear departed really liked Bro. ____." "Bro. ____ can build up our

church." "He has a way with young people." "He can get our building debt paid off." "My family would come to church to hear him."

If we agree, due to the evidence just presented, that the Holy Spirit placed pastor may be an endangered species, how do we prevent his extinction? This task may not be as easy as expected! A spirit is not visible to us and due to there being two invisible forces (God for good, Satan for evil) that wage war for our worship and services, we must be able to discern these two influences. We can have ears to hear the Holy Spirit. We should be able to recognize Satan's attempt to lead us astray. Those with ears to hear are commanded to hear what the Spirit has to say to their respective churches.

The Lord's sheep know his voice and do not follow the voice of a stranger. The Lord's sheep even flee at the sound of a strange voice. John 10:5. Remember the point of your salvation? God does not change! Our hearing may have become somewhat impaired due to many things but the familiarity of that still, sweet voice is still unmistakably clear to the delivered soul. Have you been saved? Then tune your ear to hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to you.

The Holy Spirit placed pastor can be saved from extinction by the churches staying within the Bible given qualifications and praying effectually and fervently for the Lord to make choice according to his will. Study Acts 1:15-26 for the scriptural way to make choices as a group (the church). Let Him, that knows the hearts of all men make His choice. Let your thoughts travel toward this great truth: the Lord owns the church. He is the Head of it. He is the Law Giver. He does not make mistakes.

The Holy Spirit placed pastor can be saved from extinction if the available preacher will conform to God's way and let the searching churches know from the first contact that it is an Holy Spirit placement and that he plans to abide by the Lord's direction only and that he will not be swayed by any other influence. Prayer, fasting, and more prayer will bring help from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is involved. Give Him is due. When qualifications have been met, let the choice be made by the Holy Spirit. The church is responsible to know the qualifications, and the Holy Spirit is responsible for the placement. Beware of inferior substitutes. Satan has a storehouse full of them.