

1 Corinthians 16

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of spiritual guidance and moral authority in effective ministry despite opposition.

Scripture: Acts 16:6, 1 Corinthians 16:8

Topics: "Ministry", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of recognizing and responding to the open doors for ministry despite facing adversaries. He shares personal experiences of perseverance in evangelism, illustrating that true guidance comes from the Spirit of God, which may lead one to unexpected places for fruitful work. Darby also highlights the significance of moral authority in ministry, where influence is gained through service rather than official titles. He contrasts the effectiveness of spiritual leadership with the limitations of formal structures, advocating for a reliance on the Spirit's direction in ministry efforts.

Transcript

We have in verse 8 an important principle as to work. There are many adversaries, but a great and effectual door is opened to me, and so I will stay. It is a very different thing to have the door closed, and to have many adversaries. We shall soon find out when the door is closed. I think it requires patience; and you may find amazing opposition. I remember only two people coming, for eight weeks at one place where everything was against me, but at the end of that time forty or fifty came in, and several were converted. At another place, where all was for me, even the clergyman, it all came to nothing. The highest leading is direct leading by the Spirit of God. I do not say we have that now as Paul had it; but there is being guided by His eye, while, too, it is a great mercy to be held in by bit and bridle. Take the fact that Paul and Silas were going to Bithynia (Acts 16), "but the Spirit suffered them not." Then they were called over to Macedonia; and this was positive direct guidance as to where they were to work: and Paul went afterwards to Ephesus, and stayed there a couple of years, and all Asia heard the word of God. I believe the Lord might now put it upon a person's heart to go to a particular place. I remember once going to Cork, and could not tell why I went, and there was great blessing. It is better for evangelists to go two and two, but it is difficult to get enough for it. We lean but little on the power of the Spirit of God. We have a network of railways, and use them, but Paul did his work on foot, and did a great deal more work too than we do. I use a railroad, of course, but if one can go on foot, it would be a deal better.

In verse 15 I see the Lord providing spiritual authority: "they addicted themselves"; it is the word for appointing officers to a regiment. It is not an official authority, but an action on the conscience of the person - it is a moral authority, and not official. They were not teaching, but they were serving the saints, and acquired a just and happy influence over them: and wherever an assembly is going on well, and there is a number there, there will be something of this kind. In Switzerland we were very much opposed about ministry, but they failed in their scheme. To get something we had not, they chose elders, saying Luther sanctioned them. One of them came to me, and said, "I am an elder."

300 I said, "Suppose I am unruly; what will you do?"

"Why, I will come and visit you."

"Well, you are here now: what have you to say to me?"

"Why, I am an elder."

"Who made you an elder?"

"I was chosen an elder."

"But I did not choose you."

And, quite confused, he had to own, "I cannot be an elder to one who did not choose me."

"And do you think unruly people will own you, even if they did choose you? Not they."

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