

Competent Ministers

by Richard E. Bieber

As followers of Jesus, we are called and ordained to be competent ministers, rooted in the New Covenant and ministering the life of God to others.

Topics: "Christian Ministry", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Richard E. Bieber emphasizes that every believer in Jesus Christ is called to be a minister, not just those who have formal training. God expects competence and diligence from His ministers, as they are called into His Kingdom, raised up in His life, and given work to do. A competent minister of the New Covenant is rooted in the forgiveness of sin through the Cross of Jesus Christ, ministers the life of God with the Spirit, is diligent and steadfast, fits into the ministry of the Body, cares for all people, and does everything as unto the Lord.

Transcript

Read: II Corinthians 3:4-6

Surely we all agree that when you become a believer in Jesus Christ you, at that moment, become a minister.

As far as God is concerned a minister is not somebody who went to seminary or bible college. Every follower of Jesus is a minister.

You did not choose me. But I chose you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. John 15-16

But the problem for many of us is that we tend to think of our ministry as "volunteer work." Your everyday job has to be done right. You have to keep at it even if you have a headache or sinus trouble. But volunteer work can stop when you have a headache. You can afford to make mistakes and cut corners. You can quit any time you like and it doesn't affect your pay.

Hence we don't manifest nearly the competence in our ministries that we do in our jobs. Why should we be competent? After all, we're only volunteers.

But we're not volunteers.

- God called us into His Kingdom.
- God raised us up into His life.
- God made us disciples of His Son.
- God has given us work to do.
- And He expects it to be done right.

God didn't bring us together into this Body to be a fellowship of slobs, doing things our own way, according to our moods. This isn't a service club, this is the Kingdom of God. God intends this assembly to be a body of competent ministers, where the job is getting done, not through the skill of some marvelous leader, but through the competence of all members of the Body working together.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

For himself and for the people he served the apostle Paul insisted on competence. Half-baked volunteers, well intentional dabblers, are useless. Once a man or woman becomes a reborn servant of Jesus Christ, he/she is to be an effective, competent, able minister - nothing less.

Of course, the competence comes from God.

Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant.

God puts the power in, but we have to exercise it.

When the master of the house gave the talents of gold to his servants before going away, he made them competent. But the chap who wrapped his talent up in a napkin and stuck it away in a drawer was no longer competent. He was a slob. And that danger of being slobs is always there.

We have to keep asking ourselves, in the light of God's Spirit, are we today living and working as competent ministers of the New Covenant?

Here are some things to consider:

1. A competent minister of the New Covenant is himself/herself rooted and grounded in the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is the Cross of Jesus Christ - that new agreement God makes with the human race through the blood of His Son - the forgiveness of sin.

Before we can minister with any power to others, we have to be sure that our own lives are based on that forgiveness. There are too many servants of God around,

- who forget that their only claim on God is that forgiveness,

- who begin to think of themselves as something special,
- who secretly believe that God is blessing them or is going to bless them because they're more pious than others, or more disciplined, or more spiritual, or more ecstatic.

No matter how disciplined or how spiritual you may be, or how anointed you may feel, your only hope in the presence of the true and living God is the blood of the Lamb - the covenant of forgiveness which God made with you through the death of His Son.

Apart from that forgiveness of your sin,

- never mind if you were used to save a million souls,
- never mind if you were used to build the most apostolic church on earth, apart from that forgiveness, you're lost!

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance: that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."

What a relief to be able to stand by the cross and know that Jesus paid it all for me.

2. A competent minister of the New Covenant ministers the life of God, not the dead letter.

"...for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Two men go out into the world and use almost exactly the same words about Jesus Christ. Coming from one man those words convey life. They are confirmed by wonderful evidence of God's presence. Coming from the other, just words. Nothing accompanies those words but the atmosphere of death.

We are not ministers of doctrines or ideas, we are ministers of the life of God. And the words we use are nothing unless they're drenched in that life.

"The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live...."

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak to you they are spirit and they are life."

If we're competent, the words we speak are not ours but His - and they quicken.

3. A competent minister of the New Covenant is diligent.

Whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Diligence in every aspect of our lives:

- If we make a mess, we clean it up.
- If we open a door, we shut it.
- If we turn the light on when we come in, we turn it off when we go out.

- We return what we borrow.
- We're faithful in the handling of our money.
- We keep our appointments.

How can our message have any power if we're unreliable and thoughtless in the ordinary business of life?

When our Lord fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, He made sure that every leftover piece of food was picked up - "that nothing be lost." That hillside was as green when He left as when He arrived.

When Jesus borrowed that donkey to ride into Jerusalem, you can be sure that it was returned when He was finished with it.

4. A competent minister of the New Covenant is steadfast.

He's not sidetracked by every new doctrine that comes along like these believers who need to find a new doctrine every six months. And he's not discouraged by every setback.

- Whoever gave you the idea that there wouldn't be setbacks, heartaches, disappointments, troubles?
- Whoever promised you that demons would stay five miles away from you at all times?

These trials are the very things that separate the competent from the incompetent.

4. A competent minister fits into the ministry of the Body.

- He's never a one-man marvel.
- He's never a superstar.

Many of us are forever waiting for that dramatic job to come along instead of taking hold of the menial task in the Body right before our eyes.

I have no doubt that in this Body we will see miracles the likes of which would stagger our minds at this moment when we come to the place where we all start fitting in with the menial jobs.

- Working in the nursery.
- Picking up people.
- Visiting shut-ins.
- Sweating out choir rehearsals.
- Writing letters and cards.
- Assembling literature.
- Talking to strangers.
- Still working the streets after the novelty has worn off.

- Giving the caretakers a hand with things that need to be done.
- Getting groceries for an older person who has trouble moving about.

When we learn to fit together in getting these things done, there will be power in our midst that will make hell tremble.

6. A competent minister cares about people with the care God pours into our hearts.

- Cares for the people nobody wants.
- For the people everybody forgets.

The people who gathered around the Word as Paul preached it in Corinth weren't exactly the cream of the city.

Not only that, those many Corinthians gave Paul a harder time than any other fellowship on earth. But Paul went right on loving them. That's what God did with us. And that's what we do in Jesus' name with others.

- Not just the beautiful ones.
- Not just the grateful ones.
- Not just the promising ones.
- But the ones who continuously give us a hard time.

If we're competent ministers of the New Covenant we go right on caring.

7. Finally, a competent minister of the New Covenant does everything as unto the Lord.

- Errands run.
- Menial duties.

Hours spent listening to someone's tale of woe.

- It's all worship!

Talk about praising God. That's what praising God really is. Praising God in the sanctuary with our hands uplifted is real only if our everyday life is lived to God's praise.

It doesn't make any difference whether men approve or disapprove, what matters is that everything we do is done unto the Lord. Let the consequences be what they will.

The work that God has given this Body of believers cannot be accomplished by a few red-hot souls. It can only be accomplished by the Body itself - all of us - every single one of us who names Jesus as Lord.

The call this day to all of us together is to be competent with the competence which comes from God beginning with the work that is at hand, this day.

We are not volunteers. We've been called and ordained and made competent by the Messiah Himself.

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