

## **What is a minister?**

**(2 Timothy 4:1-5 NIV)**

**“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:**

**(2) Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. (3) For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**

**(4) They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (5) But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”**

**When I first heard about football as a kid, some of its terms confused me.**

**I wanted to be a football team captain.**

**As captain, I imagined I'd call the plays.**

**Someone explained that “captain” often refers to an honorary title.**

Quarterbacks, not captains, usually call plays and signals, but back then, quarterbacks often didn't handle the ball.

**The center usually hiked the ball to one of the halfbacks or the fullback for whom quarterbacks often blocked.**

**That info made me rethink my ambitions.**

**Most fans today know that the quarterback usually calls the signals, passes the ball, hands it off, and sometimes runs with it.**

Sports historians say that the terms quarterback, halfback, and fullback resulted from the distance the backs originally played from the center, who hiked the ball.

**The quarterback started  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way back, halfbacks,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and fullbacks, farther still.**

Football terms likely evolved from English or Irish Rugby, a much older sport, which I am told, even has eighth backs.

Most quarterbacks now don't line up  $\frac{1}{4}$  back; they line up right over the center.

**Or at the shotgun position.**

“Quarter back” hardly fits where that player starts these days.



In the same way, the words minister, pastor, etc., rarely fit their original duties.

### **What is a minister?**

“What does it matter?” some ask,  
“As long as the job is done, who cares  
what term you give the person?”

**Is anyone getting the job done, however?**

**Few ministers or pastors fulfill their  
original job descriptions.**

In fact most church leaders and members seem  
not to know a minister’s real assignment.

As a result, most churches are fast  
losing ground in this country.

**Is it clear to you what ministers should do?**

Churches voice great expectations of  
those they call: bishops, pastors,  
ministers, prelates, clerics, etc.

**A local church invited Norma and me to an  
installation service for their new “pastor.”**

Because they were losing numbers, those  
leaders sorely needed church-growth.

The leaders charged the minister to visit  
all of the sick, the shut-ins, and the  
people in convalescent homes.

**They said nothing, though of the tasks  
Paul gave Timothy in our text.**

**Verse five of our text reads:**

**“Do the work of an evangelist, discharge  
all the duties of your ministry.”**

I recently read several ads for minister job  
openings in some Christian newspapers.

I’m not looking to go anywhere else; I  
wanted job descriptions for this lesson.  
Paul urged Timothy to do evangelist duties.

**To many, “evangelist” sounds old-  
timey and almost red-neck type.**

**Before we can define a minister’s role we  
must know the work of evangelists.**

**The word “evangelist” relates to the  
term translated Gospel=Good News.**

## Evangelists bring good news.

Many scholars connect the word’s origin to the victory announcement at the completion of the first “Marathon” run.



Legend says that Pheidippides or Philippides (note the photo of his statue) ran from Marathon to Athens to deliver news of Athenian victory in the battle of Marathon.

Evangelism means: announce victory news.

The angel announced Jesus’ birth to shepherds stating:

**“I bring you good news (verb form of evangelism) of great (mega) joy.”<sup>1</sup>**

**Good news always refreshes us.**

**Wouldn’t you enjoy a break from 24/7 hateful hearsay on the networks, podcasts, YouTube and Facebook?**

**What good news or Gospel should evangelists share?**

Many think “gospel” means truth. Old-timers used to assure me they weren’t

fibbing, saying **“That’s the gospel truth.”**  
**The gospel rests on many truths, but the two terms don’t mean the same thing.**

“Gospel” announces good news.

**What Good News do evangelists share?**

**A) On the cross, Jesus forgave our guilt. I spent considerable time counseling a gifted, brilliant school principal, whose mother was a near tyrant.**

In college her date put something in her drink, raped her, and then mocked her.

**Understandably feeling both anger and intense guilt, she used alcohol to escape her pain.**

This respected, award winning elementary school principal told me she felt relief only when she looked up at the end of a whiskey bottle.

**I regrettably tried to use accepted counseling methods rather than help her find Jesus’ Good News therapy.**

She consequently never dealt with her anger, never knew Jesus’ forgiveness, and

<sup>1</sup> Luke 2:10 NIV

the reassurance of living for Christ.  
If you feel guilty, tell God, let His word guide you in doing right, daily pray to Him, and thanking Him for what Jesus did.

Jesus died once for all.

**Thank God He forgave us in Christ.**

**B) A second great part of God’s good News relates to Jesus’ resurrection. Have you noticed that mortuary people almost never use the word “death”?**

**Many try to deny death’s reality by not saying the word “die.”**

Contemporaries now remember deceased loved ones by “Celebrating” their lives.

Admittedly it sounds better than celebrating someone’s death.



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Étapes,  
France  
Military  
Cemetery



Cambridge American Cemetery England

**Death remains humanity’s great enemy.**  
Fear of death warps, alters, and shapes our decisions.

**Death’s mind-creeps feed our phobias.**

As Hebrews 2: 14, 15 (NIV) declares:

<sup>14</sup>“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

**Jesus’ resurrection changed everything. He willingly succumbed to death.**

But Jesus came back.

Not in a ridiculous, nightmarish manner like Freddie Kruger.

He returned powerfully, lovingly, helping his loved ones overcome their fears. Jesus came from a Jerusalem cemetery assuring us that he’ll raise us who believe, who trust God, and forgive as he did.

Life doesn’t have to end hopelessly in a cold cemetery at the edge of town.

Neither does it need to terminate in the soil of any continent or waters of any ocean.

### **Recall this promise of Jesus?**

“A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out— those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.”<sup>2</sup>

In ancient times, when kings sent their armies to war, they instructed their generals to send strong runner messengers, who would report news of the battle.

**As we earlier noted, origins of the term Gospel or Good News arose from the custom of runners arriving to tell news of victory.**

**The Gospel shouts victory on many fronts. Jesus never succumbed to Satan’s tests.**

**Jesus encountered the devil and won. From start, when envious, hate-filled leaders convicted and executed him on the cross, to the finish, Jesus obeyed God.**

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<sup>2</sup> John 5:28, 29 NIV

**He didn’t succumb to fear, anxiety, or hate. Jesus astoundingly won victory over death.**

### **God bodily raised Jesus.**

Jesus ascended to heaven, but he promised to return and take us to live with him.

Earthquakes, tornadoes, fires and other disasters continually warn us that trying to make anything permanent here compares to building on sand.

**In Philippians, Paul contrasted those who set their hopes in the present world:**

“Their mind is set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body (immortal and imperishable) .”<sup>3</sup>

**Jesus gives unequalled hope.**

### **C) Good News three.**

Because the Lord ultimately judges everyone, we don’t have to constantly fret about injustice as some tend to do.

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<sup>3</sup> Philippians 3:19-21 NIV

We don't know other peoples' hearts.  
I often prejudice; but always regret it.  
**God knows our hearts.**

Today's text began: “**In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:**”

**The Lord will judge all of us.**

Every congressperson, bureaucrat, every preacher, priest and CEO, rich and all poor—folks of every continent account to God.

**If I help and forgive others, sharing God's Good News and praising Him, I won't have time to criticize, argue, and point fingers.**

I am unworthy of God's grace.

**All of us are undeserving servants.**

Think of the change Jesus made in our relationships.

“**So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor**

**is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>4</sup>**

**The truth of our oneness in Christ doesn't change our status in the world.**

Jesus taught us to love and respect others, trust and obey God, knowing He'll rectify present inequities and wrongdoing.

People in the world label, brand, tag, and pigeonhole other folks.

Hate, bitterness, and spite saturate the air.  
**Jesus taught us to act justly, but he did not assign us the task of correcting the world's injustice.**

We tell God's Good News, but we don't force nonbelievers to accept His standards. Only God can bring true justice and peace.

If we honor Christ, live Christ-like lives, respect human authority, and love others, thoughtful people often take notice.

**The Lord intended his followers to assemble as one.**

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<sup>4</sup> Galatians 3:26-28.

**The most amazing thing happened in the first century church.**

The New Testament tells how folks of many races, diverse economic levels and varied backgrounds met together as God’s family. Rich, poor, slaves, slave-owners, women men, Jews, and Gentiles met, shared meals, and sat as one family at the Lord’s Table.

**God’s church distinguished itself by Christians loving and respecting others.**



**Churches now rarely follow Jesus’ teachings of unity and oneness.**

**Often elites attend certain types of churches and the poor go to others.**

Churches divide over which reformer they follow.

**They differ by language and race.**

**If this isn’t bad enough, church leaders usually expect their ministers to visit the sick and shut ins--duties all in the congregation most are capable of doing.**

Many ministers-pastors try to serve on all the committees, become involved in every project, and visit all of the sick.

Church members expect them preach eloquently, teach, represent the church in the community, and never offend anyone.

**Most churches neglect evangelism.**

- **Let’s say you own a company and you employ sales people.**

Businesses expect their sales people to find, cultivate, and develop new customers.

**That’s how businesses grow.**

Instead of having your sales people develop new business, however, you instruct your sales folks to call on sick employees, disgruntled employees—those who don’t always feel like coming to work.

**Will your company survive?**

It'll flop faster than a football team with a lousy quarterback and a weak line.

**I pray that we'll all familiarize ourselves with the Good News.**

**Christ forgave us.**

**Death is dead.**

**God wants everyone saved.**

He also wants us to live upright lives that honor him.

**Jesus died to forgive us.**

**God raised him.**

He will raise all those who love him and help others.

**Ministers evangelize and encourage all to share God's great news.**

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