

## Evaluation & Expectation of Your Ministry

### *Colossians 4:17*

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February 4, 2024 p.m.

Introduction: Our text is found in the concluding personal remarks of Paul to the church at Colosse. He mentions several of his friends & fellow-workers who had been a blessing to him personally &/or to the church of Colosse. The last individual named is Archippus (pronounced Ar-kip-pus). He is mentioned only here & in Philemon :2, where he is identified as a "*fellovsoldier*." Some suggest he was the son of Philemon. He apparently was a pastor (of Laodicea? or Colosse?), or at least one having a God-given ministry. Paul's message to be relayed to Archippus exhorts him to recognize, receive, & render his ministry for the Lord. Each of us who knows Christ as personal Savior has also been given a place of responsibility in the Body of Christ. In regards to our particular ministry, we need to evaluate the past & anticipate the future as we take heed to our ministry, as we take humbly of our ministry, & as we take hold with our ministry. Might each of us apply personally these challenging words, "*Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.*"

#### I. Will you take heed to your ministry? (It is to be recognized)

"Take heed" - to be on the watch, on the lookout for danger (denotes scrutiny & vigilance)

##### A. The exhortation of a watchman > Ezekiel 3:17-21 & 33:1-11

1. His words of witness (33:1-3a).
2. His words of warning (33:3b-6).
3. His words of wisdom (33:7-11).

Illustrate: "What Would He Say?"

##### B. The expectation of a watchman > I Peter 5:8

1. He is to be awake - "*sober*"
2. He is to be alert - "*vigilant*" [Illustrate: "He heard dots & dashes"]
3. He is to be aware (avoiding danger) - "*your adversary...*"

Illustrate: Pompeii's sentinel (a watchman's duty).

#### II. Will you take humbly of your ministry? (It is to be received)

##### A. The source of your ministry (its *reception*) >

###### 1. It is **received** from God:

- a. Romans 12:3.
- b. I Corinthians 12:4-7, 11.
- c. Ephesians 4:7.

Illustrate: A Discovery of God's Gifts.

###### 2. It is **rendered** by God:

- a. Philippians 2:13 (& cf. Isaiah 26:12).
- b. Philippians 4:13.
- c. I Thessalonians 5:24.

Illustrate: Personal testimony: freshman in college

"True humility is not to think low of oneself but to think rightfully, truthfully of oneself" (see I Corinthians 4:7). "It is possible to be too big for God to use you but never too small for God to use you."

B. The substance of your ministry (its *recognition*) >

1. The **task** at hand:
  - a. God did not give you a ministry because of your talents (or abilities). He gave you your talents because of your ministry. You have the ability to fulfill your task.
  - b. Unfilled tasks (ministries) are the result of undeveloped talents.  
Illustrate: "Violin never to be played."
2. The **talents** in hand:
  - a. Romans 12:3-8.
  - b. I Corinthians 12:1-11, 28-31.
  - c. Ephesians 4:7-12.  
Illustrate: P.C. for "Preach Christ" or "Plow Corn"

III. Will you take **hold** with your ministry? (It is to be rendered) [Nike commercial, "Just Do It"]

A. The declaration of a ministry to be rendered >

1. We have a **stewardship**: See I Peter 4:10-11
  - a. Identified - "The manager of a household or of household affairs... to whom the head of a house or proprietor has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts & expenditures, & the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant & even to the children not yet of age" (Stott).
  - b. Illustrated - (1) A sacred trust, I Cor. 4:2; (2) A supplied message, I Thess. 2:13; (3) A Scriptural authority, I Thess. 4:1-3; (4) A stringent discipline, II Tim. 2:15.
2. We have an **ambassadorship**: See II Corinthians 5:20-21
  - a. Our great commission - Matthew 28:18-20 & Mark 16:15
  - b. Our great compassion - Romans 9:1-3 & 10:1"The task of ministering in the church is to be discharged fully, without shirking any of the demands & without slacking" (Carson).

B. The demonstration of a ministry to be rendered >

1. To the saved (our **stewardship**).
  - a. Titus 2:1-10 > Note the character & the conduct of the various age groups.
  - b. Hebrews 6:9-12 > Note the commendation & the continuation of their labor of love.
2. To the unsaved (our **ambassadorship**).
  - a. Colossians 4:5-6 > Note the walk (conduct) & the talk (communication).
  - b. I Peter 3:15 > Note the worship & witness of the believer.

Conclusion: What have you learned this evening from the evaluation of your past year's ministry & your expectation for your next year's ministry? In review of the past 12 months, did you take heed to your Christian service as a watchman for the Lord? Did you offer words of witness, warning, & wisdom? Were you awake, alert, & aware (of your adversary)? As you serve in 2024, will you take heed to your place of privilege with a passion of priority? Over the last year, did you take humbly of your ministry, having received it from the hand of God & having rendered it through the power of God? Faced with your task at hand for 2024, will you utilize the talents God has placed in your hands? If you are still uncertain as to what they are, reread carefully & prayerfully Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 & I Peter 4. And after reviewing in your mind this past year's events, can you say you took hold with your ministry? Did you render your Christian service as a good steward while serving as a faithful ambassador? May God help you to fulfill your ministry in this year to the saved as well as to the unsaved. Between these steps of evaluation & anticipation, there may well be the need of confession for failures in past years. Will you recognize, receive, & render your service for the Lord this year? Closing illustration: Gospel of the extra dinner plate.