

## **Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Three : Being Empowered in the Grace Which Is in Christ Jesus to Be Teachers, Soldiers, Contenders, Farmers, and Workmen**

### **I. Overview:**

Even during a period of decline, a downward trend when most of God's people are carried away, but some of God's people, who receive mercy from the Lord to remain faithful to Him. Onesiphorus was an overcomer who resisted the general trend and stood against the downward current to refresh apostles. Timothy was one who was fully perfected and equipped to minister the word of God; he was like-souled with the apostle Paul. Luke was a physician, a faithful companion of Paul until his martyrdom. Titus walked in the same spirit and in the same steps as Paul to care for the churches. Mark was useful to Paul for the ministry. Second Timothy reveals that we need to be empowered to be faithful men, those who are teachers, shepherding the saints with the teaching of God's economy; those who are soldiers, serving the Lord considered as the apostle's ministry a warfare for Christ; those who are contenders, running the Christian race until we finish our course; those who are farmers, sowing the seed of life into people and watering them with the Spirit by the words; those who are workmen, cutting straight the word of the truth being rightly unfolded, to enlighten the darkened people and bring the distracted back to the proper track.

### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. Expound during a period of decline of the church, there are a group of faithful ones.

Onesiphorus was an overcomer who surmounted the general trend and stood against the downward current to refresh the Lord's ambassador in spirit, soul, and body, not being ashamed of the apostle's imprisonment on behalf of the Lord's commission. Timothy had, from his childhood, a good foundation in the knowledge of the Old Testament. He was one who was fully perfected and equipped to minister the word of God, not only in caring for a local church but also in confronting the worsening decline of the church.

B. Why was the book of Philippians dealing very much with the believers' soul?

Philippians deals very much with the believers' soul. We must strive together with one soul along with the personified faith of the gospel; we must be joined in soul, thinking the one thing; and we must be like-souled, genuinely caring for the things of Christ Jesus. In the gospel work, in the fellowship among the believers, and in the pursuing of the Lord's interests, our soul is always a problem.

Day 2 —

A. State the subject of the book of 2 Timothy.

The subject of 2 Timothy is inoculation against the decline of the church. There are five specific titles given to the inoculator in 2:1-15. Paul regarded Timothy should be teachers, soldiers, contenders, farmers, and workmen. Paul charged him to be empowered in grace, which is in Christ Jesus. This grace is God's provision in life given to us that we may live out His purpose.

B. Explain what the grace Paul realized.

Paul realized that grace is nothing less than the processed Triune God, the Father embodied in the Son and the Son realized as the indwelling Spirit. Grace is not a thing; it is a unique person, the living, divine person of the Triune God processed to be the all-inclusive, life-giving, indwelling Spirit. This Spirit now dwells in us as our grace.

Day 3 —

A. State the apostle considering their ministry a warfare for Christ.

The apostle considered their ministry a warfare for Christ, just as the priestly service was considered a military service, a warfare in Numbers 4:23. Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle. Hence, we should not only be teachers committing the deposit to others, but we should also be soldiers fighting for God's interests. On the one hand, the priestly service is a ministry to God; on the other hand, it is a warfare against God's enemies.

B. Explain the meaning of the word battle in 1 Corinthians 14:8.

An army that is fighting a battle needs the morale, a fighting unity. In order to maintain this morale, even a little dissension concerning the smallest matter has to be killed. If that little dissenting talk is not killed, the morale

will be annulled, and surely the army will lose the fight, the battle. The Lord's ministry is like the sounding of the trumpet for the army to go on to war. The Lord's ministry is a matter of a battle.

Day 4 —

A. Explain in 2 Timothy 2:5, to an athlete contending in the games.

In 2 Timothy 2:5 Paul likens Timothy to an athlete contending in the games. It is important for a runner in a race to run fast. That is not the time for him to exercise patience. In a foregoing message I encouraged you to wait and pray. But when it comes to running the race to win the crown, we should not wait. On the contrary, we should run to reach the goal.

B. Expound knowing and keeping the position of ascension.

To gain the experience of reigning, we must first solve the problem of position. We must know and keep the position of ascension, and we must also know and keep the position of order. Knowing the position of ascension is the experience of knowing the ascension. Knowing the position of order is the experience of knowing the Body. We must know the position of order, before we can exercise His authority and reign for God.

Day 5 —

A. Explain in 2 Timothy 2:6 Paul likens Timothy to a farmer.

In 2 Timothy 2:6 Paul likens Timothy to a farmer, who must partake of the fruit, the food. This requires patience. As athletes, we should be quick, but as farmers, we need to be patient. If out of impatience a farmer would pluck up the tiny sprouts, his crop would be ruined. Likewise, if he drives his cattle too much, he may hurt them. With both crops and livestock, farmers must learn to have patience.

B. Expound that the building is altogether a matter in life.

The wise master builder and the building of God are both matters of life and in life. First, Paul's ministry was a matter of planting. This is a matter of the growth in life. Then Paul goes on to say that we are God's cultivated land, or God's farm to grow Christ. A farm is also a matter of life. Then Paul says that we are not only God's farm but also God's building. This building is surely a building in life.

Day 6 —

A. Expound in 2 Timothy 2:15 to be a workman.

In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul indicates that the inoculator is to be a workman. As a carpenter, this workman must cut straight the word of the truth. This means to unfold the word of God in its various parts rightly and straightly without distortion. Just as a carpenter has the skill to cut wood in a straight way, so the Lord's workman needs the skill to cut straight the word of the truth.

B. Explain that we should be workmen, carpenters, cutting straight the word of the truth.

Workmen cut straight the word of the truth. The truth here does not merely denote biblical doctrine; it refers to the contents and the reality of God's New Testament economy. The main elements of this truth are Christ as the mystery of God and the embodiment of God and the church as the mystery of Christ and the Body of Christ. We all need to learn to cut straight the word of the truth with respect to Christ and the church.

### **III. Conclusion:**

Through the messages of the life-study, thousands of saints in the Lord's recovery will receive a good commitment of the abundant grace of God's New Testament economy. Then, those who have received these riches can entrust them to others. Think about it; if the Lord has ten thousand saints who are filled with His good commitments and spread the riches of His economy to the whole earth, then that will be a great scene there. There is no doubt that this will hasten the time of His glorious appearing. The workers of the Lord need to be like carpenters, cutting straight the word of the truth skillfully. Because many truths have been distorted in a downward trend of the church, we need to unfold the reality of God's economy revealed in the New Testament rightly and straightly without distortion, that is, Christ as the mystery of God and the embodiment of God, and the church as the mystery of Christ and the Body of Christ.