

God Honoring Ministry Concerns

Throughout the New Testament we see the apostle Paul setting an amazing example, and a very high standard for God-honoring ministry. When we get to Colossians 2, we learn something from Paul about a true minister of Christ - a God honoring minister.

A TRUE MINISTER HAS A DEEP CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE OF A LOCAL CHURCH.

Paul writes, “[1] For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,” **2:1** What does he mean by struggling for them? Here’s what I’ve concluded: 1) He worked very hard to teach them to truth through his writings. 2) He worked hard in prayer on their behalf.

A true minister has great concerns for a local church, but we could ask: What will a true minister be concerned about?

Well, as I see it, throughout verses 2 through 5 Paul lists 7 concerns of a true minister.

Concern #1 - A true minister does not want anyone in a local church discouraged. **2:2**

that their hearts may be encouraged,

A true minister does not want to see Christians discouraged. He wants the opposite. He wants their hearts encouraged. That’s

why he teaches. That's why he prays. That's why he invests himself into them - for their encouragement - to strengthen their courage - to challenge them and to cheer them on.

Concern #2 - A true minister does not want anyone in a local church isolated. **2:2**

[2] being knit together in love,

When a local church is strong hearted, there's a unity that bonds the people together - there's a love between them that grows stronger and stronger. That's what God longs to accomplish in the Church, globally and locally (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16)

In order to develop to the maturity that God desires of us, we need each other. Christianity is not an isolated life. If you belong to Jesus by faith in Him, then there's a bond that you have with other Christians. You are linked to them through a common faith in Christ, and if you want to grow in the Lord, you need to connect yourself in love to the other believers in your community.

Concern #3 - A true minister does not want anyone in a local church to lack assurance. **2:2**

to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding

If a Christian begins to dabble in heretical false teachings, his assurance of the salvation that he has in Jesus will grow weak. He or she will become fuzzy on what salvation is. He will

become confused and lack understanding of the security of the believer and the assurance the riches of Christ. Heretical teachings consistently demean Christ and add human effort to salvation.

Concern #4 - A true minister does not want anyone in a local church to lack knowledge of Christ. **2:2-3**

and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, [3] in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

A true minister preaches a Person - the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's focus was to teach people about Jesus, and it went even further. His focus was introduce people to Jesus. He wanted them to know Jesus, and that is the focus of a true minister.

Paul's job was to reveal God's mysteries to everyone he could possible tell. His job was not to tell people God was keeping secrets. His Job was to tell people God is revealing secrets - that the secret is out - that the mystery is revealed in Jesus. John MacArthur wrote, "in Christ Himself the hidden God was manifested to mankind." According to the Bible, God is invisible, but God became visible when Jesus took on human flesh. God has fully revealed Himself to the world, and offered a relationship with Himself to all humankind through Jesus. What Paul desperately wanted the Colossians to be assured of was that they had a complete and full relationship with Almighty God because they knew Jesus by faith. They did not need some other so-called deity. They did not need philosophy. They did not need

mystical secrets. They did not need a list of rules. They already had God because they had Jesus.

The knowledge of God is found in Jesus. If you know Jesus by faith in Him, you know God. And wisdom for life is found in Jesus. If you know invest yourself in His Word, you will be completely equipped with all the wisdom you need to navigate every circumstance of life. Knowledge of God and wisdom for life is found in a relationship with Jesus and a saturation in His Word.

Concern #5 - A true minister does not want anyone in a local church to fall prey to false teaching. **2:4**

[4] I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

Delude means to deceive by false reasoning - to make someone believe a lie by giving a seemingly very logical explanation even though it's wrong. False system of religions sound good, logical, reasonable, and plausible. But they aren't Biblical.

A true minister does not want anyone to fall for a trap of false teaching that denies the full deity of Jesus, the full humanity of Jesus, the sufficiency of Jesus to save, or the ability of Jesus to keep someone saved. Paul worked very hard in prayer and teaching in order to establish people strong in the Word God - so that they would not fall prey to false teaching.

Concern #6 - A true minister does not want a church out of order. **2:5**

[5] For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order

Order means there is a unity among the church like there is a unity and a common goal in a military platoon. For an army to achieve its warfare goals, every person must look out for his brother, fight alongside his brothers, and stick to the plan of the commanding officer.

For the church, the commanding officer is Jesus. He calls the shots. He writes the plans. A church that is in good order, does not listen and get thrown off by all the whacky teachings of the world. It listens to Christ. It listens to and gets its commands from the Word of God - the Word of Jesus.

Paul said, “*though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit.*” What does that phrase mean? I believe that phrase meant Paul expected, anticipated, and believed that this local church would be able to stand strong together, even without him being there in person. He was there in spirit. He was convinced they could function as though he were there in person.

His prayers were going out from Rome and landing in Colossae. His writings, guided by the Holy Spirit, were going out from Rome and delivered to Colossae. So when his letter was read in that local church, it would be as though Paul were standing right in front of them teaching these things himself.

Paul said, “*rejoicing to see your good order.*” Paul trusted them. He displayed confidence in them. He wasn’t worried they would fall apart without him. He knew they were in a spiritual battle, but he trusted they would be alright. They didn’t need him. They needed Jesus.

Concern #7 - A true minister does not want anyone unstable in their faith in Jesus. **2:5**

and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

It all comes back to faith in Jesus. False teachings always try to get a person to stop trusting fully, completely, wholly, and solely in Jesus.

Paul said a good orderly church is firm in their faith in Christ. They’re not shaken, not swayed, not broken, they are firm. Their foundation is Christ and their faith is in Him.

That’s what concerns a true minister of God. That’s what concerned Paul.

- Would you be willing to adopt these same concerns for our church?