**Cross And Crown Christian Outreach**

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**Prepare For Ministry Challenges**

**That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. -** 2Tim. 1:12 NIV

The Apostle Paul really faced lots of challenges as a Christian such that one doubts if occasionally he did not have to look back to the good times he had before becoming an ambassador of Christ. It was from one persecution to the other for him but somehow he was able to remain strong in the faith till the end. In the scripture for today’s devotion which is part of his second letter to Timothy, he actually described his experience as suffering, giving the reason for his suffering as his divine appointment as a herald and Apostle of the gospel of Jesus Christ – 2Tim. 1: 11-12. To be a herald for Jesus Christ is to be a sign to the people that Jesus is coming back just as being an Aposlte is to be a vigorous and pioneering advocate or supporter of this same gospel.

It was in a similar call that Timothy found himself as the Pastor and Teacher of the Church in Ephesus having being left there by Apostle Paul to pastor the Church there. Although Paul was currently going through the experience he described as suffering, he never stopped thinking of what is protégé must be going through, thoughts that he said left memories of Timothy’s tears that he Paul can never forget – 2Tim. 1:4.

His concern for Timothy was part of the reason for doing this letter to Timothy. His letter was to let Timothy know that even in his own suffering state, he never stopped remembering him in prayer. Being aware of the pains he is going through, he made him realise that;

1. He will need faith which he knows he already has by inheritance – 2Tim. 1:4-5.
2. He will also need to deploy his gift which he got by laying of his hands on him – 2Tim. 1:6.
3. He will need to avoid being easily frightened as he must show courage in the Ministry – 2Tim. 1:7a.
4. He will need to demonstrate power, show love and self-discipline in the operations during this call – 2Tim. 1:7b.
5. He will need to be proud of the Gospel and fellow ministers in whatever state of humiliation they may be – 2Tim. 1:8-10.

The Apostle Paul gave these advises based on his vast experience most of which were not pleasant. He was however willing to remain faithful to his call because he believed that the person that called him is faithful and he will guard his soul which he has entrusted to him. Are you sure you have a calling into the Ministry for the reasons of propagating the gospel? Then you are better prepared for an experience similar to that of Paul.

All you need to do is to work with the advice that Paul gave to Timothy.

* It will never be a smooth ride as the experience at some stages will be like suffering. Your faith needs to remain strong at all times as you will need to face very challenging events that will occur. It will definitely be tested periodically.
* You will need to plead with the Almighty God to grant you relevant gift of the Holy Spirt as it is equally necessary for the journey. This becomes necessary as your journey in the Ministry will definitely require the demonstration of power. You will need to remain very courageous and spiritually powerful whilst dispensing your ministry roles.
* There will be scary moments but constant awareness of the superiority of the power of the Almighty God obtained by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be required to overcome in all situations.
* You will need to relate in love. Loving the people will mean caring for them and sacrificing for them. One who does not love cannot claim to be called. It is for the love of the people that God calls people in the first place and so it will be impossible to perform the task outside love after all the Bible says that God is love.
* The need to live a disciplined life can never be negotiated if one is to succeed in the Ministry. Although the word, “disciplined” was used in the New International Version of the Bible, the King James Version of the Bible uses the phrase, “sound mind” to describe the same situation. Both will appear to mean taking decisions after careful consideration of all factors and carefully applying sound sense of judgement in their implementation.
* Above all, you should expect the worst in terms of societal treatments as no condition should be considered too low to get to, due to the Ministry challenges. In the case of Paul, he narrated his experiences in the Ministry to the Corinthians, an experience that seemed life could not have gotten worse, all because of the work of the Ministry – 2Cor. 11:23-28.

If however, you are already having those experiences that can be described as suffering, just be sure that the suffering is really because of your honest performance in the work of the Ministry, and you can rest, assured that there is a commensurate reward waiting for you, probably in this world but definitely in the life after life – 1Pet. 4:15-16. May God grant you the grace to bear the cross successfully in Jesus name. Amen