Anyone who is truly saved will inevitably be called by the Lord into some form of ministry. This could be as a pastor, evangelist, teacher, singer, deacon, or even as a writer, gardener, program coordinator, or church secretary—as long as the role serves God’s church.

While ministry brings joy and eternal reward, the reality is that no ministry God entrusts to you will be as easy as it may seem. The struggles faced by the apostles will also confront you—and even those who serve after you.

Here are some of the pains you may encounter:

Being Left Behind

> *2 Timothy 4:10* – “For Demas has forsaken me, loving this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica; Crescens

> has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”

Imagine the Apostle Paul at the peak of his ministry, only for a dear coworker to suddenly leave him. How would that feel? It’s far better if someone leaves to serve elsewhere, but to leave because of worldly desires is heartbreaking. Between 2016–2018, we experienced this with a close friend: despite years of shared ministry goals, the friend suddenly cut off communication and blocked us entirely.

Theological insight: Being forsaken is a trial in ministry, yet God uses it to teach perseverance (James 1:2-4). Don’t let the actions of others discourage you from serving.

Loneliness in Ministry

> *Paul warns Timothy not to be disheartened if he finds himself alone:*
> *2 Timothy 4:9-12* – “Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas has forsaken me, loving this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia,

> Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in ministry. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.”

Even the Apostle Paul experienced loneliness despite having been surrounded by a large ministry team. At times, only a few faithful companions remain. This is temporary; God uses these seasons to strengthen our reliance on Him.

Theological insight: Seasons of solitude are opportunities to deepen intimacy with Christ (Psalm 27:10; Isaiah 41:10).

Conflict and Separation

Even successful ministry can experience division, as seen with Paul and Barnabas:

> *Acts 15:36-39* – “After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are.’ Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul did not. There arose a sharp disagreement, so that they

> separated. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas.”

Conflict may arise over ministry strategy or personal expectations. These moments test patience, humility, and faith in God’s sovereign plan.

Theological insight: God uses conflicts to refine character and build maturity in ministry leaders (Romans 5:3-5).

Being Wronged or Opposed

> *2 Timothy 4:13-15* – “The cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, bring with you, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.”

No matter how much good you do, opposition is inevitable. Even Paul faced adversaries like Alexander the coppersmith.

Opposition is not a sign that God has abandoned you; it is part of the cost of faithful service.

Theological insight: Persecution and opposition refine faith and produce endurance (1 Peter 4:12-14).

Being Misunderstood

Jesus Himself was misunderstood by those who expected a political Messiah

> *:*
> *Matthew 11:6* – “Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

Similarly, Paul was underestimated by many:

> *2 Corinthians 10:10* – “For some say, ‘His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive, and his speaking amounts to nothing.’”

Expect that people may misjudge your character or ministry methods. Do not let this derail your calling.

Theological insight: God’s approval is paramount, not human recognition (Galatians 1:10).

Periods of Lack

Even faithful servants experience scarcity. Paul instructed Timothy to bring his cloak for warmth:

> *Philippians 4:11-13* – “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content... I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

Shortages are allowed by God to teach dependence and contentment in Him.

Suffering and Illness

Ministry does not exempt one from physical suffering. Timothy and Epaphroditus experienced illness due to ministry demands (Philippians 2:25-27). Likewise, Elisha died after prolonged sickness.

Theological insight: Suffering in ministry is a participation in Christ's own sufferings (2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 1:29). It is temporary and God provides restoration.

Conclusion

If you internalize these realities, your ministry will be marked by perseverance rather than discouragement. Ministry is challenging, but the eternal reward surpasses temporary trials:

> *Revelation 3:11* – "I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."

Stay steadfast. God bless you. Shalom.

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