

FINDING HONOR AND JOY IN GOD'S MINISTRY

Note to the speaker:

Instill heartfelt appreciation for the privilege of sharing in the Christian ministry. Inspire confidence that Jehovah's Witnesses should rightly be regarded as ministers. Motivate all to experience the joy that comes from glorifying God by means of the ministry

PREACHING BY JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES CONSTITUTED MINISTRY (6 min.)

At hometown of Nazareth, Jesus informed townsfolk that he had been anointed to declare "good news to the poor" (Lu 4:18)

Jesus said that he had come into the world to "bear witness to the truth." Had come not to be ministered to but to minister (Joh 18:37; Mt 20:28)

Commissioned his disciples to preach the Kingdom message in Israel (Mt 10:6, 7)

Told them later to go also into all the earth. This constituted their ministry (Mt 28:19, 20)

Word "minister" in Christian Greek Scriptures translates Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* (w89 3/1 5)

D. Edmond Hiebert, writing in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, said this about *di-a'ko-nos*: "It has been held that the term is a compound of the preposition [*di-a'*], meaning 'through,' and the noun [*ko'nis*], 'dust,' so that the term denotes one who hurries through the dust to carry out his service. But this suggested derivation is not generally accepted today. More probably the verbal root was [*di-e'ko*], 'to reach from one place to another,' akin to the verb [*di-o'ko*], 'to hasten after, to pursue.' Then the root idea is one who reaches out with diligence and persistence to render a service on behalf of others."—1983, Vol. 140, p. 153 (*it-2* 406-7)

It denotes a servant, one who does not let up in humbly rendering thorough service in behalf of others

Did Jesus indicate that God's ministers would be revered and receive special favors?

He told disciples instead that they would be hated, persecuted, and even killed for engaging in ministry of spiritual healing (Mt 10:16-21)

They were not to make commercial gain, take honorary titles, or assume superior positions but would suffer many privations (Mt 10:8-10; 23:8-11)

Even so, Christian ministry is the highest honor and most joyful assignment ever given to humans. Requires absolute integrity

Is this to say that only a privileged few in congregation can have this honor?

To help answer this question, need to get Scriptural view of the English word "minister"

CORRECT SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF TERM "MINISTER" (12 min.)

English word "minister" derived from Latin *minister*, which has same connotation as Greek word *di-a'ko-nos*—an inferior officer or servant

Used throughout Christian Greek Scriptures, the word has three basic meanings (w81 3/15 14)

May denote one who serves in a material, secular sense (Ro 13:4)

When used in this way, *di-a'ko-nos* is often translated "servant" rather than "minister" (Mt 22:13)

Can pertain to those who hold an appointed office in the congregation, which is a special restricted official sense (Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8, 12)

Work of elders in early congregation called ministry (Eph 4:7-12)

Is applied to any dedicated person who serves God in sacred or spiritual matters (Eph 6:21; 1Th 3:2; w81 3/15 26)

When *di-a'ko-nos* has this connotation, usually rendered "minister" rather than "servant"

"Minister" more fitting because it conveys sense of one who performs an elevated or godly service, as distinguished from one who performs mere mundane duties

In commending congregation at Thyatira, Asia Minor, Jesus showed that all in congregation had ministry, and thus all were ministers (Re 2:18, 19)

Scriptures offer *all* in the congregation the privilege of finding honor and joy in God's ministry

Some languages apply word "minister" only in political sense, but this does not mean that Jehovah's people are bound by these usages (w81 3/15 22)

Babylonish religions have given flattering titles to their so-called ministers, who want to be known as 'Reverend,' 'Most Reverend,' and so on (Mt 23:6-8)

Contrary to original thought of a lowly station

For centuries clergy have fattened themselves and lived in shameless luxury with kings and rich men of earth (Re 18:3; *re* 262)

Shocking figures on greedy profits made by men today who are regarded as TV stars of the "Electric Church" (g88 3/22 5-7; g88 7/8 31)

Even more shocking are the sex scandals of these TV "ministers" and others of the clergy

Brother C. T. Russell contrasted proud attitude of false religious ministers with true humble ministers of God (w81 3/15 22)

Is it presumptuous to regard baptized disciples of Jesus Christ as ordained ministers? No!

Do such faithful ones have the legal right to be duly authorized and Scripturally approved as true ministers of God? Yes! (*g88* 4/22 30; *w81* 3/15 23)

Jehovah's Witnesses are not under obligation to conform to the views of the world or of false religion as to meaning of term "minister"

GLORIFYING GOD IN OUR MINISTRY (10 min.)

Paul used his public ministry (preaching) to glorify God (1Co 3:5, 6)

He also regarded the assignment as a high honor for him (1Ti 1:12)

Not ashamed of his ministry, Paul held it in highest esteem

Used the Greek word *dox·a'zo*, meaning "glorify," as he thankfully said: "I glorify my ministry" (Ro 11:13)

Considered ministry to be something of great value, worth making sacrifices for (*w81* 3/15 29)

Felt so highly honored that he referred to himself and fellow ministers as "ambassadors substituting for Christ" (2Co 5:18-20)

By glorifying his ministry in this way, Paul brought glory to God

Anointed remnant now use this same honored assignment to bring glory to Jehovah

Willing to make any sacrifice to continue serving as ambassadors of the Kingdom

Great crowd likewise enjoy privilege of ministry, serving as envoys of Kingdom (Isa 60:6, 7; Re 7:10; *w84* 8/15 12-13)

Number of these now glorifying God increasing continually. Among 11,800,000 attending the Memorial, 4,700,000 are active in field. Potential for many more to share in ministry. Can help these to take positive stand (2Co 6:1; *w88* 8/1 27-9)

Watchtower articles have encouraged God's people to have larger share in glorifying God by becoming regular pioneers, just as Paul urged Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry" (2Ti 4:5; *w93* 9/15 28-31; *w88* 12/15 25-7; *w87* 2/1 15-20; *w86* 4/15 28-30; *w82* 3/1 21-6)

Can each of us increase the glory we bring to God by sharing in the triumphant shout of victory as at the downfall of Jericho? (Jos 6:10-20; *w86* 12/15 19)

Much joy yet to be found in happy ministry. Glorify Jehovah by making wise use of short time remaining (Eph 5:15-17)

MINISTERING WITH JOY AND APPRECIATION (12 min.)

Jesus Christ found great delight in public ministry. Told disciples to follow his example and beg Master to send out more workers (Mt 9:35-38; *w79* 7/15 8-10)

Paul, Peter, John, and others were thankful and appreciative of ministerial work, in spite of persecution (Ac 5:41, 42; 20:20, 21; 2Co 12:10; *w79* 7/15 10-13)

Specific purpose of ministry is to render whole-souled sacred service to Jehovah. This makes us coworkers with God in his field under cultivation (1Co 3:6-9)

Seeing how Jehovah uses us to accomplish his work brings much joy (*w88* 3/15 6, 7; *g87* 2/8 13)

Modern-day ministry involves preaching from house to house, as well as feeding interested ones by means of home Bible studies. Includes also helping all interested ones to associate at regular congregation meetings (Mt 10:5-10; Lu 10:5-7; Heb 10:23-25; *w79* 7/15 10)

Response of honesthearted ones to our ministry brings us much joy. Note extreme joy of bringing in lost sheep and even "joy in heaven" over the return of the repentant one (Lu 15:4-7; *w89* 1/15 8, 9)

Having Jehovah's favor because of faithfulness and diligence brings joy, regardless of people's response to our ministry

In parable of talents, willing slaves found real happiness in doubling talents. Invited into joy of the master. Sloggy slaves found no joy in being lazy. Thrown into darkness outside (Mt 25:19-30; *w90* 5/1 8, 9)

No greater joy can be found than that which comes from having Jehovah's favor because of faithfulness in his public ministry (Mt 25:21, 23)

JEHOVAH RICHLY BLESSES HIS ZEALOUS MINISTERS (5 min.)

Actual experiences from the field show how Jehovah is blessing the efforts of his zealous ministers (*w90* 1/1 7; *w89* 1/1 31)

Many people have commented on zealous activities of Jehovah's ministers (*w88* 7/15 11; *g87* 3/22 5, 6; *w85* 4/1 11)

Use glorious ministry to illuminate others, enrich own happiness, and, above all, to honor Jehovah (2Co 4:6, 7, 15; *w90* 7/15 18-19)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)