

1 Timothy 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

Analysis

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Paul breaks into spontaneous thanksgiving to "Christ Jesus our Lord" for his calling to apostolic ministry. The phrase "who hath enabled me" (tō endynamōsanti me, τῷ ἐνδυναμώσαντί με) uses a verb (endynamoō, ἐνδυναμώω) meaning to strengthen, empower, or make able. Christ didn't merely commission Paul but continually provided power necessary for faithful ministry. Ministry effectiveness depends on Christ's enabling, not human ability.

Paul marvels that Christ "counted me faithful" (piston mē hēgēsato, πιστόν με ἡγήσατο). This doesn't mean Christ recognized pre-existing faithfulness in Paul; rather, Christ made Paul faithful through transforming grace, then counted him trustworthy for ministry. The passive verb suggests God's sovereign choice and enabling work precede and ground human faithfulness.

"Putting me into the ministry" (themenos eis diakoniam, θέμενος εἰς διακονίαν) indicates divine appointment. The word diakonia (διακονία) means service—Paul views his apostleship as humble service, not elevated status. This understanding of ministry as servant leadership stands in contrast to worldly concepts of leadership as power and privilege. Christ both calls and equips; human ministers respond in grateful service.

Historical Context

Paul's transformation from persecutor to apostle represented the most dramatic conversion in early Christianity. His former life opposing Christ (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; Galatians 1:13) made his apostleship a profound demonstration of God's grace. That Christ would choose and use such an enemy to become His premier missionary testified to the gospel's transforming power more powerfully than any theological argument.

The question of Paul's apostolic authority was contested by opponents who argued he lacked proper credentials (not among the Twelve, didn't know Jesus during His earthly ministry). Paul consistently maintained that his apostleship came directly from Christ through divine revelation (Galatians 1:1, 11-12), not human appointment. His Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ authorized his ministry.

In the broader context of 1 Timothy, Paul's emphasis on Christ's enabling and appointing him to ministry serves dual purposes:

1. it establishes apostolic authority for the instructions that follow,
2. it provides a model for Timothy and other ministers—all Christian service depends on Christ's call and empowerment, not human credentials or abilities.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. In what specific ways have you experienced Christ's enabling for ministry tasks beyond your natural abilities?
2. How does understanding ministry as service rather than status affect your approach to Christian leadership?
3. What practices help you maintain dependence on Christ's power rather than slipping into self-reliance in ministry?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	Χάριν	ἔχω	τῷ	ἐνδυναμώσαντί	με	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ	
And	G5485	I thank	who	hath enabled	me	Christ	Jesus	
G2532		G2192	G3588	G1743	G3165	G5547	G2424	
τῷ	κυρίῳ	ἡμῶν	ὅτι	πιστόν	με	ἡγήσατο	θέμενος	εἰς
who	Lord	our	for	faithful	me	that he counted	putting me	into
G3588	G2962	G2257	G3754	G4103	G3165	G2233	G5087	G1519
διακονίαν								
the ministry								
G1248								

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 4:13 (References Christ): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2 Timothy 4:17 (References Lord): Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Philippians 2:11 (References Jesus): And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Acts 9:22 (References Christ): But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Acts 9:15 (References Lord): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Colossians 1:25 (Parallel theme): Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

1 Corinthians 7:25 (Faith): Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

2 Corinthians 4:1 (Parallel theme): Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

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