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The Work of a Preacher

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THE WORK OF A PREACHER
II Corinthians 2:14-17

I. In Northern Italy there was an Oct. 1963 landslide.
A. 50 million cubit feet dirt piled into a lake.
   It was like a rock in a tea cup full of water.
   It overflowed the dam, clipping away a portion. Thousands died engulfed in the tidal wave inundating that narrow gorge.
B. Worldwide publicity came—a wave covered human life.
C. A wave of ignorance sweeps over the land by no process other than the birth of human mind which must be taught.
   1. Today over 190 million Americans.
   2. Ralph McGill quoted a professor Davis like this:
      a. Quote clip.
D. Hearts should be touched by the death of thousands but more should be concerned about the tidal wave of ignorance engulfing the earth.
   1. Who will meet it? Gospel preachers.
   2. Then imperative is the question "what is his work?"

II. Many are the sources that could be quoted.
A. We could ask each other.
   1. No list would be identical.
B. Men will never agree as size of church, tradition of community, and concept of thought varies.
C. Now as always there must be a source and an authority to which with complete confidence we can turn.

1. This is God—and the revelation of himself in the Scriptures.
2. To them we go.

III. Perhaps none more dramatically say it than Paul in 2 Cor. 2:14-17. We read:

2 Cor. 2:14-17 "Now thanks be unto God which . . ."

A. It shall be the burden of this address to see what here is meant.

B. It is the picture of a Roman triumph. Word used only here and Col. 2:15

1. This was a solemn and public honor which the Roman people conferred on a victorious general.
2. It followed a great victory—like conquering a province.
3. It was organized on this manner:
   a. A great procession came through city, heralded by a magnificent entrance.
   b. Adam Clark and Albert Barnes give a fine description of this event—may I quote from a compilation of their works.

IV. What does this tell us of the work of the preacher?

A. First it shows its the work of God.
   1. He gives the victory—so complete it involved the total ruin of the enemy.
   2. God has sovereign and gracious control of
a. Clip on trace a title.

3. Let the preacher like the apostle remember he is one sent.
   a. Peter, an apostle--man with a message--one sent.
   b. Clip on humility.

4. Preacher works for the Lord, with the people.
   a. Calls request may seem petty--could be providential.

B. God selected Christ to the "the fullness."
1. To Him glory is ascribed--and rightly so.
2. All the ministry must be the exaltation of Jesus. **This is His Security!**
3. Paul called himself Christ's prisoner--not Nero's. (Phil. 9) (Phil. 1) (Rom. 1:1)
   a. Bondage here true source of freedom.
   b. How do we react to adversity?

(1) Boy taking gas. Ps 37:23 "The steps of a god

C. By man the savour of his knowledge is spread in every place.
1. Man who preaches Jesus deserves the honor of the brethren.
   a. We give 25 yr. service pins in industry
   but ask preacher "how come you live so long!"
   b. By the power of God we overcome all--even being fired!

D. The Roll of the Preacher is a Censor.
1. He carries the sweet incense of the gospel.
   a. He does not make it, change it, or withhold it—he carries it!
   b. Only in this do we become sweet savour as we proclaim gospel and fight sin.
   c. Truth is not based on human resources.
      (1) Clip on Martin Luther.

2. It must go to everyone—not think small.
   a. World wide must be our vision—25% all people now alive. 7 out of 10 babies born to heathens.
      (1) Fulton Sheen clip.
      (2) Farmer and work.
   b. Defuse as on the air.
   c. Everywhere Paul went men knew more of Jesus. Lu 24:19 “Mighty in deed & word.”
   d. We must not despense a poisoned perfume.

3. He releases a pleasant fragrance of tribute to God.
   a. None is compelled against his will—but "remember who's making the suggestion."

4. But even a parade has a pause!
   a. Do we let the preacher ever rest?
      (1) Clip on Mark and grain.
   b. Do we grant simple consideration?

5. It has diverse effects. Light heals some and it blinds others. I could hardly see
in Shelbyville, Ky. library. Medicine skillfully applied heals, without skill it aggravates. Bee stings some, honey to others.

a. As some captives killed so others were freed. They were first tributaries and then allies.
b. So today some believe--saved; others disbelieve--damned.

(1) This puts great responsibilities on the preacher. Dignity there—and "now Lo'd if yo' cain't hep me, please don't hep that bear" is out of place.
(2) Two camps to which we may go—reject gospel and stay lost, accept gospel and be saved.

(a) By our own reaction to the gospel we face either salvation or damnation.
(b) We are responsible for our deeds.
(c) We labor to save not to destroy men.
(d) That some will be lost we know now and it is not the fault either of the gospel or the preacher.
(e) Who can point to any part of gospel and say this was intended to make me miserable. All is for salvation.
(f) Some heavier ruin because gospel preached to them. All who perish would anyhow whether gospel or not.

(3) Man will truly feel his insufficiency.

(a) Who doesn't feel it? Tremble?
Jackie White clip.
(b) Who prays for them as they should?
(c) You will notice Paul didn't answer this. (F.B. Young story)
(d) One place to go.
   2 Cor. 3:5-6 "Our suffering is of God
(e) This frustration manifests itself even in getting sermon suggestions.
(f) May even close wrong subject.
   Jer. 6:11 "I am weary holding in
   Jer. 5:14 "Fire in bones"
(f) Fire preachers so church can hear what they ought in "farewell".

God forbid that its man who causes the choice or appraisal rather than gospel.
E. As surely as you please man can make merchandize of the gospel.
1. Bible identifies their group as many.
2. Calls them corrupters of word.
   a. What an epitaph for a tombstone!
   b. To corrupt it is to intermingle with own inventions, explain away until nothing is left. Let it please every carnal mind and rob it of all force
   c. Corrupt=i.e., "deal deceitfully", what a tavern keeper, notorious for adulterating wines, does when he mixes good with cheap liquor. He increases quantity, lowers quality, sells at same price
Charline "How many I got--better go (7) put some more water in the soup."
Tindal spoke of those who "chappe and chaunge with the word of God."
d. He prostitutes right for sake of gain--do we our minds?
e. Do we seek gain by falsely making things look better than they are?
f. They labor to pervert.
g. Huksters use every trick. "No picking" on some tomatoe wagons.
h. We are not petty merchants. D.D. Woody told me "maybe they won't notice!"
i. We are not in business for self but the Lord.

3. But be of truth!
a. You received pure doctrine--preach it and preserve it, deliver it to mankind as you received it.

4. Let your preaching be marked by three things: (not like Green's football players requirement.)
a. Sincerity.
   (1) Better than anyone else you know whether you are or not.
   (2) Can you stand the test?
   (3) So yours unmixed honesty?
      (a) Rueul on curtains and Ross Dye.
      (b) Speak to geraniums
b. As of God.
   (1) We must be rooted here as a plant is
in the soil—not like mums in burlap bag in a sawdust bed. Are we insulated against truth?

(2) He judges not success but fidelity, zeal self denial.
(a) Football coach can go out.

(3) Are you influenced by Him, under His control, acting by His command?

(c) In the sight of God speak we in Christ.
(1) We are ever in his sight. This makes us honest like highway patrol. Preach as though sent by God.

(2) Paul's greatest joy—advancing the kingdom.
(3) We work for God (with the brethren) and are therefore acceptable to Him (and should be to the brethren). If He is pleased He bestows proof of His love.
(a) Clip on Parson's job.
(4) If we do our work we are what God appointed us to be.
(5) No joy out of Jesus not traceable to Him.
(6) Gospel is sufficient.
(7) Whatever you try—preaching in a virgin area, rooting out error in an old—you win! Can't obliterate a sermon.

(8) God sets gulf between too and its unbridged.
(9) Triumph ours over devils, idols, sup-
F. Then let him preach!

Incarnate word
Written word.
Spoken word.

2 Tim. 4:2 "Preach the word--
Rom. 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the good
I Cor. 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of
Rom. 10:14 "How then shall they call on him
Matt. 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all
Luke 9:60 "Jesus said unto him, Let the de
Haggai 1:13 "Then spake H. the Lord's me

1. Note Lord's man, messenger, work!
2. Birthright for mess of pottage vs. pot of message.
   a. "I can stand a meddling plumber,
      painter--but not a preacher.
(1)Bruce Overfield not loan to 3 P's!
3. Don't frustrate him.
   Micah 3:8 "But truly I am full of p.
   a. Can't say "my study."
   b. Need office to protect preacher so
      privacy.
   c. Not in "who's who" but should be!
   d. Don't expect=talents of all men.

G. Acrostic on Preach.
1. Preach
2. Reach
3. Each
4. Accountable
5. Creature
6. Honestly
West End 2/23/64
Binger Cook - Bapt.
Jim Reese - Bapt
Mr. & Mrs. Outhier - P.M.
IN THE BEGINNING

In an excellent book on preaching (Preaching to the Contemporary Mind), Professor Merrill Abbey of Garrett Biblical Institute tells of a famous law case. A New York law firm asked a New Orleans lawyer to trace the title of a piece of business property in that city. He cleared it back to 1803, but the New York firm asked that he go further back. After a time, they received this letter from him:

Gentlemen:

Please be advised that in the year 1803 the United States of America acquired the territory of Louisiana from the Republic of France by purchase. The Republic of France in turn acquired title from the Spanish crown by conquest; the Spanish crown obtained
it by virtue of the discoveries of one Christopher Columbus, a Genoese sailor who had been authorized to embark by Isabella, Queen of Spain, who obtained sanction from the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, who is the Son and Heir of Almighty God, who made Louisiana. Well, that is about as far as you can go.
In Middlemarch George Elliott describes one of those antique mirrors that we sometimes see in the homes of friends. It is usually a round concave mirror of excellent reflecting quality, but polished for so many years that its surface is now covered with innumerable tiny scratches, not obvious save to the closest gaze. Were anyone to hold a lighted match or candle close to its center the little scratches would arrange themselves in concentric circles around the reflected central flame. Is this not the parable of many life? These people in Corinth and their counterparts in every age may not have been consciously selfish folk, but they were self centered.
"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

We live in a world that has narrowed into a neighborhood before it has broadened into a brotherhood.

L.B. Johnson
Against this practice Luther began to contend, for the honor and purity of the Church. The controversy continued, and he was given an opportunity to repudiate his position as set forth on many central questions. But this was his answer: "Unless I shall be convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear reason, I neither can nor will make any retraction, since it is neither safe nor honorable to act against conscience. Here I stand. I can naught else. God help me. Amen." Within a few days he was excommunicated by the Church and declared an outlaw by the state.

...from "The Ministers Manual for 1958" page 257
There was once a saintly old priest who had a rocking chair in his sacristy. Everyday he rocked back and forth, praying: “O Lord, give me souls”; but he never left the sacristy to find any. Those days are now past. We are living in a new age of the Church in which the canonical gives way to the pastoral, the desk of administration to the feet of those who spread the Gospel and where we all become missionaries.

What better reveals this than the places where successive Pontiffs have been crowned in modern history. Benedict XV was crowned at the altar of Our Lady in the rear of St. Peter’s. Pius XI moved forward a hundred feet and was crowned at the main altar over the tomb of St. Peter. Pius XII walked through the long nave of the Basilica, up small stairs in the front walls and stepped onto the balcony to be crowned. When he stepped onto the balcony, he literally stepped into the world. When the beloved John XXIII was crowned, he also stepped onto the balcony, but he did something more: he spoke to the world; he called it to himself; he addressed all men as brothers.

Our gloriously reigning Paul VI was crowned not in the area of the church itself, nor on the balcony, but in the world — in the piazza, in full four-directional view of mankind. The Church is no longer on a rocker in the sacristy, no longer canonically legislating for her own flock, not just calling observers into the Church but going into the world, into the highways and the byways to meet prodigal children before they ever get near the Father’s House.
I would much rather make people think than to please them. I prefer to do people some good rather than accommodate their prejudices. I would rather have self-respect than mass-respect. I would rather be honest than popular. I am committed to preaching the truth in love without any regard to consequences. I would rather preach as in the presence of Christ and find all of "our" pulpits closed to me than to sell my soul to anybody. The elders where I preach understand this, but it would make no difference if they did not. My attitude is simply this: There are better ways and honorable ways to make a living, and I feel no need to sell my soul to anybody. However, as long as there is a pulpit where I can preach with intellectual honesty as I do at Sunset Ridge, I mean to continue. I am profoundly thankful for this and the many
other faithful congregations where truth is sought after.

Taken from "A Challenge to Preachers" by Ross W. Dye - August 8, 1963 issue of "Gospel Advocate"
Brother Reuel Lemmons in his editorial in the "Firm Foundation" of April 30, 1963 entitled "Curtains Come in Colors", wrote:

"We seriously doubt that the complete freedom to preach the truth enjoined by the Bible is recognized by any gospel preacher doing local work in the church today. Some preachers are in larger enclosures than others, but all feel the stifling effect of curtains."

A REAListic MAN

Friend: "Tell me—who is the real boss in your house?"
Husband: "Well, my wife bosses the servants—and the children boss the dog and cat—and—"
Friend: "And you?"
Husband: "Well, I can say anything I like to the geraniums."
In most incidences all the preacher asks is simple consideration. He needs the understanding of people--and if he is basically honest there will be no infringement of him upon the generosity of time afforded him by the church. For instance he may be some day get to the office by 8:30 leave at 4:00. On other days he may come at 9:30 and leave at 6:15. These liberties have to be established, and of necessity must be followed in order that a work can be done and various emergencies met.
Perhaps you have prepared a sermon into which you have put all your best. When you had finished it, you said—humbly, of course—"Now this will make somebody sit up and take notice!" And after you had preached it, there was just the blessed silence of an unruffled pool. Then, a Sunday later, after a rushed and broken week, you preached a sermon for which you felt that you ought to apologize. Yet, somebody came to see you, or wrote you, to say that this despised sermon had helped him beyond words. Not a ripple about the dandy sermon of which you were so proud, and a whole tide of feeling about the one for which you wanted to apologize! Isn't it queer? It is good to know that God can use the weak things of this world to confound the things that we thought mighty.  

--Pulpit Digest/July-Aug. 1963, pg. 19
As Herman Melville says in the eighth chapter of "Moby Dick":

For the pulpit is ever the earth's foremost part,
All the rest comes in its rear;
The pulpit leads the world!

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In the 1956 Warrack Lectures, David MacLennan portrays preaching as almost the only "head-on confrontation" with God that most men will ever experience. He says that preaching "is to lead them to that collision with reality through which God speaks most clearly, most personally, and most decisively."

--Pulpit Digest/July-Aug. 1963, pg. 18
Of those apostles, W. J. Lhamon said more than sixty years ago:

"They were entirely and beneficently innocent of all speculations about monarchianism and Eutychianism, and Monophysitism, and Monotheletism and supralapsarianism, and sublapsarianism, the kenosis and the krypsis, and the genus ideomaticum, and the genus apostelesmaticum, and the genus majestaticum, and of transubstantiation, and consubstantiation, and eternal generation, and eternal procession, and cosubstantiality and tripersonality, and the voliproesentia, or the multivoliproesentia.... Oh, thank God! The apostles were beneficially innocent of all this. They were too reverent and practical to indulge in such meddlesome speculations."

"The layman goes to church because he hungers for God." And wonder if we are giving him stones instead of bread!

* * * * * * * * *

That's not Bible preaching! We merit the terrible indictment of John Milton's Lycidas, "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

It was Hugh Thompson Kerr who said, "We are sent not to preach sociology, but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not progress but pardon; not the social order, but the new birth; not an organization, but a new creation; not democracy but the gospel; not civilization but Christ. We are ambassadors, not diplomats." --"Christian Standard" Dec. 7, 1963--pg. 6
Every person who has rushed up to the minister three minutes before the worship hour with a petty complaint is responsible. Every person who has insisted that the minister also serve as janitor, mimeograph operator, administrator, amateur psychiatrist, P.T.A. entertainer, fund-raiser, baseball manager, bowling team scorer, magician, advertising man, and typist is responsible. Every person who has refused to call on the lost, visit the sick, give, attend, and serve in the church is responsible. Every person who has pouted when the preacher did not call every time she caught a cold is responsible. Every person who has stood unsympathetically on the sidelines, who has regarded it as his divine calling in life to criticize, is responsible. Every member who has thought of the minister as his own private chaplain, and who has longed to be petted, praised, and catered to, is responsible.
ble.

Let us all, upon our knees, ask God's forgiveness for having switched the church from the main line of preaching to the sideline of providing fellowship, recreation, and entertainment. As someone has put it, "We have traded the fireball of evangelism for the softball of recreation." God forgive us.

--"Christian Standard" Dec. 7, 1963--pg. 6
Oliver Wendell Holmes said "the mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour upon it, the more it will contract."

(over)
Coach Green said a Negro described the football players he wanted--he wanted one who was a bit agile, then a bit mobile, and he will teach him to be hostile.

(over)
HUMILITY

A town sought out its humblest citizen and bestowed upon him a medal. Then they had to take it away because the fellow started wearing it.

* * * * * * *

Jackie White's father heard me preach. He was from Johnson City, Tennessee and wanted to congratulate me. He said "My mother distrusted any prepared sermon. That's the reason I liked yours so. You really preached like you'd never studied it or seen it before. It was really fine and free."

(over)
Coach was told "There's no way you can go but up." Alumnis said "I beg your pardon, you can go out."

(over)
A preacher must understand that he works for the Lord --not for anyone else. Let him keep in mind it is his fervent desire to work with people but for the Lord.

There will be many situations where he will wonder whether his actions have been proper. He will wonder if he should have made another call, written another letter, and be tormented whether he did too little or too much. For instance, one time F.B. Young came to the services--he hadn't been here in three years--I wrote him a letter--and he said, "now wouldn't that make you feel like a dog--the one time a fellow comes the preacher notices you and calls it to your attention."
Mark tells the only account of the kingdom of heaven being like unto a man sewing grain in the 4th chapter of Mark. He said the man sews grain, goes home and goes to bed and gets up the next day. I wish the brethren knew this--they don't think the preacher is ever supposed to go to bed! Some call late at night--some call early in the morning--but bless your heart some time or the other they all call.
A preacher must be aware of the changing audience to which he speaks. Several years ago people were content to wait seven days for a stage coach. Now they are quite concerned if they miss their time at the first section of a revolving door.
Boots Bribe
(Prize Winner)

Every time a certain old man attended church he liked to say "Amen" when the preacher said something he agreed with. His son didn't like for his father to say "Amen" so often in church and he knew his father wanted a pair of boots awfully bad but thought he couldn't afford them.

"Dad," the son said, "if you will quit yelling 'Amen' so often in church, I'll get you a pair of boots." His father agreed.

So the next time the man started to say "Amen" in church, he caught himself and slapped his hand over his mouth, but of course, made some noise. After this happened four or five times, he again started to down his impulse by putting his hand over his mouth. Suddenly he stopped and spoke, "Boots or no boots, Amen!"

Dublin, Ga. George.
Ralph McGill quoted Professor Davis with these words: "The rate of growth of the world population remained low right up to the 16th and 17th centuries... then came the quickening. The increase was spectacular. Between 1650 and 1850 the annual rate of increase doubled. By 1920 the rate had doubled again. From 1950 to 1960 it took a great leap forward moving Professor Davis to say "the human population is now growing at a rate that is impossible to sustain for more than a moment of geologic time." Since 1940 the world population has grown from 2.5 billion to 3.2 billion. This increase, within a mere 23 years is "More than the total estimate of all the earth in 1800." If the present rate continues a hundred years from now it will be 6 times its present size.
PREACHER SHORTAGE  This is keenly felt in our brotherhood. The ladies have a special service the first Wednesday of the month. It has been suggested the men have a class this same time in preaching. Sounds good! The Commerce Dept. gives the following facts on churches and located ministers: Methodists--39,000 congregations and 24,000 preachers; Southern Baptist--31,000 congregations and 29,000 preachers; Roman Catholic--23,000 congregations and 16,000 preachers; First Christian--8,060 congregations and 7,744 preachers; NOTICE: Church of Christ--17,850 congregations and ONLY 5,000 ministers! Sobering, isn't it?

(over)
A couple of young boys walked into the dentist's office. One faced him boldly and said, "Doc, I want a tooth took out and I don't want no gas 'cause I'm in a hurry."

"I must say you're a brave boy," said the doctor. "Which tooth is it?"

The little boy turned to his silent friend and said, "Show him your tooth, Albert."
SOUTHERN BAPTIST PREACHER

1. Male.
2. Age--Ave. 40 (3 out of 4 from 25 to 49).
3. Marital--96% married, 2 kids, 3% divorced.
   a. 3% phy. handicapped.
   b. 3% avoided some climates.
4. Training:
   a. 1 out of 10 not thru 8th grade.
   b. If church of 300 or more, 50% did graduate work.
   c. 33%--1 or more years college.
      30%--1 to 3 years graduate work.
      11%--more than 3 years graduate work.
   d. 3 out of 4 to Baptist College.
   e. 40% to a seminary.
5. Part time.
a. 1 out of 5 does 30 hours work secular or going to school.
b. 35% do secular work.
c. 16% in school.
d. 3% do other religious work.

   a. Preached 12 years.
   b. Those with churches of 1000 or more 21 years experience.
   c. Ave. tenure was 5 churches in 12 years.
   d. 1 out of 10 had 10 different churches.
   e. 30% less than 1 year with present church, 5% - 10 or more years.

7. Outside interest.
   a. 40% didn't have time.
MINISTER'S ROLE HAS CHANGED
by Edmund Willingham, Religious News Editor
"The modern minister's loss of various roles may lead to confusion about his work, according to an assistant professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School.

The Rev. Kenneth Mitchell, at a meeting on the minister's work, said the typical minister in 1893--two generations ago--filled these roles in his community:

'One of the few educated men, public school teacher, presider at weddings, presider at funerals, moral guardian, social reformer, provider for the poor, preacher of the gospel, and in some instances healer (kept herbs).

(over)
Being a retail store operator is very much like being a farmer in one respect.

When a farmer was asked recently what time he went to work in the morning, he replied to the interrogator: "I don't go to work in the morning. I'm surrounded with it when I get up!"

* * * * *

THINK SMALL

Last year it was compact cars. This year we're getting compact refrigerators, compact dishwashers and compact freezers. To keep up with these challenging times, man, you've got to think small.

(over)
On such occasions the general was usually clad in a rich purple robe, interwoven with figures of gold, setting forth the grandeur of his achievements; his buskins were beset with perls, and he wore a crown, which at first was of laurel, but was afterwards of pure gold. In one hand he had a branch of laurel, the emblem of victory; and in the other, his truncheon. He was carried in a magnificent chariot, adorned with ivory and plates of gold, and usually drawn by two white horses. (Other animals were also used: when Pompey triumphed over Africa, his chariot was drawn by elephants; that of Mark Antony, by lions; that of Heliogabalus, by tigers; and that of Aurelius, by deer.) His children either sat at his feet in the chariot, or rode on the chariot horses. To keep him humble amidst these great honours a slave stood at his back,
casting out incessant railings, and reproaches; and carefully enumerating all his vices. Musicians led up the procession, and played triumphal pieces in praise of the general; and these were followed by young men, who led the victims which were to be sacrificed on the occasion, with their horns gilded, and their heads and necks adorned with ribbons and garlands. Next followed carts loaded with the spoils taken from the enemy, with their horses, chariots, &c. These were followed by the kings, princes, or generals taken in the war, loaded with chains. Immediately after these came the triumphal chariot, before which as it passed, the people strewed flowers, and shouted Io, triumpeh!

The triumphal chariot was followed by the senate; and the procession was closed by the priests and their attend
dants, with the different sacrificial utensils, and a white ox, which was to be the chief victim. They then passed through the triumphan arch, along the via sacra to the capitol, where the victims were slain.

During this time all the temples were opened, and every altar smoked with offerings and incense.

from Clark's Commentary
on II Cor. 2:14
page 320-321