

Preaching With Passion

Preaching for Results

Being off for a year on a leave-of-absence has afforded me the opportunity to visit many churches and to sit under the preaching of a lot of different denominations and pastors. After having visited a couple of dozen churches, at least, and many of those for multiple services, I have found only about three who I would qualify as faithfully preaching the Gospel of Christ. Let me explain.

All of the churches I attended were what we would call evangelical, not liberal or heretical. But in most of these churches three common faults were present.

1. The Word was not preeminent – sometimes not opened at all
2. Jesus Christ was not mentioned much less exalted – that is astounding!
3. The Gospel of salvation was not given – no mention, no explanation, no invitation at all!

Other observations, (I'm not alone on this, Marilyn, who is very un-critical often left these churches saying, "What was that all about?") are that these same churches ...

1. Spent 10-20 minutes on announcements about the denomination or the church events and calendar.
2. In the preaching that did occur they usually tacked on a scripture about 20 minutes into the "sermon" and then only by reference with no exposition of the Scripture itself.
3. Most of these sermons were topical in nature on some popular or culturally relevant "felt need," but ended with no practical application of the truth. Most ended abruptly, some without even a closing song or an invitation or challenge to draw closer to God.
4. Not one of these churches referenced hell or judgment, and none referred to the need of repentance.
5. To no one's surprise the presence of God was not evident. No one was saved, no one was convicted of sin, no one repented, no one was edified, no one was challenged to live godly, no was healed, no one was delivered, and no marriages were restored.

When a family member asked what I thought of their pastor's message I cautiously stated that I thought it was a good lecture on a biblical topic but there was no presentation of the Gospel or invitation to receive Christ or any challenge to live

godly in Christ Jesus. To that she responded, “Well that’s because we don’t have any unbelievers in our church, or if we do there are only a few.” – WOW!!!

Is it any wonder that I am concerned about pastors and the ministry today?

The Call to Preach

I am concerned about the “call” to ministry and what that means to most men in the pulpit today. Compare what I am seeing in this passion-less, fire-less, urgency-less preaching today to the prophets and apostles. I really believe that unless the pastor is broken before God and His word the people will not be broken either. If the apostles and prophets would have done what pastors today are doing would there have been any effect upon the people they preached to? No.

Look at all the apostles and prophets. All of them were first broken by God over their own sin before they could be used of God in leading people to brokenness. Not one prophet ever got to be a man of God by going to a seminary to learn the Scriptures. No. Men were made to be men of God in the fire of adversity and in the crucible of crushing conviction. Each of them knew first hand the “Woe is me!” before they could cry out with passion, “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees!” Fire begets fire. So pastor, get on fire then preach God’s word. We are not supposed to be “men of the cloth” we are supposed to be flaming fires. Where’s the fire?

Where’s your fire?!!!

Hebrews 1:7 & Psalms 104:4

Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Jeremiah 20:9

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

1 Corinthians 9:16

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

These Men Had Fire!

Acts 26:18 – Paul’s Clearly Defined Mission from Jesus

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations. 6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. 7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatever I command you shall speak. 8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD. 9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Isaiah 6:1-8

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"