

**The Pastor:
The Man and His Ministry**

(Course 108)

Section Two

The Pastor's Preaching

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Preachers and Preaching

By George W. Truett

The following sermon was preached by one of the greatest preachers of all time: George W.

Truett, who was pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas for forty-six years. It was preached at a noon-day luncheon for preachers in the Nashville, Tennessee area in November of 1930. You are required to read this sermon three times as you pursue this course.

Brother Chairman and fellow preachers: The many courtesies and privileges that have been mine, in connection with this week's visit to Nashville, have very deeply touched my heart, but none more so than this privilege of "breaking bread" with you, my honored fellow preachers. Closer and dearer to me than any other group of workers in all the world are my brother preachers.

No formal address would I attempt to bring you, as we sit together about these tables. With a painful sense of my unworthiness do I now respond to your request. Let me talk with you, quite informally, just as my heart shall constrain me. I would hasten to offer you my most cordial congratulations that you are privileged to be Christ's preachers. Yours is the most worth while work beneath the stars. I feel about it as the great soul Phillips Brooks felt, when he laughingly told a large gathering of business men in Boston, at a noonday luncheon: "***I am sorry for all you fellows who are not parsons.***" A modern writer who seems to have a penchant for cheapening preachers, and for deriding churches and all the activities of organized Christianity, said recently in a widely circulated journal that he could not for the life of him understand why any red blooded man could give his life to the business of being a preacher. I suppose that he is utterly unable to understand it ! But you understand it, and I understand it, and each of us would whole-heartedly exclaim with Paul:

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

If I may speak quite personally for a moment, I would say that it was the consuming ambition of my heart from my earliest recollection to be a lawyer, but that noble calling was not Christ's appointed calling for me. Now, for a generation, I have given my humble testimony, as a preacher of his glorious gospel. If he should give me a thousand lives, today, and ask me to choose what calling I would have them follow, I would not hesitate one moment, to choose that every one of the thousand lives should be a; preacher for him.

"Happy if with my latest breath, I may but speak His name;

Preach Him to all, and gasp in death, Behold, behold the Lamb!"

You would very earnestly agree that nothing can take the place of the Christian ministry. The triumphs of the press and of the schools; the marvelous advances in the realm of science; none of nor all combined, can take the place of preacher. **"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe."**

Nor will history let us forget that the halcyon days of Christianity have always been the days of great preaching. It was so in the days of Tertullian, was so in the days of Luther and Calvin and Latimer and Knox. It was so in the days of Whitefield and Wesley and Robert Hall and Jonathan Edwards. It was so in the days of Spurgeon and Maclaren and Beecher and Joseph Parker. It was so in the days of Phillips Brooks and John A. Broadus and B.H. Carroll and Charles B. Galloway. Triumph goes ever with true preaching, and defeat goes ever with false preaching. An ignorant, ineffective, unworthy pulpit is the supreme handicap to the furtherance of Christ's cause throughout the earth. The moral safety of the nation and of the world is largely in the keeping of the Christian pulpit.

God's Word has much to say to preachers, personally, as well as to give them solemn admonitions concerning their all-important message. Paul's ringing admonition to Timothy is to be faithfully taken to heart by every preacher : "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." And also Paul's word to Titus comes with great force to every preacher: "Let no man despise thee." Let us mark well the expression. Paul does not say: "Let no man hate thee," but "Let no man despise thee." Paul exhorts us so to live that our character and conduct shall not be despicable. ***True manhood is to be exalted in the preacher's calling***, to the highest degree. One can be easily assured that John the Baptist was a true man, and so was Paul. Terrible is it beyond all words for Christ's preacher to be the wrong kind of a man.

The Christian ministry is not for prigs and fops and charlatans. It is the most masculine, virile, heroic calling on this earth.

Often are we correctly reminded that knowledge is power, but character is far more so. What a man is, in himself, counts far more than what he says with his lips or works with his hands. If the preacher be lacking in fundamental integrity, then, his life is a ghastly, living lie. The men of the world will bear with our crotchets, as preachers, if we so live as to convince them that we are true, genuine, sincere men. Every preacher ought to be such a sincere and unselfish man that his community would be willing to trust its life into his hands.

So immeasurably important is this great matter that you will at once agree that it

behooves us, as preachers, to watch with all diligence and conscientiousness against every wrong habit and motive.

The preacher is perhaps more sorely tempted than is any other man. Satan's chief grudge is doubtless against the true preacher.

Therefore, the preacher is to watch most faithfully against every wrong habit and motive. For one thing, the preacher is to watch himself resolutely against idleness. By all **means** is to learn the value of time. Quaint old Ben Franklin's word should never be forgotten: "**Value time for time is the stuff of which life is made.**" Over the gateway of many a man who has failed, written the secret of his failure in these two words:

"He dawdled."

The preacher is to be the busiest man in the community, and he is to be busy with the right things. He is never to lose the sense of proper perspective and proportion in his matchless work. He will be tempted constantly to give his time and energy to the smaller things. The story is widely told of a preacher who spent nearly all of his time in going from one business house to another in his town, writing promiscuous letters, wherever he paused, and then hurrying to the depot to mail them, when he heard the sound of the coming train. One day, this same preacher declaimed loudly against the indifference of his people, vehemently asking them: "What more can I do, in this town, than I am doing?" To which question, one of the men present made the blunt reply: "Nothing more, unless you meet all the freight trains too."

The preacher is never to be a trifler for one hour with his incomparable task. He is to be the most indefatigable toiler in his community. It is said that Whitefield preached eighteen thousand times, before he reached the age of fifty-six. Certainly, the preacher is one man who should be utterly unwilling to eat **the bread of idleness**.

He should also watch most conscientiously **against the love of ease**, even as one should watch against some fatal infection. Ease is the bane of mankind. It undoes nations and organizations and families and individuals. God's Word sounds a woe for them who are at ease in Zion. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is to be heeded by every preacher:

"Thou therefore endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Certain it is that if a preacher is hankering for some easy job in the ministry, he is already on the toboggan; and unless his spirit shall be radically changed, he is traveling rapidly to a humiliating defeat. If men in Christ's work would save their lives, they must lose them for Christ and his gospel. Emerson's essay pictures the selfish striving of many for fame, while here and there an unselfish worker forgets himself into immortality. Jowett's great word is for preachers:

"When we cease to bleed, we cease to bless."

So was Mazzini's word with which he challenged the youth of Italy: "Come and suffer." So was Carlyle's last word, whispered to a friend: "Give yourself royally."

The preacher is to **watch against impatience**. "Patient continuance in well doing" is to be the rule of our lives. Paul thus speaks to us: "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not." And again: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain **in**, the Lord."

I am a believer in the long pastorate, both for the sake of the preacher, and for the cause for which he lives. The frequently changing pastorates may well give us deep concern. They may: well revive the old question asked by Jeremiah "Why gaddest thou about so much to change your way?" Or the statement, made in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews : "They declare plainly that seek a country."

The preacher is to guard against professionalism. Just here, is a very serious snare for the preacher.

If a preacher preaches just to preach,

he is indeed in a wretched plight,

and the people who hear him are in a still more wretched plight.

The fires of zeal and passion are to be kept blazing in a preacher's life, even at white heat if possible. If preaching becomes insipid and stale to the preacher, if it does not taste good to him, let him betake himself to the quiet place, and so wait on God, by prayer and by meditation on his word, that his preacher heart will again be ablaze with interest and compassion for the souls of the people. Professional preaching is abominable both in the sight of God and of serious men.

The preacher is unceasingly to guard against **every unworthy habit and motive**. How wretched a sight for a preacher to be a coward, or a blustering braggart. How terrible a thing for him to be jealous and envious, on any pretext, against his fellow preacher. **Envy is as rottenness in a man's bones**. Well does the Bible ask:

"Who can stand before envy?"

The prophet of God, the shepherd of souls, the ambassador of Christ, is to be the right kind of a man. He is to be gladly willing to **pay the price**, whatever it costs and wherever it leads, for spiritual power. He is ever to tread the blood-sprinkled way of the cross. Paul paid the price for spiritual power. Let us ponder long and deeply his pungent words "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse; that I may win Christ." Verily, the most epic, heroic, important business in all this earth calls for the right kind of men.

Let me hurry on for some words about **the preacher's message**. He is divinely commanded ever to see faithfully to his message. It is to be God's message. In season and out of season, the preacher is unwaveringly to **declare the whole counsel of God**. He is to **magnify biblical preaching**. He is to remember that his pulpit is his supreme throne of power and responsibility. **The Thermopylae of Christianity is the pulpit**.

Surely, the preacher must realize that he must needs be a constant, earnest student, and supremely a student of God's holy Word.

**If the preacher does not study,
he will become an echo, instead of a voice.**

Christ would have his preachers to be **voices and not echoes**. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." It will mark the beginning of a preacher's certain decline, when he ceases to be an earnest student. Just here is a matter calling for the most frequent and conscientious self-examination at the hands of every preacher. To be careless here is indeed a tragedy.

Let me frankly express my humble, personal conviction that very few preachers preach of enough. I do not now speak of the regulation sermon: "firstly, secondly, thirdly, and finally, brethren"—but I speak of the preacher's wayside ministry. His opportunities to witness for Christ are constant and endless. He is to seek to make faithful use of them all. In doing so, he will be walking in the steps of Jesus, the one perfect Preacher. Jesus gave his vast message on the new birth to just one man, and his far-reaching message on life spiritual and eternal to just one woman. Has the preacher one soul for an audience? Then let him there give his most faithful testimony for Christ, for issues are bound up with the preacher's audience and message, both for time and for eternity. Let Jesus teach us all by his suggestive, unceasing, wayside ministry.

You will fully agree, I am happy to believe, that the preacher is to keep to the great central themes of God's Word. The false prophet is not only the one who denies and perverts the truth, but **he is also a false prophet whose chief emphasis is given to minor and secondary contentions**. Misplaced emphasis explains the pitiful defeat of preachers again and again.

Sometimes one's heart is pierced with grave concern for the pulpit, as he reads the printed list of subjects to be discussed from the pulpit.

It is easy for a preacher to catch the cheap cheer, but such behavior presages a cheap man. **The itch for notoriety is indeed a deadly microbe**. We do not go forth on our God-appointed mission as preachers, to be ranters and lambasters and snickering caterers, with an endless succession of grotesque, spectacular, bizarre, barn-storming methods; but we are to go as true prophets of God, as faithful, compassionate shepherds of souls, hiding ourselves ever behind the cross of Christ. Thus does Paul put it: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Both our message and our method as preachers are to be such that the sinning, needy people to

whom we preach, shall see Jesus only.

Certainly, the preacher is forever to sound the positive and not the negative note. The pulpit is no place for a religious stammerer.

It is conviction that convinces.

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Let us hark back to the preachers of the New Testament, and mark their positive note. Listen to Peter and John : "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And to these words from Paul: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And again, let us listen to this positive word from Paul-a word that has reassured myriads, both in life and in death: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day."

Again, the preacher is to preach with the conquering note of hopefulness. The preacher is not to be *a whining blubberer*. He is not to mistake *hysterics for piety*. He is not to be a *wailing pessimist*, but he is ever to be a Christian optimist. He is to assure the people that God's grace and promises are adequate for every possible test and experience that can come to mankind. Somebody has given us this definition both of the pessimist and of the optimist:

"A pessimist is one who sees a difficulty in every opportunity, and an optimist is one who sees an opportunity in every difficulty."

The preacher is to show the people the way of certain triumph in Christ. The preacher can surely do better than to give his emphasis to the sounding of dirges and of lamentations, and to the teasing of a burdened people with hopeless jeremiads. A little boy who was made to sit under such a pulpit, protestingly asked "Mother, will his fusser never get tired?" Surely, surely, the preacher is not to degenerate into *an old scold*. Paul's expression : "Neither murmur ye," is ever a timely word for preachers. Paul always sounded the conquering note, whether in jail or out of it. "Rejoice," "rejoice evermore," "rejoice in the Lord, always." Paul was an invincible Christian optimist, as ought every preacher to be, and all because of Christ.

Once more, you will earnestly agree that the seeking note for the salvation of the people is ever to be the regnant note in the pulpit.

It is always to be the primary and crowning note in the message of Christ's preacher. Our Savior and Master will not let us forget that his commission for his preachers today is the same as that which he gave to the mighty Paul:

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

Let us listen to the same mighty Paul as he tells us of his God-given ministry : "And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The seeking note for lost souls is forever to be regnant in every pulpit and also in every church. **What better would our churches be than ethical clubs, if such note should be absent from them?** Christ's preachers are to watch for souls, as men who must give a most solemn account to God. May we so faithfully watch that we may give such account with joy and not with grief. Let us unceasingly paraphrase the cry of Rutherford of Anwoth

**"Oh, if these souls about me,
Would meet me at God's right hand,
My heaven would be two heavens,
In Immanuel's Land!"**

Far too long have I detained you, I fear, but your patient and sympathetic attention has constrained me to keep on talking. From my deepest heart I thank you for this courtesy at your hands, and I thank God for you and your incomparably blessed work. One of the mightiest preachers, in the generation just gone, was Dr. B.H. Carroll of Texas. He was pre-eminently a preacher to preachers. In one of his messages to preachers, on the text, "I magnify mine office," he closed his message with this expression, which I trust, all of us, as

preachers will joyfully adopt as our individual confession, today and forever:

I Magnify My Office

"I magnify my office, O my God, as I get nearer home. I can say more truthfully every year, I thank God that he put me in this office ; I thank him that he would not let me have any other; that he shut me up to this glorious work. And when I get home among the blessed on the bank of everlasting deliverance, and look back toward time and all of its clouds, and sorrows, and pains and privations, I expect to stand up and shout for joy, that down there in the fog and mists, down there in the dust and in the struggle, God let me be a preacher. I magnify my office in life; I magnify it in death; I magnify it in heaven; I magnify it, whether poor or rich, whether sick or well, whether strong or weak, anywhere, everywhere, among all people. Lord God, I am glad that I am a preacher, that I am a preacher of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ."

Portrait of a Preacher

Introduction:

There are many preachers of the present and the past whose lives and example we would be wise to emulate, but there is none more worthy than the Apostle Paul. He qualifies on these points. He was:

- A peerless preacher
- A tireless teacher

- A caring pastor
- A persuasive man
- The epitome of intercession
- A model for evangelism

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:” (I Corinthians 2:1-7).

A chosen vessel to take the gospel to the gentiles, he wrote nearly two thirds of the New Testament. Without the aid of modern transportation and media we have today, he penetrated the wicked pagan society of his day from the circumference to the center with the gospel. When an humble, selfless, self-sacrificing preacher who was willing to die for the sake of the gospel, as did Paul, talks about his life and his ministry, we should give attention to what he says.

Now there is some key explanation of Paul's bold statement about his “speech and his preaching.” It not explained by the following:

1. Natural eloquence – It was Apollos who was so eloquent, not Paul. He said that he “came not with excellence of speech.”

2. Natural boldness – Paul said, “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and much trembling.”

3. Man's wisdom – A church today looking for a plausible pulpiteer would not consider a modern-day Paul.

4. Material possessions – He “had no certain dwelling place.” Imprisoned in Rome, he wrote to Timothy and asked him to come to him shortly and bring with him his “cloak, his books, and his parchment.” That was about the extent of his possessions.

5. Physical appearance – He would be a Hollywood reject today. Tradition holds that he was handicapped physically: stooped over, with poor eyesight.

6. Denominational acceptance and popularity – He certainly would not fit the bill today.

Many pastors today think they cannot be a great preacher without these things Paul did not have. Was Paul a great preacher, pastor, evangelist, church planter? I think he was all of these things, but he was not filled with man’s wisdom. So what did he have? He had five things that made the difference and they are available to us.

I. Spiritual Power

He testifies that his preaching was “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” We have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and He is our anointing. The key is to appropriate the anointing for preaching in power. Believe Him and He will empower you.

II. Spiritual Purpose

Paul’s purpose is stated in his words, “We preach Christ crucified.” We “declare unto you the testimony of God.” “I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

III. Spiritual Persuasion

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-38).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

IV. Spiritual Preparation

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days” (Galatians 1:17-18).

Paul never went to a theological institution, but he was well trained, having studied at the feet of Gamaliel. His spiritual preparation was by the Holy Spirit who taught him while he was out in Arabia.

V. Spiritual Passion

Paul had a passion for Jesus, according to Philippians 3:10. He wanted to know Him more intimately. He had a passion for souls. He wrote, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.” Several times he wrote about his tears, agony and travail.

Dear pastor, these five things will qualify you for preaching the Word of God. Don’t neglect a single one of them. Emulate Paul and you will be used of God.

The Secret to Staying Fresh

“All my springs are in You.”

Psalm 87:7

"I have heard somewhere of a spring the waters of which had certain medicinal properties so that those who drank from it were helped in the case of various infirmities. In the course of time, homes sprang up around the spring, then a hotel, stores, and eventually, a town that grew into a city. But there came a day when visitors would ask, 'By the way, where is the spring from which this grew?' and dwellers in the city would rub their hands in embarrassment and say, 'I am sorry that I cannot tell you, but, somehow, in the midst of all our progress and improvement we lost the spring and no one knows now where it is.' There is a sad application here for the church. Under all our ecclesiastical superstructure today we have lost the spring. We need to relocate it." - Vance Havner, *Hearts Afire*.

Introduction: Dryness and freshness are two terms to describe the spiritual condition of our lives. I don't suppose there is a greater challenge to the busy pastor than the one to stay fresh. I will never forget a conversation I had with Dr. Hyman Appelman many years ago. This Godly man, a converted Jew and lawyer turned evangelist, spoke seven languages, preached on most of the continents, in every major city of America and in many cities abroad. He handed me an unfinished manuscript and asked this question, "Do you know why I continue to write." I said, "I think so, then answered—to stay fresh." "Exactly," he quickly replied. He was a man who had reached the pinnacle of success in his ministry—*yet at age seventy-six, he was still deeply concerned about staying fresh.*

Can there be anything more needful, more important, more necessary in the life of a preacher than staying fresh? Absolutely not! Nothing in the ministry of a pastor is more devitalizing to his preaching than dryness. As bad breath and body odor is socially offensive, so is spiritual dryness to a church. As unexcused ignorance is repulsive to intelligent people, dryness is to people in the pastor's life. Dryness is superficial and produces superficiality. Dryness in the preacher begets dryness in the church.

I. **The Cause of Dryness:** A Sign of Judgment

According to Jeremiah 3:3-4, dryness in the life of Judah was caused by their idolatry and disobedience. Verse 3 says, "Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain."

When there is negligence of that which brings freshness to our hearts, God will judge us with leanness of soul. The psalmist tells us, "He turns rivers into wilderness, and water springs into dry ground; A fruitful land into barrenness because of the wickedness of them that dwell

therein."

God, in His judgment, turns our hearts dry,

By His grace he gives freshness.

II. The Course of Dryness - Degradation

Joel 1:12, 16 - "The vine is dried up, the fig tree languishes; the pomegranate, the palm tree, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered because joy is withered away from the sons of men... Yea joy and gladness is cut off from the house of your God."

1. A Scenario in the life of a preacher whose heart is spiritually dry: Strength is Depleted; Spiritual Life has Deteriorated; Vision has Dissipated; Burden has Diminished; Spiritually Empty with nothing to offer; Spiritually Exhausted and has become "weary in well doing."

2. A description of a preacher who is dry: barren: desert, unproductive, sterile, empty, void, inoperative, ineffectual, impotent, useless, incapable, unfit, powerless, dull, meaningless, boring, fruitless. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

II. The Cause of Freshness (A sign of blessing)

As God is the cause of dryness as a means of correction in our lives, He is the causes freshness.

Psalm 107:35-38 – "He turns the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs...And there He makes the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation...And sow the fields, and plant the vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase...He blesses them also, so that they are multiplied greatly."

A. The Promise of Freshness

We must not confuse freshness with these things:

1. **Boldness** – I have known preachers who were bold enough to fight a circle saw, but that did mean that they possessed spiritual freshness.

2. **Loudness** – There are preachers who can be heard a proverbial country mile away, but they may not have freshness.

3. **Soundness** – Vance Havner said, “You can be as straight as a gun barrel theologically and as empty as one spiritually.”

4. **Busyness** – One can be as busy as a beehive and be as dry as a cracker barrel.

An Old Testament promise: - “I will pour water upon him who is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: And they shall spring up among the grass as willows by the water courses” (Isaiah 44:3-4).

A New Testament promise: - “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come after me, and drink. He who believeth on me, as the scripture says, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38).

D.L. Moody said, “I use to carry heavy buckets around, but now I have a river flowing through me.”

Jesus said – “Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

B. The Place of Freshness – “All my springs are in Thee.”

Freshness is in communion with God. Neglect communion and you will dry up. Seek to know Him more intimately. You can't drink from a dry well—you must go to the fountain of living waters. The Lord said in Jeremiah 2:13, “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

C. The Provision for Freshness – the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). Review the material on how to be filled in the course on the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Spirit will allow Him to produce His fruit in us. Read Galatians 5:22.

There will arise in us and flow through us:

Fountains, the source of which is God.

Pastor, the secret to staying fresh is absolute surrender to God, and appropriating the promise of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He is called the “dew of Heaven.” Freshness will make the needed difference in your preaching. Without freshness, preaching is like a cat trying to eat a grindstone. You sound like an empty wagon on a rock road—you just rattle along. ***The Freshness of the Dew Releases the Fragrance of the Flower.***

Freshness is having more in the stock room

than you have in the show window.

Soul Satisfaction

by J. Oswald Sanders

*This article is from Oswald Sanders' book entitled *Spiritual Problems*. I suggest that you read it often for personal edification. The pastor must have soul satisfaction to be effective in his preaching ministry.*

Alexander MacClaren wrote many years ago, "Is there anything in human utterance more majestic and wonderful than this saying of my text, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me"? There He claims to be able to meet every aspiration, every spiritual want, every true desire in this complex nature of ours. There He claims to be able to do this for one, and therefore for all. There He claims to do it for all the generations of mankind, right away down to the end. Who is He who thus plants Himself in the front of the race, knows their deep thirsts, takes account of the impotence of anything created to satisfy them, assumes the divine prerogative and says, "I come to satisfy every desire in every soul, to the end of time"? Yes, and from that day when He stood in the temple and cried those words, down to this day, there have been and there are millions who can say, "We have drawn water from this fountain of salvation, and it has never failed us." Christ's audacious presentation of Himself to the world as adequate to fill all its needs, and slake all its thirst, has been verified by nineteen centuries of experience, and there are many men and women all over the world today who would be ready to set to their seal that Christ is true, and that He indeed is all-sufficient for the soul."

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A preacher who does not have soul satisfaction

Will do more damage than good in the pulpit.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [inner man] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39).

It is said that David Brainerd turned to this passage often in moments of great loneliness or depression or anxiety, was this sublime proclamation of his Lord.

Whenever the cravings of John Wesley's eager soul became too intense for human

satisfaction, even at earth's purest fountains, he invariably repaired to this text for comfort. And have not the same words allured our parched souls to slake their thirst at the same fountain?

The Symbolic Setting

It was the last day, the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Israel commemorated God's care and protection in their wilderness wanderings. The whole population of the city deserted their houses and for a week lived in booths made out of the branches of a thousand trees. Everywhere a holiday spirit prevailed. On each of the last seven mornings the picturesque ceremony of the water libation had been observed with its music, dancing and song. Of all Israel's festivals, this was the most joyous. An old Hebrew proverb claimed that "he has not seen joy who has not been present at the feast of tabernacles."

This morning, as on the previous days, the officiating priest had left the temple courts in company with the festal throng and had made his way to the Pool of Siloam. As the people waved aloft their palm branches and chanted their psalms, he dipped his golden pitcher into the pool and lifted it out of the water while the crowd chanted, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Is 12:3).

At the very moment the smoke of the morning sacrifice began to ascend from the sacred altar, the procession reached the temple. Silver trumpets gave a threefold blast of welcome. For the last time, as he reached the altar of burnt offering, the priest raised aloft the golden pitcher and emptied its contents, sparkling in the sunlight, at the base of the altar. Just when the enthusiasm and excitement had reached their zenith, a clarion call rang out: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [inner man] shall flow rivers of living water."

The effect was electric. Every eye turned in the direction of the voice. Who was the speaker? It was the young Prophet, Jesus. The imagery was familiar and there was no mistaking His meaning. He was claiming to be the antitype of the outpoured water-the Messiah. Even the temple guards came under His spell and found themselves powerless to lay hands on Him. "Never man spoke like this man" was the strange excuse they gave for their failure to apprehend Him.

What intensity there was in His invitation. Usually He sat and taught, but now He stood and cried, "If only you would come and drink of Me, you would never thirst again." What passion and urgency there were in His plea. He raised His voice in order to reach the largest possible company, and its tones have reverberated down the centuries until they fall on our ears.

The Spiritual Desire

"If any man thirst...." The very invitation implies that every man does not thirst in the sense in which Christ spoke. The great mass of Christians is contented and self-satisfied rather than spiritually thirsty and discontented. Such thirst is all too rare. People are not necessarily motivated by spiritual desire in their church attendance. There is a great

difference between emptiness and thirst. Through carelessness I have allowed the gas tank of my car to run empty of fuel, but never yet has it been thirsty. It would be perfectly content to sit by the side of the road until it rusted away. Many of God's people are spiritually empty, but not thirsty.

"As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God," cried the psalmist (42:1-2). The imagery behind his words is agonizing rather than pleasurable. The hart is not standing passively beside a limpid stream slaking its thirst. Rather, it has been pursued mile after mile by its relentless enemy until it stands with distended nostrils and heaving sides, panting desperately for water. Do we in any sense approximate such a thirst after God? He undertakes to satisfy only those who thirst after righteousness.

This invitation is specifically limited to the thirsty. And what is thirst but a lack, an absence, a craving, a conscious but unsatisfied need? Let us specifically discern and define the areas of need, the conscious lacks in our lives. Is it purity, joy, love, wisdom, cleansing, sympathy, courage, peace, discipline? His invitation is addressed to us individually, for it is to "any man" irrespective of past history or present character. All who are thirsty are included in its scope. Only those who are self-righteous and self-satisfied are excluded from its blessings.

The Source of Supply

"Let him come unto *me*." The remedy for our spiritual malady lies in our own hands. There is no thirst which the human heart can know but will find its satisfaction in the Lord Himself. What does it mean to come to Him? When we say to a child, "Come to me," we do not need to explain our meaning. He knows. One possibility is that he will respond by exercising his will in the direction of the invitation. The other possibility is that he will refuse and will exercise his will in the opposite direction. To come to Christ in this sense is to exercise your will in obedience to His invitation.

"Come unto *me*." Christ is claiming the ability to satisfy the deepest need of the human heart, yet we are strangely reluctant to come directly to Him. We will attend ceremonies and observe sacraments. We will follow men and congregate in meetings. We will frequent camps and conventions. We will listen to priests and preachers-anything, it would seem, except come personally and alone into the presence of Christ. But He is absolutely intolerant. He will quench our spiritual thirst personally and not by proxy.

The very purpose of the Savior's invitation was to direct the attention of the people away from a ceremony which had been repeated year by year and century by century, to a Person, Himself. The ceremony was soon over and the pitcher empty but Christ was Himself the reservoir into which there poured continuously the inexhaustible fullness of the Godhead. Countless thousands have drunk from it and been satisfied.

I came to Jesus, and I drank

**Of that life-giving stream,
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.**

The Simple Secret

“Let him come unto me and *drink*.” The newborn babe needs no instruction in the art of drinking. In essence, what is drinking? Is it not appropriating, making one’s own that which God has provided for the quenching of thirst? The water flowing at the feet of a thirsty man will never slake his thirst until he drinks it. The abundant provision God has made for every spiritual need is unavailing unless it is appropriated.

Many come to Christ at conversion, take one initial draught from the wells of salvation, and mistakenly suppose they have received all. They subscribe to that dangerous half-truth, “I received everything when I received Christ.” True, they were given everything in Christ, for “God ... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” But the crucial question is, How much have we appropriated of what God has given? Every inch of the **land of Canaan** was given to God’s people but they had to place their feet upon it before it became theirs in actual possession. Christians of this type, instead of enjoying a present satisfying experience of Christ’s fullness, constantly look back to the isolated drink they had ten or twenty years ago. Their testimony is always to an experience in the past.

In this invitation, the verb “drink” is in the present continuous tense, and the clause could be correctly rendered, “Let him come unto Me and drink and keep on drinking.” In the days when Dr. Sherwood Eddy was a mighty power for God in the student world, in addressing a large gathering in India he said, “If there have been any rivers of living water flowing from my life, it is because there was a day when I came to Christ and drank, and *since then I have been daily coming to Him and daily drinking*.” Here is the open secret. Might it not be that our spiritual failure to attain stems from a failure to daily keep on drinking? The Master is not pleased when we fail to take what He gives.

Marcus Cheng, one-time principal of the Chungking Theological Seminary, tells of one occasion during his student days when his funds were exhausted. In his need he took the unusual course of opening his heart to a missionary. It was late at night when he came and the missionary asked him why he had come so late at night and contrary to rules. Cheng simply said, “I have no money.” The missionary invited him in, opened a chest where he kept his money in silver coins and said, “Take what you want.” Tremblingly the impecunious student picked out the smallest coin he could find. His friend said, “Take more, take all you need.” Cheng broke down and wept at the unexpected generosity. He declared that in that hour he saw that God was prepared to treat him as his friend had done. So our Lord urges us, “Drink more, drink all you need.”

If we keep on coming to Christ and keep on drinking, we are encouraged to expect the inevitable result.

The Inevitable Result

“Out of his belly [inner man] shall flow rivers of living water.” It hardly seems possible that from unpromising and limited lives such as ours God can cause torrents of living water to flow. One of Europe’s noblest rivers has its birth in the very heart of an Alpine glacier. It matters little to God how cold the heart is or how mediocre it seems. If only He is given the chance, out of that icy heart He will cause to gush out mighty torrents which will pursue their life-giving way, bringing life and verdure wherever they go. “Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh.”

We will never become the fountainhead, but we may be watercourses. Through these ordinary lives of ours, God will pour His fullness on others. None of us, as we survey the past, will be satisfied with what God has been able to achieve through us. The experience depicted in these verses has not been our constant experience. The blessing we have brought to others has been a trickle rather than a torrent. But we must not overlook the fact that before those rivers can reach the thirsty souls around, our own personal thirst must first have been fully slaked. If we still have to go to the world or some source other than Christ for our satisfaction, then those rivers will never flow.

“*Out of his inner man*” is the key phrase. The true blessing of the Spirit is always an outflowing blessing. A Spirit-filled Christian is never self-centered. Rivers always flow outward. Many barren and fruitless lives result from endeavoring to reverse the process and cause the rivers to flow inward. The Dead Sea remains the Dead Sea because it greedily welcomes all the waters that flow into it, but pours out none in return. God’s order is “out of him shall flow rivers”; so when personal enjoyment and happiness, rather than the blessing of others, are the object of pursuit, life becomes sterile.

Some Christians are content to be like the pitcher which the priest dipped into the Pool of Siloam—held aloft, poured out and emptied, awaiting the festival of the coming year to be filled again. The greatest peril of the deeper life convention movements lies just here. God’s intention is that our lives should know no vacuum—not a pitcher that can be emptied, but a water course constantly full and overflowing to meet a world’s need.

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman said that one Monday morning, although everything had been going satisfactorily in his church so far as the outward eye could see, yet his soul was possessed by a great thirst. He was far from satisfied with his spiritual condition. Taking up a newspaper which contained a sermon each week, he found that the sermon this particular week was by Dr. F. B. Meyer. He read, “There are many men who have never yet learned the difference between working for God, and allowing God to work through them. That is the reason so many ministers and Christian workers break down.” Dr. Chapman wrote afterward, “The Lord then enlightened my eyes. I had been working my finger tips off for the Lord. It is now going to be different. Kneeling down I prayed, ‘Lord, from today onward, pour Thyself through me to them.’” That was the beginning of the great ministry which carried him around the world as God’s instrument to sweep thousands of souls into the kingdom.

The Savior’s Meaning

What is the dynamic which can transform a cold, barren, unattractive life into one characterized by warmth and fruit and winsomeness? The evangelist supplies the secret: “But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

The Holy Spirit is the sufficient cause of transfigured lives. Historically, the descent of the Spirit was dependent on the ascension of Christ, for not until He was exalted on the right hand of the Father was the Spirit poured out upon the waiting disciples. The present day experience of believers reveals an exact correspondence with the historical fact. We will know nothing of the power of the Holy Spirit, nothing of the outflowing torrents, until Jesus has been invited to ascend the throne of heart and life. But once He is accorded His rightful place, we will know the uninterrupted flow of the Spirit’s power through our lives.

The coronation of His Majesty King George VI was a ceremony which attracted worldwide attention. At one stage, the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed these words to the assembled peers, “Sirs, I present to you George, your undoubted king; wherefore all of you who are come this day to do your homage and service, are you willing to do the same?” To this there was a shouted response by acclamation as they said, “We are Willing.

As Christ is presented to you as your undoubted King, are you willing to enthrone Him as ‘King of your life? The moment He ascends the throne will be the moment when rivers of living water will begin to **flow from** your life.

Preaching in a Storm

By Sam Wolfe

Someone said, “We are either in a storm, coming out of a storm or entering into a storm. This statement is absolutely true. Jesus tells us that in the world we will experience tribulation. Peter wrote, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though **some strange thing happened to you.**” Trials and tribulation are not “strange,” neither are we strangers to them—they are common to all of us, for no one is exempt from them, not even a Godly and faithful pastor.

Only God can prevent the storms and nothing can come to you that God does not either cause or allow. And He does both. First Peter 1:6 tells us that, “if necessary you are in various trials.” Psalm 107:25 says, “He is the One who commands and raises the stormy

seas.” When God deems it necessary to accomplish some purpose in your life and ministry, He will bring on a providential storm or allow Satan to cause one—and in that storm, He will direct you and bring you through it as you stay surrendered to Him. And that is the key to victory we will discuss.

As a pastor, you are in a strategic position in the ministry, and as a Godly man you are a threat to Satan and his kingdom of darkness. Therefore you may expect some storms that he causes. He takes advantage of every opportunity to attack the storm-tossed pastor and people and cause turmoil in the church.

There are storms that are peculiar to the pastor and through those storms, Satan works to defeat your ministry. Discouragement and Depression, Doubt and Fear, Sorrow and Heartache, and Financial Reverses—these are the forms some of the storms take. Now when these storms come into your life, do as Adrian Rogers said, “Remember this truth, ‘I am governed by providence.’”

A Personal Testimony:

I will never forget the first major storm that came into my life and ministry. I was in my early twenties with very little experience in the ministry. I was pastor of a small rural church and we were experiencing God’s blessings in an exceptional way. But there were some men in the church who were not pleased with me and my work. I had just arrived back from preaching a revival when a man came to me and told me that the church was going to vote on me. I asked, “Why, what have I done?” That man’s reply was, “***Preacher, you just don’t have the gift of gab.***” He implied that the church wanted a more experienced pastor, but the true reason a few people were unhappy with me was my Bible preaching that made them uncomfortable with their lifestyle that was far from Godly.

I could not believe what I was hearing. How could it be happening to me? I had been faithful in all aspects of my ministry. I had heard about such situations in churches, but never realized how it could affect one going through such a storm. I had heard it from my preacher-daddy when he experienced opposition, but it didn’t really resonate in my mind.

The fact is—I thought my world was coming to end. I was devastated with depression and disillusioned by disappointment. How could they do this to me?

Well, the day came when they had determined to vote on me and ask me to leave. After I preached, I took my seat up on the platform and turned the called business meeting over to a deacon. The discussion began and was in progress when suddenly someone in the congregation spoke out and said, “Just a minute, the pastor is still in here.” I then spoke up and asked, “Why shouldn’t I be in here; I am a member of the church; this meeting is about me.” And then they voted on whether or not I could remain in the meeting.

I won that vote.

After the discussion resumed, someone suggested, “Ask the pastor if he has anything to say.” I did and simply asked, “What do you have against me; what are your charges.” And the only charge was the one made by the man who initially approached me, informing me of the planned meeting to discuss my inability to socialize as they expected. They were correct in their evaluation of my personality—for I was shy and had always been from my youth. However, it did not adversely affect my preaching.

Well, the time came for the vote—***and I won***. I remained as pastor for a few months and God moved me to a much greater opportunity. Looking back, I can see the hand of God’s providence in my life and ministry. He has accomplished His purposes through the many storms He has brought me through.

But what I had to learn was:

How to act and preach in the time of the storms.

The first thing I want to emphasize is this—Satan works through you to get to your people. Second, when you are going through storms, most likely your people are also. So it is imperative that the pastor consider his people and be the intercessor they need. In doing so, you minister to them as God ministers to you. The key to victory in the midst of the storm can be discovered in the implications of the following three words:

- 1. Refrain**

When the storm comes, it is human nature to react in negative ways. The self-life or the flesh wants to take over and it will cause us to make serious mistakes in judgment.

- We must refrain from **self-pity**.

Feeling for ourselves, although we are hurt by the circumstances of the storm, is not the answer. Many men of the Scriptures resorted to self-pity, but it did not help. Jonah and Elijah are two examples.

- We must refrain from **anger**.

Anger reveals a weakness in our character that weakens the effectiveness of our leadership and causes the people to lose confidence in us.

- We must refrain from **blaming others**.

Although others may be the blame for the storm, it is not our place to judge or condemn—we are to have a redemptive attitude and bring the wise mature men of the church into the situation to find answers and a solution to problems.

- We must refrain from **hasty decisions**.

Jumping to conclusions and rushing to judgment always leads us down a dead-end street contrary wisdom and the will of God.

- We must refrain from **self-vindication**.

God is the One who vindicates His man. Stand on solid ground of truth, integrity and love and God will honor you before your people.

2. Refresh

Someone said, “You cannot separate the man from his message.” This being true, if the message is to be right the man must be right. Storms have a way of wearing you down to the point of physical exhaustion and spiritual emptiness. Years ago I used the word, “stupefied” before I realized that it was a word in the dictionary. That describes us when we are filled with frustration and anxiety. We find ourselves unable to process our thoughts with wisdom and understanding. We go to bed with worry and fear.

What we need most in a time of storm is the peace of God in our hearts and a sense of the victory He has promised. Jesus has promised His peace—not the peace the world gives, but His peace. ***It is hard to shake a man whose heart is filled with the peace of God.*** The unsettling and boisterous waves of opposition and trouble cannot affect us when we are walking on them with Jesus. Remember, that which was over the heads of the disciples in their little boat was under the feet of Jesus.

The refreshing peace of heart and mind is the stabilizing factor we must have to survive the storms that we go through. The Bible tells us that David refreshed himself in the Lord—that is what we must do. How???

Charles Spurgeon said years ago, “I like to lay my soul a soak in a brief passage of the Word.” Likewise, we must bury ourselves in the Word of God and soak it up into our minds and hearts. That is the only thing the Holy Spirit has to use in our lives. There must be a blending of our minds with His mind and this is possible only through the Word. The Word must not only color our thinking—it must control our thinking. We must ask the Holy Spirit to do His thinking through our minds.

3. Refocus

I strongly encourage you to read often chapter 20 of II Chronicles. A great multitude of Ammonites and Moabites was moving against Judah. When Jehoshaphat heard that the enemy was near, he became very fearful. And here is a great principle to follow. ***“Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord.”*** He asked for a divine intervention into the situation. People came from out of all the cities of Judah to seek the Lord. Their confession was, “We have no might against this great company that is coming against us; neither know we what to do....”

“But our eyes are upon You.”

“And said, O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven and rule over all the kingdoms of the heathen, and in Your hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand You?”

What a dramatic change in their focus! They ceased to be terrified by their focus on an enemy they had no power over. They began to pray and reflect upon God who had the power they desperately needed. And when God was in front and center of their focus, there was a divine intervention. Read the rest of the story—it is exciting and encouraging.

Here is a note I wrote in a flyleaf of my Bible years ago which I read often: ***“Never consider the greatness of your difficulties without considering the greatness of God. When acknowledging your insufficiency, acknowledge God’s sufficiency.”***

So when storm comes, draw a razor-sharp focus on God who either caused or allowed it. Yield to His sovereignty and rest on His omnipotence—and trust Him to guide you through it, and in doing this you will gain two vital things you must have:

- **Confidence in your attitude toward God**

You must be careful not to confide to the exclusion to putting your confidence in God. You will probably feel the need to rush out to seek consolation from people to gain their

sympathy and support. Godly counsel from friends is good to have, but don't settle down in a false security that you may allow from the encouragement from friends who love and support you. Keep your focus on God and look to Him with confidence. Isaiah 28:29 tells us that our God is:

“wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”

He is the One you need in the midst of the storm. Isaiah said, “You (God) will keep him in perfect whose mind is stayed on You” (Isaiah 26:3). When Jesus bade Peter to step out of the boat and walk to Him on the water, he did so—but when he changed his focus by taking his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. This happens to us when we see only the storm.

- **Composure in your relationship with people**

Read Acts chapter 27 now, and read it often—especially when a storm comes. Paul was on ship headed for Rome, where he was to appear before Caesar, when a terrible storm came up. The wind and waves were so tempestuous the ship was finally broken to pieces. Neither the sun nor stars were seen for fourteen days—and all hope of survival was abandoned. Then Paul stood in the midst of the men, and with the greatest example of composure, said, “I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there will be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.” Now how could Paul be so composed and confident in the midst of such a terrible storm? Two reasons:

1. **He received a divine visitation.**

He said, “For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve” (27:23). You may not receive a visit by an angel, but you can certainly get a word from God. Paul's word came from “the angel of the Lord,” which was a theophany, an appearance of deity in human form. In fact, it was Jesus who appeared to him. You may receive this, but can receive a Word from the Lord who is the Word. And you get it through communion with God in the Scriptures. A personal word that provides us what we need in the storm.

2. He was assured of the fulfillment of God's purpose.

It was God's purpose for Paul to be brought before Caesar. It appeared that the storm would not allow that to happen, but the angel said to him, "Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar..." (vs. 24).

When Paul received his word from the Lord, he gave his word in this testimony. "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for ***I believe God...***" (vs. 25). Can there be greater composure than this in the midst of a storm? I don't think so. And this is what the man of God needs to maintain as he faces his people. They don't need "a reed shaken in the wind." They need stability in their pastor and leader—a man full of God with victory in his heart.

Dear pastor, when you allow God to so prepare you for the turbulent winds of a storm, you may not see God's purposes fulfilled in the lives of all your people, but you will experience the fulfillment of God's purposes in your life. You will not succumb to Satan's accusation and condemnation and bow your head in defeat—you will be the victor whom God will vindicate in the eyes of the people. If He does not choose to leave you there to face the ravages of the storm, He will lead you to an opportunity of His choice where His purposes will continue to be accomplished in you.

Preaching to the Needs of the People

By Rev. Jimmy Stallard, Director

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One of the greatest needs in the ministry is for the pastor of a church to preach to the needs of the people. A “need-oriented” preaching ministry does not pretend to preach to what people want to hear, but what they need to hear (2 Timothy 4:2-4). As one who has been a pastor for almost twenty-four years, I know this requires sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and a keen understanding of the people on the part of the pastor. Mixed with much prayer this combination should produce a well-balanced diet that will feed and nourish the congregation from week to week. Nothing would be more hurtful to a church than a pastor who ignores the genuine spiritual needs of the people.

But the question naturally rises – how does a pastor go about meeting the needs of his people from the pulpit? How does he approach his task? Certainly he can discern the needs through prayer. But he can also spend time with his people to get to know them. He can, thus, learn what “makes them tick.” This can give him wisdom as to where the real needs might rest. He can be a good listener and a delicate asker of questions as he keeps his people’s needs in view.

However, no matter what he learns from his people, there are so many of them. He cannot preach a message to one person or even a few. He must speak to so many. How can he address the needs of a greater multitude of people? The preacher can certainly look to his own life and needs and many pastors do preach out of their own needs. This is not wrong because all men face the same temptations and from time to time will have the same needs as the pastor

(1 Corinthians 10:13). The solution can be found in the various kinds of preaching the pastor can do.

First, he must always keep the gospel in view for there will always be unsaved people present and ***evangelistic preaching*** must be cultivated and developed. This is more than just “how to be saved sermons,” but messages on the doctrines of salvation that reach the basic needs of those who are without Christ. *Redemption* will speak to those who feel the bondage of sin and that there is no way. Others feel the heavy weight of God’s wrath upon them and the doctrine of *propitiation* helps them see that Christ, through His death on the Cross, has turned away that wrath. *Justification* speaks of God’s declaration of righteousness imputed to the believing sinner who might feel he could have never been good enough to be saved.

Second, he can use various approaches to preaching to the believers making up his

congregation. This will consume most of his time, effort, and work toward producing messages with lasting impact on those who need to hear from God through the preacher. There is **topical preaching** which will take any devotional or spiritual topic of interest that the preacher discerns can be of benefit to the people. He must be led by the Lord in choosing the topic and he must trust the Spirit to speak to people in ways that the preacher could never speak. God has committed Himself to His preachers and, as E. M. Bounds proclaimed, **men are God's methods**.

There is also **doctrinal preaching**. While related to topical preaching, doctrinal preaching focuses on the basic foundation truths of scripture. Remove basic Bible doctrine and the people will starve spiritually. Every pastor, to be faithful to his calling, must include doctrinal preaching to meet the needs of his flock (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16, 17; Proverbs 4:2; Ephesians 4:13-16; Colossians 2:3, 10). These include ideas about the person of God, creation, salvation, the church, prophecy, the Holy Spirit, the angelic and Satanic realm, and the nature of man. In order to relate to this world properly and to understand it in proper context, the people have need to know these things. This is the job of the pastor.

Another way to be sure that the needs of the people are met through preaching is through **biographical preaching**. This kind of preaching focuses on the stories found in the scriptures about the various Bible characters such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Peter, Paul, John, and many others. When a concept or idea is wrapped around a person, people will be able to identify with it. Preaching a series of messages on a certain Bible character will reveal truth to the people that they can grasp. This will meet a deep need and resonate with the people as they see that Bible truth is for them and the saints of old were men of clay with weaknesses just like we have today (James 5:17, 18). The ups and downs experienced by the congregation will be addressed as various truths about the people of the Bible are expounded by the pastor.

One major way to be sure the people's needs are met is by preaching **expositionally or expository messages**. This means preaching through various passages (usually longer than just a verse) or books of the Bible. By going through a book of the Bible verse-by-verse or section-by-section, the Bible is allowed to speak for God to the people in a profound way. The pastor must be careful in choosing a particular book of the Bible and it will be necessary for him to understand the basic theme of each book of the Bible. Each of those themes may become important in the particular timing it is preached in the pastor's church. When I preached through various sections or books of the Bible as a pastor, I was amazed at how often each week the Spirit of God took what was preached and met a vital present need of the people. But, each preacher must be led by God to preach on a book just as surely as he is led concerning each individual message.

For example, if a church has gone through a tough period of trials and difficulties,

there may be a need to preach through Philippians which has the theme of joy throughout its pages. A series of messages on Ecclesiastes, which can become discouraging out of context, might not be the best choice for such a time. Specific trials can be addressed by preaching through Job or Jeremiah/Lamentations. To get the church to focus on its need to be soul winners and evangelize the community, the Book of Acts would be a good book to expound. The list of possibilities is endless for any pastor who is serious about getting the mind of God in preaching through various books of the Bible.

Finally, there is the possibility of **seasonal preaching**. While not all preachers are comfortable with this and not all denominations focus on the calendar like some do, people seem to be more open to certain truths at various times of the years. For example, who can doubt that the message of Christmas can be very readily used to preach on the person and work of Jesus Christ and His purpose in coming into the world? Easter and the weeks leading up to it lend itself to the direct preaching of the gospel.

Other seasons that could be utilized are the patriotic season, homecoming season for the church, family seasons such as Mother's and Father's Day, and big day events and meetings. I often preached a series of messages on family topics from Mother's Day through Father's Day each year and then picked up a few weeks of patriotic themes until the Fourth of July. Whenever a revival or Bible conference was scheduled I would preach for about a month before to prepare the people for the meeting. This required focus on my part and a sensitivity to the Spirit to be led to preach on Bible characters, Bible doctrines or topics, or particular books of the Bible.

Rest assured, if the preacher is faithful to walk with the Lord and gives attention to what subjects he is preaching and how they are emphasized, he will find himself faithful to His Lord and faithful to the people of his church. He will know that they are well fed and well balanced believers able to stand against the work of the enemy. This should be the goal and mission of every Bible-believing preacher who stands behind the sacred desk of the pulpit and speaks to the people on behalf of the Lord of glory.

The Minister and Discouragement

This article is by Warren Wiersbe, and taken from his book, entitled Walking with the Giants.

"I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to." So said Charles H. Spurgeon in a sermon in 1866, and perhaps the statement shocked his listeners. Is it possible that the great Baptist preacher could go through the valley of despair? "Personally I have often passed through this dark valley," he said in an 1887 message. Perhaps one reason Spurgeon was able to bring such great comfort to his hearers was that he knew the problem of discouragement firsthand.

So did Alexander Whyte. Said his biographer, G.F. Barbour: "Resolute as was Dr. Whyte's character, he had seasons of deep depression regarding the results of his work in the pulpit or among his people...." And John Henry Jowett wrote to a friend in 1920: "You seem to imagine that I have no ups and downs, but just a level and lofty stretch of spiritual attainment with unbroken joy and equanimity. By no means! I am often perfectly wretched and everything appears most murky." The saintly Andrew Bonar, friend of Robert Murray McCheyne, wrote in his journal on 4 July 1857: "I was very melancholy, I may say, on Saturday evening. The old scenes reminded me of my ministry, and this accompanied with such regret for past failures...." In 1888, when celebrating his ministerial jubilee, Bonar wrote: "I see in the retrospect so much that was altogether imperfect and so much that was left undone." And he closed a letter to a friend: "Your affectionate, aged, frail, poor, unworthy, feeble, stupid brother and fellow servant of a glorious Master!"

It seems that depression and discouragement are occupational hazards, if not occupational diseases, of the ministry; so it would be profitable if we explored some of the causes and cures of this dangerous malady. The melancholy John Donne called despair "the damp of hell," and surely that it is.

One of the best discussions of ministerial discouragement is in Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students*, "The Minister's Fainting Fits." A more modern discussion is chapter 4 of J. Oswald Sanders' *A Spiritual Clinic*, "Despondency: Its Cause and Cure." Chapter 14 of *A Minister's Obstacles*, by Ralph Turnbull, deals with "The Dagnet of Discouragement." I highly recommend all three to you, not as substitutes for your Bible (which, after all, is the best medicine for a broken heart), but rather as encouraging signposts along the way. I find it helpful to enter into the "fellowship of sufferings" with my ministerial brethren; it does my soul, good!

Sometimes the reason for discouragement is physical: too much study ("a weariness of the flesh"), too many meetings and late hours, pressures that develop into tensions, unwise eating, and lack of rest and relaxation. The average church member has no idea of the physical price that a faithful pastor pays to do God's work.. Perhaps this was part of Elijah's problem when he asked to die (I Kings 19): he was just overtaxed and underfed! God let him sleep, fed him, and returned him to his ministry a new man. "Rest time is not waste time," said Spurgeon. "It is economy to get fresh strength." Yet the average pastor feels guilty if he is "doing nothing" instead of investing leisure time for future ministry. For the busy pastor,

recreation cannot be "doing nothing." Rather, it must be doing something different, finding a change of pace or change of scenery, in order to come back to the old job with new enthusiasm. After all, Jesus told His disciples, "Come ye apart rest awhile"; and as Vance Havner reminded us, "If we do not come apart and rest, we may just come apart!"

But I feel that Elijah's discouragement was caused by something more than a tired body and an empty stomach: *Elijah was sure that he had failed. "I am no better than my fathers!"* The pastor, if he is dedicated at all, is a man of ideals; he wants to achieve for the glory of God. Yet, no matter how hard he prays and works, it seems that his goals forever elude him. On the forty-seventh anniversary of his ordination, Bonar wrote, "My ministry has appeared to me to be wanting in so many ways, that I can only say of it, *indescribably inadequate.*" On the tenth anniversary of his marvelous ministry at London's Westminster Chapel, G. Campbell Morgan astounded his congregation by telling them he considered himself a failure! "During these ten years, I have known more of visions fading into mirages, of purposes failing of fulfillment, of things of strength crumbling away in weakness than ever in my life before," he said. Yet he had rescued his church from almost certain failure and had made it the focal point for evangelical Bible study in the entire English-speaking world! In all fairness to Morgan, I must add that a typhoid infection was already at work in his system. It laid him low for the next four months, almost taking his life.

The pastor is an idealist: he aims high and does not always reach his goal. Add to this the fact that he is usually the subject of criticism, and it is not difficult to see the ease with which discouragement can capture even a man of God. When a pastor decides that he has failed, Satan has found an opening; and you can be sure that the enemy will take advantage of it. Of course the answer to the problem is not for us to lower our standards or bury our ideals, but to learn to recognize our own moods and feelings and reckon with them.

"We are apt to become men of moods," Phillips Brooks said in his *Lectures on Preaching*, "thinking we cannot work unless we feel like it.... And so the first business of the preacher is to conquer the tyranny of his moods, and to be always ready for his work. It can be done." We must beware of self-pity, the attitude that so quickly saps our strength and poisons our outlook. The French mystic Francois Fenelon reminded us, "Discouragement serves no possible purpose; it is simply the despair of wounded self-love." His book *Christian Perfection* is a helpful guide for the pastor's "interior life," particularly the chapters entitled "Not to Be Discouraged by Faults" and "Helps in Dissipation and Sadness." Fenelon is a mystic, but he has a practical turn to his writing that is unique and helpful. Our feelings of failure, like Elijah's, can drive us deep into despair, so we must learn to recognize and control them. My favorite preacher, George H. Morrison, said something in one of his sermons that has encouraged me when I have felt my work vain. He said: "Men who do their best always do more, though they be haunted by the sense of failure. Be good and true; be patient; be undaunted. Leave your usefulness to God to estimate. He will see to it that you do not live in vain."

God rarely permits His servants to see all the good they are doing, so we must continue to "sow beside all waters" knowing that "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." If we are to minister effectively, we must experience both the mountain tops and the valleys, and we cannot have mountains without valleys. Brooks expressed it this way in his interesting lectures, *The Influence of Jesus*: "To be a true minister to men is always to accept new

happiness and new distress, both of them forever deepening and entering into closer and more inseparable union with each other the more profound and spiritual the ministry becomes. The man who gives himself to other men can never be a wholly sad man; but no more can he be a man of unclouded gladness."

Mentioning Brooks reminds me of one simple device the pastor can use to brighten up his discouraging days. Brooks kept a few personal letters that he had received from people who had been helped by his ministry and who had been kind enough to write and tell him. One such letter was from an obscure Boston tailor, and when Bishop Brooks received it, it must have given him great joy and new strength. "I am a tailor in a little shop near your church," the man wrote, "and whenever I have the opportunity I always go to hear you preach. Each time I hear you preach I seem to forget all about you, for you make me think of God." Letters of appreciation (no matter how rare they may be!) are worth keeping and reading again, not to inflate the ego but to encourage the heart. By the same token the pastor ought to remember to write those who have helped him; they need encouragement too. A minister friend of mine writes five such letters each Thanksgiving, to the five people who that previous year were a special blessing to him. "Give and it shall be given unto you...."

If Elijah was discouraged because he felt that he had failed God, then Moses was discouraged because he felt God had failed him! And perhaps we can put Jonah in the same category, although Jonah's discouragement obviously grew out of his rebellion against God's will. Moses was in the will of God, ministering to the people, and yet they were complaining so much that the great prophet wanted to die (Num. 11). Nothing depresses the pastor like criticism when he knows he is doing, with God's help, his best. If a man is thin-skinned and sensitive, he had better avoid the ministry. David was right when he said, "Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are *his* mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man" (1 Chronicles 21:13). Criticism is valuable when a brother "speaks the truth in love," but malicious criticism (usually motivated by jealousy or some other sinful attitude) can be a thorn in the preacher's flesh. If we are not successful in our work, somebody will criticize us; and if we are successful, somebody will criticize us!

Few preachers have experienced the kind of criticism that Spurgeon did when he began his ministry in London. A steady stream of magazine articles and pamphlets examined the young preacher's character, words, works, and motives, and most of them were anything but sympathetic. More than one writer expressed doubts that Spurgeon was even converted! His sermons were called "trashy," and he was compared to a rocket that would climb high and then suddenly drop out of sight! "What is he doing?" one writer asked. "Whose servant is he? What proof does he give that, instrumentally, his is a heart-searching, a Christ-exalting, a truth-unfolding, a sinner-converting, a church-feeding, a soul-saving ministry?" Reading that statement over a hundred years after it was published, we feel like laughing out loud! The writer was Rev. Charles Waters Banks. Have you ever heard of him?

At first this criticism deeply hurt Spurgeon, but then the Lord gave him peace and victory. Hearing slanderous reports of his character and ministry week after week could have led him into defeat; but he fell to his knees and prayed, "Master, I will not keep back even my character for Thee. If I must lose that, too, then let it go; it is the dearest thing I have, but it shall go, if, like my Master, they shall say I have a devil, and am mad, or, like Him, I am a drunken man and a wine-bibber."

Mrs. Spurgeon, knowing the trials her husband was going through, prepared a wall-motto to hang in their room, with Matthew 5:11-12 as the text. The Word of God did its work, and the preacher won the battle. Luther was right when he said that "the love of a woman" is a great help in days of discouragement; and blessed is that pastor's wife who knows when her husband needs that extra touch of love and understanding. (Luther's two other suggestions for overcoming despair are to exercise "faith in Christ, and get downright angry!")

Moses was wise enough to take his discouragement to the Lord, and the Lord solved the problem. In the final analysis, discouragement is a spiritual problem and can only be fought with spiritual weapons-the Word of God, prayer, Christian fellowship, and ministry. I think it was John Watson who advised the discouraged preacher to get busy if he would overcome his melancholy. Perhaps Watson borrowed the idea from John Keble, who advised: "When you find yourself overpowered as it were by melancholy, the best way is to go out and do something kind to somebody or other."

It does the pastor good to be reminded occasionally that he is privileged to share a high and holy calling. "Let us rejoice with one another," Brooks told his Yale audience, "that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and happiest and made us preachers of His Truth."

I find that reading again the biography of some great preacher or reading some godly preacher's sermons will usually lift the clouds and get me started again. It does me good to be reminded that the ministry is a wonderful calling, in spite of its dangers and discouragements. If a man does not love the ministry, he must seek some other vocation. Or, if a man in the ministry is too self-centered, he had better seek spiritual help; it is usually the self-centered pastor who suffers from chronic depression. "Do not be a spy on yourself," counseled Henry Ward Beecher. A constant spiritual autopsy can leave one bleeding and dying.

The pastor must have a confidant to whom he can turn in the hour of battle. Few church members ever ask, "Who is my pastor's pastor?" To be sure, as Psalm 23:1 affirms, "The Lord is my Pastor." But often the Lord uses another under-shepherd to help us unburden our hearts and regain our vision of the ministry. The right kind of friend can understand when we think nobody can, so cultivate among your brethren that kind of friendship.

Discouragement is an enemy we must learn to expect, face honestly, and fight with all our strength. No man can preach good news effectively if he himself is discouraged. We must try to understand the causes of our despair and, above all else, never yield to the expensive luxury of self-pity. The "I-only-am-left" complex can only lead to defeat. There are yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. It would be nice if one of them would step out and stand by our side, but until then, let us dare to believe God's Word and keep on going. "Never think of giving up preaching!", Alexander Whyte wrote to a Methodist pastor friend. "The angels around the throne envy you your great work.... Go on and grow in grace and power as a gospel preacher."

Above all else, let us live and labor for the eyes of God, not of men. If appreciation should come, be thankful for it; but if it does not come, be faithful just the same. Resign in a dark hour of discouragement and you will regret it when the sun comes out again. The preacher who said that "it came to pass" was his favorite statement in the Bible was not good at hermeneutics, but he certainly had common sense. The cloud that hovers over us today will be gone tomorrow, and it only covers the sun-it does not put it out.

These are discouraging days for our people, so let us as pastors magnify the ministry of encouragement. Let each of us be a Barnabas—a "Son of Encouragement." Let us ask the Lord to give us an encouraging attitude in our own hearts and encouraging messages from the Word. By encouraging others, we ourselves will be encouraged, and our work will prosper to the glory of God.

The Preacher's Perils

The faithful pastor will guard against these perils, lest his ministry suffers:

Hygiene	Pride	Sexual lust	Lack of passion Sloppy Dress Temper	Poor
	Procrastination,	Rudeness	Envy	
	Lack of preparation	Laziness	Prayerlessness	
Negligence	Lack of compassion	Mediocrity		Dishonesty
praise		Jealousy	Becoming	Love of
Selfishness	Presumption		stale	
Impatience	Bitterness		Love of	money

Vita-C's for Effective Preaching

The following are seven things that should describe the pastor's preaching. He should preach:

1. With **Conviction** – Preach like you believe what you preach,
2. With **Clarity** – Make the way of salvation clear,
3. With **Confidence** – As Paul who said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel....”
4. With **Courage** – As Paul who said, “I am determined to know....”
5. With **Compassion** – Don't “traffic in unfelt truth.” – Vance Havner
6. With **Certainty** – “I know whom I have believed.”
7. With **Credibility** – Be sure of the facts.

Perspectives for Preaching

The preaching of a faithful pastor should have balance. He should maintain a broad spectrum that includes five categories of biblical truth. As you commune with God in the Word and prayer for your people, the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth as Jesus promised in John 16:13.

Paul wrote: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of god” (Acts 20:27).

When leaving his Ephesian friends, he thought he would never see them again, but he was leaving with a heart of satisfaction and a clear conscience because of his faithfulness to proclaim the whole counsel of God. William MacDonald wrote, “He had not only instructed them in the fundamentals of the gospel, but in all the truths that were vital for godly living.”

Looking back on your pulpit ministry can you say that you have preached the whole counsel of God? Is your conscience clear and your heart satisfied? Looking forward to the end of your present pastorate and even to the end of your preaching ministry, I'm sure you would desire with all your heart to be fulfilled by having preached according to the pattern of

Paul.

Now regardless of your style of preaching, expositoryly, topically, etc. as a good pastor you should cover the biblical spectrum that includes the whole counsel of God. One may ask, "What is the whole counsel?" We can find the answer to this question by examining the epistles of the New Testament. What did those writers declare? They proclaimed the Word of the true and living God from five major perspectives:

1. Salvation

Since "the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not" it is imperative that salvation be preached again and again. We should never take for granted that the unsaved know what the gospel is. I have heard preachers say, "Now you know what to do, don't put it off." The fact is, they don't know until you tell them.

As you preach the doctrines of salvation, the Holy Spirit uses that truth to condition the mind and heart of the sinner to receive the truth. He convicts the sinner of his lostness, causing him to see his terrible plight without God. He causes the sinner to focus on the mercy of God and draws him to Jesus who said, "No man comes unto me except My Father in Heaven draw him."

And dear pastor friend, "Don't yield to the false idea that when you preach salvation, your people go lacking. No, the truths of salvation are good news to the saints as well. They need to be confirmed and strengthened in their faith. They need to be reminded again and again that..."

The Blood makes you Safe,

The Word makes you Sure.

2. Consecration (Christian Growth)

Salvation brings the sinner into a relationship with God, but consecration brings into fellowship with God. The Christian must be encouraged again and again that salvation brings him into the family of God and makes him a child of God, but consecration makes him an obedient child. The child of God is commanded to totally surrender himself to God according to Romans 12:1-2.

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Now the Christian must understand that without consecration, there can be no sanctification. The flesh, or the old nature, cannot be conformed to the image of God's Son. There is no Christian growth in a life that is dominated by the flesh. You must preach consecration to God again and again throughout your ministry.

3. Restoration

The world is a battlefield covered over with the wrecks of human lives. They don't need condemnation—they need restoration. Many of them are unsaved who have been led to believe there is no better life for them. That is Satan's lie to them that must be refuted again and again from the pulpit. To hear that God loves them, in spite of their sin, and Jesus died and shed His blood to save them is good news to their ears. This truth can be used of the Holy Spirit to break their cold hard hearts and cause them to become receptive to the gospel.

Also, there are many Christians among the wrecks on the battlefield of life. They, too, need to hear the good news that, "there is forgiveness with God." Satan condemns them also. He locks them up in a cage of accusation with their guilt from failure. Well, you must unlock that cage with the truths of forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Tell them they can have the dawn of a new day in their lives—and can be restored to fellowship with the Lord. Preach the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus again and again.

4. Glorification

Oh, what joy there is in proclaiming the second coming of Christ, the redemption and glorification of the body and the glories of Heaven. This is the believer's blessed hope. And they need to hear it again and again. God's people are beat down, so to speak. This world has a wearing and tarring effect on them. This world offers only ashes and sawdust, but they need to know where the real values are. They are all worn out and pressed down, but the outward and upward look of expectancy is the one they should have. However, they have such a short memory until they need to be reminded again and again that Jesus is coming again, broken bodies, diseased and racked with pain, tears and sorrows will all pass away. They need to hear it from your pulpit.

5. Retribution

Finally, although it is not a message of comfort, people need to hear the Word of warning. First, the unsaved must hear the consequences of their unbelief in the rejection of God's offer of salvation. They need to hear that there is a Hell to shun and a Heaven to gain.

Second, the saints need to hear that, "Whom the Lord loves He chastens and corrects." They need to hear the stern, yet comforting, message that God's chastening is for their own good because it yields the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" and makes them partakers of God's holiness according to Hebrews chapter 12:6-11.

Now the whole counsel of God includes much more, but these are the basic elements of truth that must be woven into the fabric of your pulpit ministry over the time of your pastorate. Don't shun to preach it.
