

The Perils of Preaching

Jer 20:1-18

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Intro: *Do we think that only “the preacher” will endure hardship for his work?*

- A. Many seem to think so: **2 Tim 2:3**
- B. The mistake is in assuming that “the preacher” is THE preacher!
 - 1. Preacher’s job (along with elders) is to prepare each member for service.
 - a. **Eph 4:11-12**
 - 2. In reality, we are ALL preachers!
 - a. **2 Cor 4:1-3; 5:18-20**
 - 3. We preach by example, by attitude, but mostly we preach by mouth.
- C. God reminds in His word that, though we are standing for truth and right, we can expect opposition.
 - 1. The many prophets, apostles, and preachers whose lives are attested to in the Bible are a testimony to the fact that no matter how right the message, trouble will accompany it.
 - a. **2 Cor 7:5**
 - 2. John Wesley used to ask his young men whom he had sent out to preach on probation two questions: "Has any one been converted?" and "Did any one get mad?" If the answer was "No," he told them he did not think the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel, and sent them about their business. When the Holy Ghost convicts of sin, people are either converted or they don't like it, and get mad.
- D. Jeremiah’s story is not unlike any faithful Christian’s:
 - 1. He called Israel to repentance for their disobedience
 - 2. Called to speak truth, even though it’s unwelcome
 - 3. What are some of the perils of preaching?

I. Confrontation From Without – vv 1-2

- A. He was ostracized, beaten, scourged, thrown into prison, and even a muddy cistern because of his message.
 - A. All because he knew his beloved country was on a downward slide.
 - B. He dealt with arrogant leaders and rebellious people because he loved them!
- B. No doubt, God never promises us a life free from trouble
 - A. **2 Tim 3:12**
 - 1. If living godly gets you persecuted, what do you think preaching against ungodliness will get you?
 - 2. Sometimes , if they can’t attack the message, the only response from the ungodly is to attack the messenger!
 - B. But we *can* know we’re in good company:
 - 1. **Matt 5:10-12**
 - 2. Noah was surely ridiculed but was a preacher of righteousness
 - 3. Joshua & Caleb must have felt utterly alone as everyone else sided with the other 10 spies
 - 4. Amos was told to go back where he came from!
 - 5. Someone may tell *you* to shut up! Will you?
- C. Don’t be surprised; expect it and learn how to deal with it
 - A. **1 Pet 4:12-16**
 - B. Sometimes you must stand alone, but stand you must!

II. Confusion/Doubts Within – vv 7-8, 10, 14-18

- A. There is no discouragement like that which comes from utter contempt and rejection.
 - A. We can’t deny our feelings - Insults hurt, rejection is painful.
- B. There isn’t a saint who’s lived who hasn’t struggled
 - A. **2 Cor 11:23-29**
 - B. Sometimes those inward struggles can lead to doubt:
 - 1. “Give me the benefit of your convictions, if you have any; but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own.”
– Goethe.
 - C. Who hasn’t doubted his own effectiveness?

- C. One of Satan's most effective ploys is discouragement.
 - A. The hardness of the way, the difficulty of the task, the prosperity of the wicked, the delay of our own desires make us wonder if perhaps we've responded to the wrong call.
 - B. DON'T fall for it! Resist the devil & he'll flee!
- D. Discouragement can give way to Encouragement; Doubt can give way to Conviction.
 - A. **2 Cor 4:7-11**
 - B. God can use you even in your deepest, darkest funk!
 - 1. **2 Cor 12:9-10**
 - C. A discouraged church member asked the preacher how to start a revival. He replied, "Go home, lock yourself in your room, and kneel down in the middle of your floor. Draw a chalk mark all around yourself and ask God to start the revival inside that chalk mark. When He has answered your prayer, the revival will be on."

III. Relief Only Comes From Proclaiming – vv 9, 11-13

- A. Jeremiah knew he couldn't keep it in.
 - A. There is a word used by the prophets often translated "oracle" which also means "burden." It is as though the message given by God is a weight upon the prophet that he can only relieve by proclaiming the message.
 - B. As burdensome as this "oracle" was, and as utterly lonely as Jeremiah must have felt as God's preacher, he HAD to preach!
 - 1. When he did, he felt God's presence with him as a "dread champion."
- B. In the same way, God's people have always felt compelled to SPEAK UP.
 - A. **Psalm 39:2-3; Acts 4:19-20; 1 Cor 9:16-17**
 - B. William Lloyd Garrison, who wrote the anti-slavery paper called the Abolitionist and was probably the leader in that cause, was so hot to get rid of the slavery cancer upon our society that he angered many, many people. One of his friends, Samuel May, said one day to him, and I quote, "Oh, my friend, do try to moderate your indignation and keep more cool, why you're all on fire." To which Garrison replied, "My friend, I have need to be all on fire for I have mountains of ice around me to melt." May God's word be as a burning fire in our hearts so that we can melt the mountains of ice around us!

Conc: We cannot worry about who we might offend or that they may oppose us! God has given each of us an oracle, a *burden*, the gospel and we cannot BUT speak!

- A. **Rom 1:16**
- B. Besides, God will vindicate us in His way:
 - 1. **1 Pet 2:11-12; 2 Thess 1:6-8**
- C. Your responsibility is not whether someone will respond to the message, that's *their* decision. Your job is to make sure they hear the truth so they can make up their own mind.
- D. **INV**