

Preachers

by Bill Crews

I speak as a preacher, and as the son of a preacher. This should at least lend itself to my being better qualified and to my having a better perspective in regard to the above subject. From the standpoint of reading about the experiences of past preachers in the 19th and 20th centuries, of knowing about some of my father's own experiences, of observing many preachers of both his acquaintance and mine, and of having some experiences of my own, I should know something about the following.

Remember that all preachers are still mere men, subject to the same temptations, weaknesses, shortcomings, and pitfalls of other men. They bring their personalities, characters, qualifications, and backgrounds with them into their work as preachers. Some change very little and make little progress. Others grow and improve by leaps and bounds. A few go backwards.

I would not advocate paying a preacher so little that he and his family are always having to struggle and suffer because of it. But a few are paid too much; they thrive and have it easy; they think they can command it, and they demand it. I can remember when preachers in general did not and could not dress as well as most men in the church -- and that was not good. Then I remember a time arriving when many of them were better dressed than most men in the church -- and that was no better. When a preacher becomes a wearer of expensive suits, a fashion plate, a style show; when more attention is attracted to what he is going to be wearing next than to what he is going to be preaching next; he has gone too far. What a thing to be remembered for as a preacher!

When a preacher begins to work at "getting his name before the brethren," trying to impress and make an impression upon brethren and churches, being scheduled for lots of meetings, working only with big churches or moving only if he can "better himself," he's already headed in the wrong direction and is in the wrong line of work. When a young preacher feels he must write lots of articles in "brotherhood papers" to promote himself, or feels he must "get in with" or "fasten himself on the coat tails of" a few, well-known preachers, he has lost sight of the Master he should be serving and the goals he should be striving for.

When any preacher goes out of his way to cultivate the special friendship of wealthy brethren -- usually because of what they can do for him, while ignoring, passing over and having no time for brethren of little means, no matter how spiritually strong, wise and rich, he has lost sight of his mission as a preacher and has his priorities all mixed-up. It not only doesn't look right; it isn't right!

Let no brother in Christ aspire to be a preacher unless (1) he intends to please God and not men (Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4), (2) he resolves to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27), (3) he strives to be a living sermon, an example of what it means to be a Christian (1 Tim.4:12; Acts20:35), (4) he will show no respect of persons (Gal. 2:6; 1 Tim. 5:21; Jude 16), (5) he is willing to receive, as well as give correction (Prov. 9:8-9; 12:1), (6) he intends to be a diligent student of the word of God as long as he lives (Ps. 1:1-2; 1 Tim. 4:13-16), (7) he is willing to suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

Let me close this piece on a bright note. Some of the finest men and greatest Christians I have ever known were and are among the preachers I have known and know. I speak of men whose reputation is spotless, men of great character and good influence, humble and courageous, men of great heart, men who love the Lord, His truth, and the souls of people, men who have made great sacrifices and are willing to sacrifice themselves to please the Lord and to do His will.

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