

"Bring Something To Put It In!"

by Wayne Goff

Growing up as a preacher's son, my father's preaching was extremely formative to me. He was the only preacher I heard on a regular basis for the first eighteen years of my life. Fortunately, my father has very unique ways of expressing a truth and many of them I have never forgotten.

One such saying was "If you want to get anything out of a sermon, then you better bring something to put it in!"

As a child, I imagined people carrying buckets to church so that they could get something out of the sermon. Perhaps that was the graphic visual, but I had not yet gotten the point. You see, my father, like all preachers, knew the frustration of working hard to prepare a sermon only to see it fall on a few too many deaf ears. When he really thought his sermon was not getting through, he would stop and utter this admonition.

Getting Something Out Of A Sermon?

You see, dear reader, if a Christian does not study his Bible, and particularly the New Testament, then he doesn't have much of a foundation upon which to build his own spiritual understanding. Consequently, when a sermon is preached, its truth might not be appreciated because it is not properly understood. Spiritual maturity is not gained by years but by experience -- "reason of use" (Heb. 5:14). The more one studies God's Word, the more knowledge and understanding he will have. It's just that simple, and there's no shortcut available to make it easier.

Now consider that many sermons prepared by gospel preachers contain hours of study and preparation. I know now from experience that sermons don't "grow on a grape vine." The hours of study, and the years of hard work represented by a studious preacher, yield more fruit as the years go by. The preacher has a mind full of God's Word into which he can "tap" to prepare and present his lessons. Preachers love to go to a gospel meeting and hear experienced, knowledgeable preachers. Why? Because they are challenging and insightful as we listen to them. A preacher can tell pretty quickly how hard the preacher worked on the lesson he is hearing. His years of experience make this possible. The more advanced in knowledge the preacher is, the more the listening preacher or member will gain. It's a matter of having something to put it in! We call that kind of a preacher, a "preacher's preacher."

Now you don't have to be a preacher to appreciate and understand God's Word deeply. But you do have to put in hours of study! The same thing is true in any field of endeavor. The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11), and so can you.

Frequently you will hear someone say after a sermon, "I just didn't get anything out of it!" Well friend, that was because you didn't bring anything to put it in!

While living in Texas one preacher was told that his sermons were too much above his audience. His reply was simply, "Then get your heads up!" This particular preacher may indeed have used an uncommon vocabulary that was difficult to follow, but all of us could use a little head raising when it comes to improving our knowledge of the Bible.

Do you like to play Bible Trivia? If so, then chances are you're an experienced Bible student. If you don't like to play that game, then that might be a suggestion to start studying a little bit more. "But I don't like to study!" you say? Then you will have to take up that one with the Lord! God is the One Who decided that those who would be saved are the ones who would be taught! Jesus said "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me." John 6:45

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