

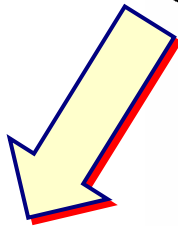
What are you preaching?

- **Pride**
- **Power**
- **Judgment**

What are its effects?



on others?



- ☠ *Discouragement*
- ☠ *Division*
- ☠ *Domination*
- ☠ *Destruction*

...Or...

- ✚ *Encouragement*
- ✚ *Unity*
- ✚ *Freedom*
- ✚ *Growth*

Are your words leading people closer to Christ, or are they pushing them away?
Where are your words leading you?

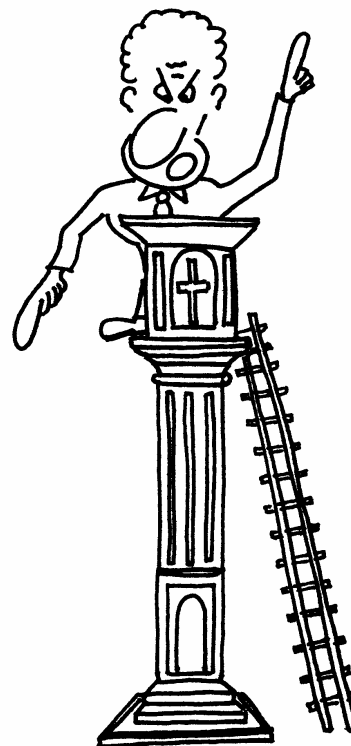
Life or death? It's your choice!



It's your tongue!

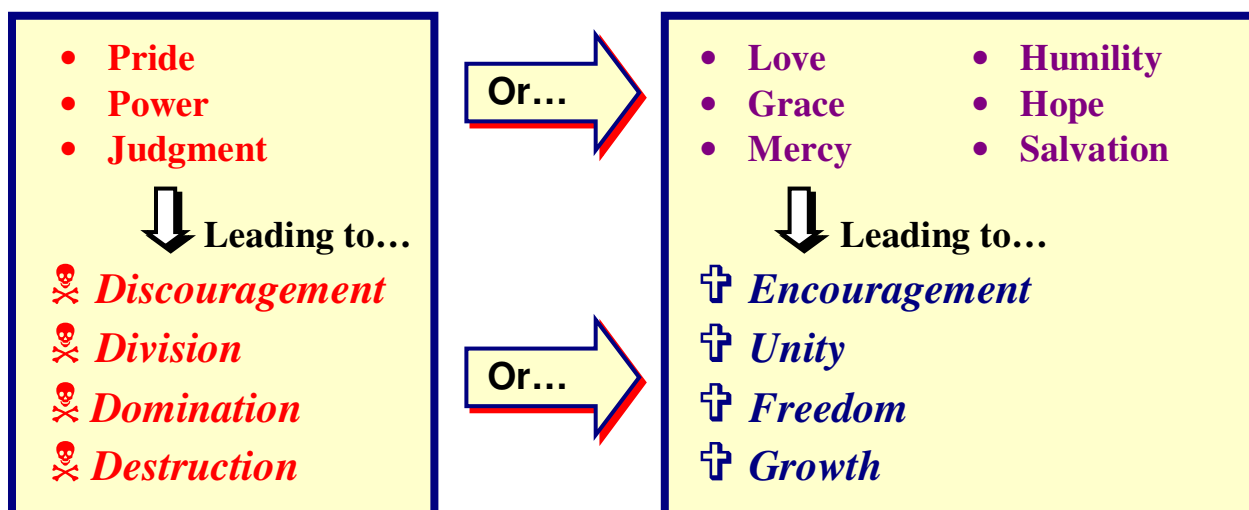
The Pulpit

The pulpit is the most influential place you will ever occupy. It is the point of contact between God's Word and God's people. It is a place that is literally surrounded by its audience's expectations. People give more credence to what is said from the pulpit than from any other place. At any given time, your listeners will have great varieties of needs. Some will be desperately seeking a miracle. Others will be emotionally damaged, living without hope, but still seeking hope. There will be those riding the winds of success, who seek to set their sails even more accurately into those winds. And... there will be people in total ignorance of their need for Christ (until you open your mouth). They are all listening to you!



What you preach is a great deal more than the words that come from your mouth. Your listeners will first judge you from the nonverbal ways you communicate with them. They will form quick opinions about you, and these will drive their decisions to receive or reject your words. You will have a very limited window of time to communicate your attitudes. As you begin to speak, your listeners will latch onto the tone of your voice and take careful notice of the look in your eyes. If you show anger, insecurity, judgment, aloofness or the like, they will withdraw their approval and become distant. You will be speaking and nobody will be listening.

How does being in the pulpit affect your message? Is it...?



What you preach is really a combination of who you present yourself to be, and how you present the words that are in your heart. There are a number of questions that you ought to ask yourself. Start with the following three.

- ? Will my listeners perceive me as a prideful, power seeking and judgmental person? If so, what will the effects of my words be upon them? What would the long-term effects of this kind of preaching be upon me?
- ? Will my listeners perceive me as a person of love and mercy? Will they find me humbly communicating grace to them? Is there always a message of hope and salvation in my presentation of both myself and my words?
- ? Will anyone see Jesus, and not the preacher, when I fill the pulpit? Do I consistently hide behind the cross? Who is the center of attention when I preach? This last question needs constantly to be every preacher's companion!

Look again at the two lists (☠ and ☩) on the preceding page. Think about what the terms on those lists really mean for your listeners and for yourself. Do you see how crucial your charge to preach is? Do you see the potential for good and evil? Life or death...

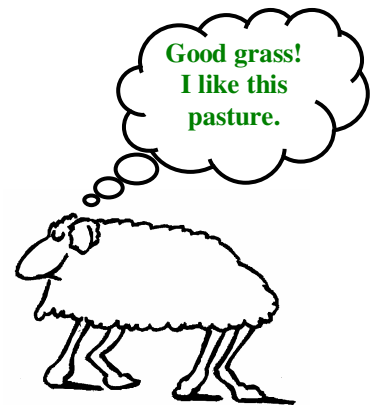
It's your choice. It's your voice!



Discouragement
Division
Domination
Destruction

Or...

Encouragement
Unity
Freedom
Growth



Are your words leading people closer to Christ, or are they pushing them away?

And... where are your words leading you?

You will eat the same meal that you serve to others!

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love to talk will have to eat their own words.”

(Proverbs 18:21 God's Word Translation)

What are they hearing?

 1 Corinthians 1:23 "We preach Christ crucified."

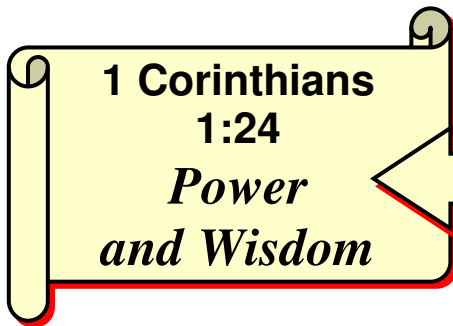
What is the effect?



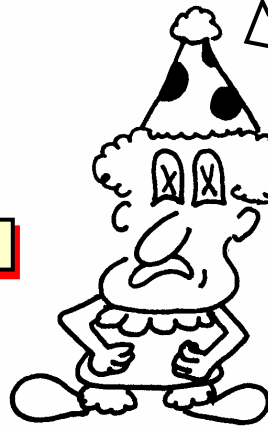
Ouch!



and



or



Ridiculous!



Blinded eyes

Not just any power...
but the power of GOD!



 1 Corinthians 1:30

- Righteousness
- Sanctification
- Redemption

 2 Corinthians 5:17

 Romans 12:2

Will they get it?



Preach with no other focus than Jesus Christ! He is the central Character of the Bible.

Christ, alone, is the answer. Therefore, your sermon must turn its focus to Him. Otherwise, it simply will become nothing more than interesting words.

Good teaching that lacks eternal relevance has very little value. In the view of eternity, a sermon without Christ is like the sound of one hand clapping. It's simply effort wasted and unknowable.

Preach for effect! Every sermon must be a challenge to its listeners. Each time we take the Word and open our mouths, we exercise the power to move people. Our words become the cause of one effect or another in the lives of our hearers.

What do we preach?

"but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,"
(1 Corinthians 1:23 NKJV)

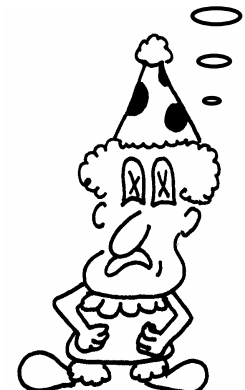


It has been said, "Keep the main thing the main thing." When we step into the pulpit, nothing is more critical. Your sermons will vary widely in their subject matter. One thing, however, must never vary - the presence of **the Scarlet Thread of Redemption**, woven into your words, every time you speak!

Reactions to your preaching will vary. Some will recoil from words of the Cross. They will see your message as a stumbling block. Others will ridicule those same words. They will see them as foolishness.



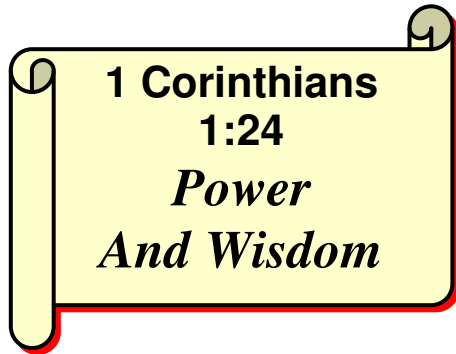
There are only two contexts within which your words will work: [1] receptivity (drawing some to God), or [2] rejection (pushing others away). Words preached either thaw the coldness of hardened hearts, or solidify the rebellion of those already hardened (pushing them beyond softening or warmth). Therefore, the words you preach will be either fuel for life, or a decree of the finality of eternal judgment!



? Can you see that harsh words might cause people to stumble, remaining blind to the truth – a sure precursor to utter disaster? Speak with care! Speak the truth in love! Let your words be salt and light.

Power and Wisdom

Ask yourself these questions.



? What are the effects on my hearers when my words speak divinely inspired power and wisdom from the pulpit?

? What are the effects on me, from watching others receive my words... and from hearing my own words, as I speak them?

What goals should I set for my preaching?

Fill in the chart, below. Take five goals and apply both theological concepts and practical subject matter to them that would help you (and your hearers) achieve them.

Goal	Biblical Principle	Practical Subject Matter
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Preaching Points

1. Preach a “go ahead” message.

- Emphasize a forward focus. Your listeners are not there to learn how to stay stuck in their troubles!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV)

- ? What are the worst offenders that blind a congregation to life-changing truth... offenders that you, as a preacher, have some control over?

2. Speak words of change.

- Transformation only comes to your hearers when they see and accept their need to change.

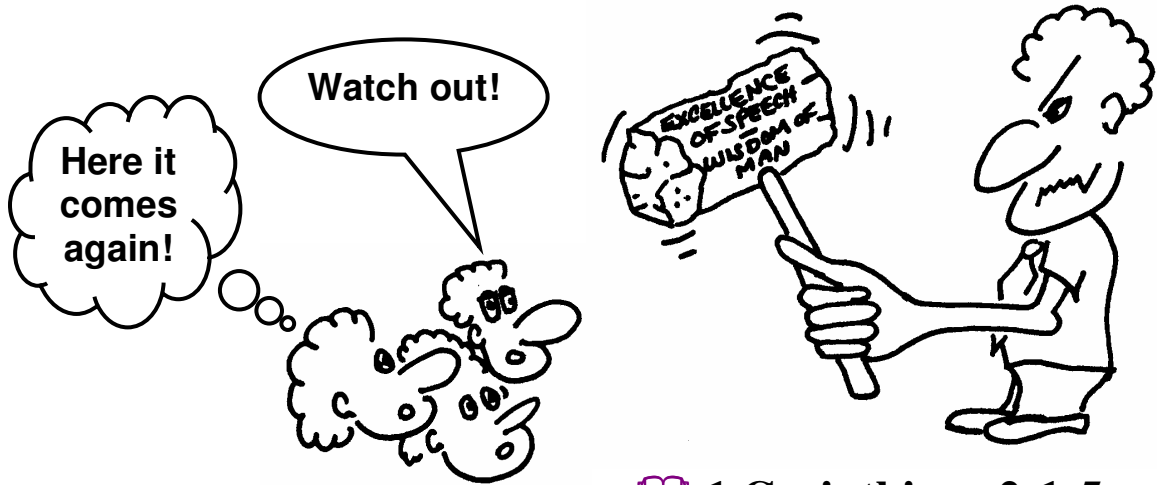
“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2 NKJV)

- ? What creative ways can you think of to get your hearers to immerse themselves in your preaching points after you have left the pulpit?

- ? How could you change your typical sermon format to make it a more capturing, penetrating and inclusive presentation for your hearers?



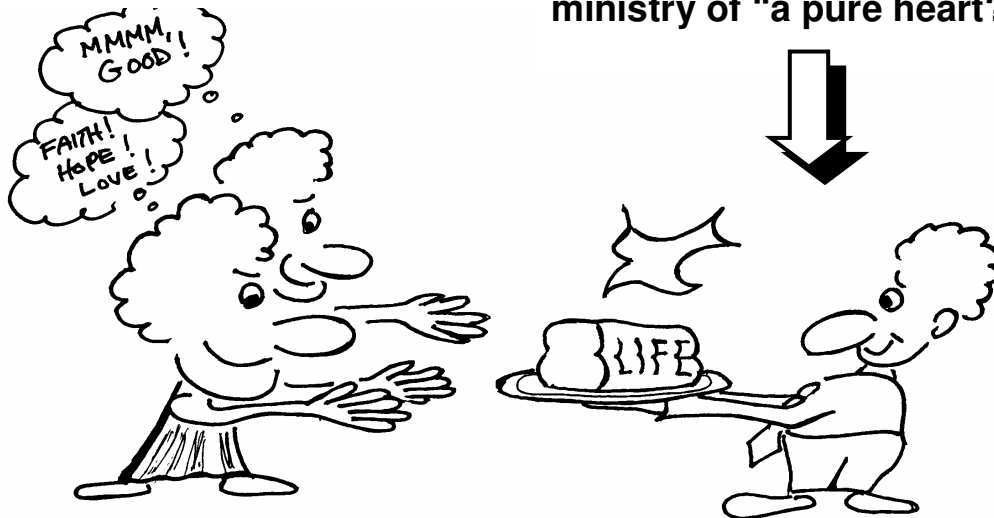
How are they affected by your words?



📖 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

📖 Luke 6:45

Do you have a preaching ministry of "excellent speech," or is yours a ministry of "a pure heart?"



Watch your heart!
Watch your mouth!
Watch your sheep!



📖 2 Timothy 3:10-17

"...equipped for?"

📖 2 Timothy 2:1

"be strong in grace..."

📖 1 Corinthians 13:8

"Love never fails."

Preaching for Effect

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. {2} For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. {3} I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. {4} And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, {5} that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV)

Priorities

- **Knowing only one thing (the main thing) – Christ and His gift to us**
- **Speaking in demonstration of the Spirit – An unwavering expectation that your words will be bathed in the anointing of the Holy Spirit**
- **Speaking in demonstration of His power – An undeniable anticipation of the supernatural intervention of God as you speak**
- **Focusing the listeners’ faith in the proper direction**

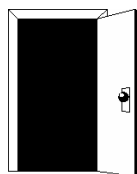
“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45 NKJV)

In His epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul shows us some common pitfalls and key priorities of preaching. Here they are.

☠ Pitfalls ☠

1. Excellence of speech

The word “excellence” implies a desire to have prominence among the speaker’s audience. A desire for prominence is a door to downfall.



“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18)

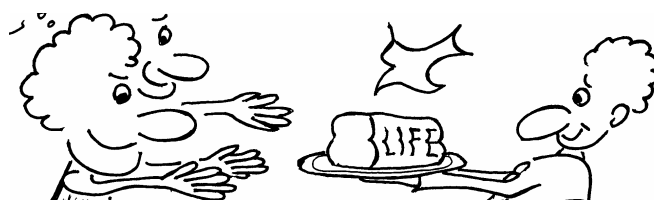
2. Human wisdom

The word “wisdom” implies a lower form of wisdom than a preacher should operate in. It is an ill-fated wisdom, devoid of power.

❓ **What will you serve your listeners? Will you bring down the hammer...**



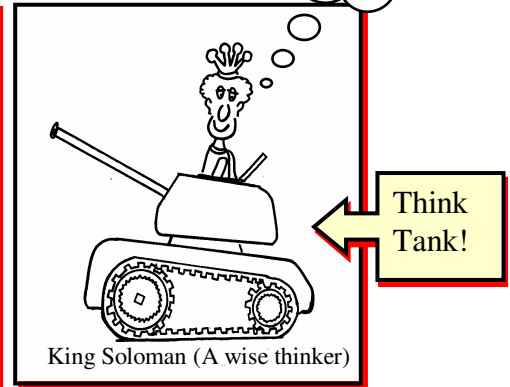
Or... will you open your heart?



Who's In the Old Think Tank?

(Who's on the throne of your mind?)

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. {15} But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. {16} For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:14-16 NKJV)



The mind of the LORD is a mysterious thing. It is far beyond our natural comprehension. However, Jesus has given us His word and His Spirit, so we can think like He thinks. As preachers, we ought to strive to preach with the mind of Christ! Our thinking is influenced by many factors. One critical ingredient to the formation of our thought patterns is the input of our teachers. It has been said that we become like those who teach us. It follows that we ought to be very cautious about who we allow to fill our think tanks and even more cautious about what they fill them with.

- ? **How well do you discern the secondary sources of your preaching material? Are they spiritually on track, based on, and in agreement with the Bible?**
- ? **How well do you discern the people behind the material you ingest? Are they spiritually on track? It has been said that we should be careful about who we allow to lay hands on us to pray. How much more should we scrutinize those who want to lay hold of our minds?**
- ? **Is there a tangible anointing, followed by a tangible demonstration of power when you preach? Is the faith level steadily rising in your hearers?**
 - **Do you consistently go beyond the sermon, in obedience to what God wants when your words are finished? How much altar ministry or prayer with your congregation do you initiate?**
 - **Is your preaching alive with the fire of God, and does the power of God fall on you because you are great kindling, a vessel fit for the Master's use?**
 - **Do you see results days, weeks and months later in the form of changed lives? Is 3 John 2 a reality among your hearers?**

“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, {11} persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. {12} Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. {13} But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. {14} But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, {15} and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. {16} All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, {17} that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:10-17 NKJV)

Preaching Points

3. Stay steady and consistent in your character and your message - “Like a rock!”

“Continue in the things you have learned and been assured of.”
Others will be receptive to the Gospel if you do!

4. Preach Scripture!

Nothing else will equip anyone for anything. Study it. Live it. Preach it. Be “thoroughly equipped...”

“Strong in grace”

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 2:1 NKJV)

“Strong in love”

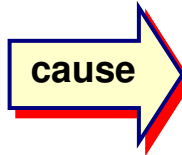
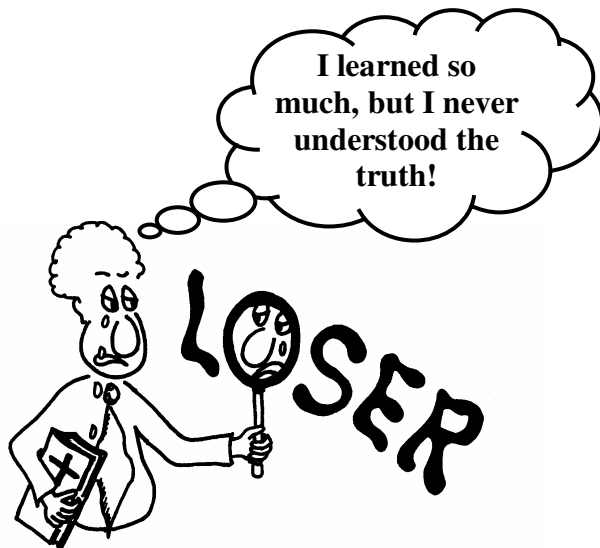
“Love never fails...” (1 Corinthians 13:8a NKJV)

List your three strongest qualities as a preacher. Now think carefully about what is weak about your preaching (A task that requires honesty, humility, truthfulness, transparency, teachability and effort!).

*Remember, it is either your hammer...
or your heart that others will feel!*

**Watch your heart!
Watch your mouth!
Watch your sheep!**


How will your preaching affect you?

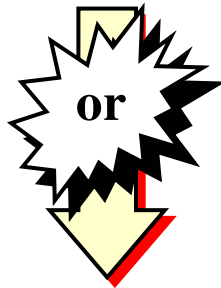


 **2 Timothy 3:7-9**

Are you listening to what you preach? Are you growing from the experience?



 **2 Timothy 4:1-5**
“Fulfill your ministry.”



 **2 Timothy 4:17&18**

“But the Lord stood with Me and and strengthened me so that...

The message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear.

And...

The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever.

Amen!”

Winner
and
Champion



ramson

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: {2} For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, {3} unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, {4} traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, {5} having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! {6} For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, {7} always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. {8} Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; {9} but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”

(2 Timothy 3:1-9 NKJV)

Job Description for Preachers who are Losers

(2 Timothy 3:1-9)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. lovers of themselves | 8. unloving | 16. haughty |
| 2. lovers of money | 9. unforgiving | 17. lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God |
| 3. boasters | 10. slanderers | 18. having a form of godliness but denying its power |
| 4. proud | 11. without self-control | |
| 5. blasphemers | 12. brutal | |
| 6. disobedient to parents | 13. despisers of good | |
| 7. unthankful, unholy | 14. traitors | |
| | 15. headstrong | |

19. EVER LEARNING AND NEVER COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

What you see, above, are nineteen descriptions of how bad preaching manifests itself in pulpit preachers. Though we expect that none of us are these kinds of people, we can be sure that some of these descriptions, listed above, raise their ugly heads from time to time in each of us.

“It isn’t a matter of whether or not you and I have rebellious, demanding streaks in us – It’s only a matter of realizing where they show up.”

Jan David Hettinga, *Follow Me*, NavPress, 1996, P.37

True failure in the person called to speak for God is described in Number 19. These people are losers. God calls them “disapproved.”

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: {2} Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; {4} and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. {5} But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:1-5 NKJV)

Look again, carefully, at the nineteen attributes of a loser on the previous page. Do Paul’s words, in verse 2, above, “Be ready in season and out of season” take on a deeper meaning than simply being a reference to studying the Word? Describe what this meaning might be.

? If you had to express the significance of the phrase “*fulfill your ministry*” - what would you say?

Notice that the Scriptures above are a solemn charge from Paul to Timothy. They are also a charge to you, preacher. Paul says, “*Be watchful in all things.*” This implies that watchfulness is to be a lifestyle.

? What does watchfulness imply for you as a minister of the Gospel? Look at the list again describing the failings of the “loser” preacher. Pick the three on this list that *you* are most susceptible to, and comment briefly but succinctly on them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Most Serious of Warnings

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. {9} As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9 NKJV)

(Verse 9 repeats Verse 8 to emphasize its serious message.)

“...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.”
(Luke 12:48b)

“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. {18} And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”

(2 Timothy 4:17-18 NKJV)

“...and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me,”



Preaching Points

5. Project power!

The same power that raised Christ from the dead dwells in you. You are strengthened by God to preach. Preach like Peter and Paul. Stand in the midst of all opposition and preach Jesus. Call all of heaven down when necessary!

6. When you preach for His glory, reach for His glory.

It will bathe you in the light of His Son. You will gain what you reach for... and take multitudes with you!

