

GOD'S PREACHER

LAURENCE A. JUSTICE

DEDICATED

TO MY LATE BROTHER

PAUL DAVID JUSTICE,

ONE OF GOD'S

CHOICE PREACHERS.

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INTRODUCTION

Laurence Anson Justice, author, presents the Gospel from the perspective of a man born and reared in a Baptist minister's home, brought up in a Baptist church, taught in a Baptist Sunday school, converted and baptized in his father's church. He was called to preach by the Holy Spirit in that church environment. Educated at Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he has spent fifty-two years in the ministry as an evangelist, prison chaplain, and pastor of Baptist churches.

In this time when there is a proliferation of non-scriptural church ministries, the author presents the New Testament Ministry of the Gospel. His premise in this book can be summarized in the Pauline doctrine of the Ministry as given to the Corinthian Church: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe...we preach Christ crucified...I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

In the light of this background he examines the Ministry in all its biblical aspects, its nature, its call, its qualification, its preparations, its perils, and its great rewards.

The book gives special attention to several thoughtful questions:

- How can one identify God's call to the gospel ministry?
- Does God ever withdraw the call to the ministry?
- What are the Bible qualifications for the Gospel Ministry?
- How can a Bible student identify false teachers of whom Paul warned?

The whole theme of the Gospel Ministry is dealt with scripturally, reverently, and practically. It expresses the author's soul-deep conviction of his own calling.

Do read this book carefully, earnestly, and profitably.

Anson Justice

WHAT IS PREACHING?

Laurence A. Justice

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1

A sovereign God has chosen preaching as the means of communicating His message to this world. The world views preaching as foolishness but the apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 1:21 that “...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Seven hundred and fifty years before Christ God sent a backslidden preacher to Nineveh, a city of 600,000 people. Without any newspaper ads or TV coverage or radio publicity Jonah preached a very simple message of repent and the whole city repented. Paul the apostle was a preacher before he was anything else. In I Corinthians 1:23 he says, “But we (the apostles) preach Christ crucified...” The Lord himself was primarily a preacher. Mark 1:38 says, “And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.” The question I want to answer in this message is this; what is preaching?

WHAT PREACHING IS

God in his word tells his preachers exactly what preaching is and how He wants it done. The biblical definition of preaching is that it is simply proclaiming or declaring God’s message to men. Matthew 4:17 says, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The word “preach” in this verse is a translation of the Greek word Kerusso and it means literally to proclaim as a herald. The same word is translated preach many times in the New Testament. So, what is a herald? Herald is an English word from the middle ages. A herald was an officer in old England who made proclamations and announcements for his king. In the pre-newspaper days the king would announce public policy and news through his heralds. This would be done on the street corners or in some other public place. A herald spoke a message that was from a source beyond himself. He spoke what the king had to say and so he had the voice of authority and certainty.

God’s preachers have the voice of authority and certainty because their message comes from a source outside themselves. The message of God’s heralds come from the King of Kings! God’s preacher does not say, “This is my opinion” when he preaches. God’s preacher says, “Thus saith the Lord!” The words “thus saith the Lord” occur 2,500 times throughout the Bible as God’s preachers speak. People who come to the churches of Jesus Christ are entitled to hear these words from the preachers because biblical preaching has behind it the authority of the King. In this sense God’s preachers today are prophets of God. They declare and proclaim God’s message. They speak for God.

True biblical preaching clearly leaves the impression that the audience is under obligation to hear and to obey the word that is preached because it is the word of the King of Kings. Sometimes people excuse their sin by saying, “Well, I just don’t agree with the preacher.” But that is not what is important. What is important is whether you agree with God’s message. Every person is responsible for agreeing with God’s message.

In telling what preaching is, God's word also tells us how it is to be done, that is, how God's message is to be proclaimed. In Isaiah 58:1, God says to Isaiah the prophet in instructing him about preaching to the people of Judah, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet..." A herald proclaimed the king's message publicly and loudly and clearly and that's the way God's preachers are to proclaim his message. Cry aloud literally means to cry with the throat. It speaks of a loud, strong cry that may be heard. It means cry with a full voice. And then the Lord says for the preacher Isaiah to lift up thy voice like a trumpet. A trumpet can be heard far away. Because of this fact the trumpet was used in Israel of old to sound the alarm. Part of a preacher's responsibility is to sound the alarm concerning sin and false doctrine and to do it in such a voice as to be heard clearly.

Should a preacher raise his voice when he preaches? The word of God certainly teaches that he should. The angel of the Lord told Zechariah the prophet in Zechariah 1:14, "Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." Matthew 3:3 tells us John the Baptist, as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 was "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John's crying here was not shedding tears but crying out aloud, proclaiming like a herald! As a matter of fact the Greek word which is translated crying here in Matthew 3:3 means literally to bellow like an ox.

How did the Lord Jesus Christ, the Master preacher, preach? Did he raise his voice when he preached? In John 7:28 we read, "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying..." Here the word cried is from the Greek word *krazo* and this is the same word that is used to describe the shouts of the people in Matthew 27:23 to crucify the Lord. "And the governor said Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified." It is certainly obvious that those people were not speaking in a soft calm voice when they cried out, "Let him be crucified."

Acts 2 reports Peter's great sermon at Pentecost and in verse 14 we read about how Peter preached. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem..." One time an elderly lady with poor hearing told me that I was the first preacher she had heard in the past 20 years even though she went to church every Sunday.

The preacher's crying aloud shows us something of the intensity of the preacher, something of his conviction of the importance and seriousness of his message. The preacher is to lift up his voice when he proclaims God's message. He is to speak publicly, boldly, with conviction, with passion, with enthusiasm, with urgency.

In my grandfather's generation it became quite popular for preachers to change from the heraldic style to a calm and quiet lecture style of preaching. One well known preacher delivered a series of sermons which were later put in book form and the title of this book emphasized this change in preaching style: *Quiet Talks on the Lord's Return*.

Some of our Baptist schools in recent years have been teaching our young preachers not to get excited when they preach but rather to use a calmer and more conversational style. But anyone who can calmly preach the glorious gospel of the grace of God that his preachers are commissioned to preach has something seriously wrong with him. Some people have suggested to me over the years that I need to calm down a little bit in my preaching. Listen, I can't calm down! Brother, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most solemn, the most meaningful, the most emotional message in all of time and eternity. How can anyone preach it calmly?

A young preacher once asked a famous older preacher why people would not come to hear that young preacher preach. The young man preached the same message as the famous man did and yet people would not come to hear him. The famous preacher replied, *Son, catch on fire and they'll come to see you burn.* Someone has well said that if a lawyer pleaded his cases like most modern preachers plead theirs, that lawyer would starve to death.

Now, having said all this it is important that we recognize that "Cry aloud" and "Lift up your voice like a trumpet" do not mean emotion for the sake of emotion. I'm, afraid some preachers are that way in their preaching – all emotion or as Vance Havner once said, "All heat and no light." Enthusiasm in preaching must not be something that is created by conscious effort. Painted fire never burns. There must be real emotion, genuine zeal in biblical preaching.

WHAT PREACHING IS NOT

There are several things that pass for preaching in our modern churches that according to Bible descriptions of preaching are not preaching at all. First of all biblical preaching is not a matter of the preacher sharing things with his congregation. It is very common today to hear preachers begin their messages by telling their hearers that they have some things to share with them. Biblical preaching is not sharing! Sharing is not a declarative message with God's authority behind it. God's preachers don't come forth and share things with their congregations. They proclaim as a herald, Thus saith the Lord!

Nathan did not "share God's good news" with King David when David had committed adultery and stolen another man's wife. He said to David, "Thou art the man" Isaiah and Jeremiah never shared their messages. They came forth and cried, "Thus saith the Lord." John the Baptist did not share his message. He delivered an ultimatum to sinners; Repent or perish! John the Baptist did not say to Herod, "Let me share with you some things about your affair with your brother's wife. No, he said, It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

God's preacher comes forth and declares what sin is and what is sin, he proclaims that sin brings guilt and demands punishment in eternal hell. He proclaims that unless people repent of their sins and turn to Christ they will be eternally lost, God's preacher proclaims that God demands a perfect righteousness from all who would be accepted with Him and that Christ Jesus has accomplished that righteousness in his perfect sinless life and in his death on the cross. God's preacher proclaims that Christ was buried and rose again from the dead and that this resurrection was the seal of God's approval of His atoning work. God's preacher proclaims God's demands that cold and indifferent Christians awake from their spiritual slumber and serve the Lord as He requires – in love and diligence and zeal. When a man is trying to arouse God's people from

their spiritual slumber, sharing some things with them has no sense of urgency and thus will not accomplish the desired results.

Secondly, biblical preaching is not a matter of salesmanship. Biblical preaching is not selling the gospel. Somewhere today's preachers have gotten the idea that they are selling the gospel to a lost world. There were preachers in Paul's day who believed the same thing. Paul says in II Corinthians 2:17, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." The word corrupt in this verse means literally to huckster, to peddle, to act as a salesman.

The number one concern of the salesman is not so much in presenting the truth as it is in selling his product. Whenever preaching is seen as selling, the salesman must do everything he can to say only positive things that will sell the product of the gospel. Salesmen do everything they can to keep from antagonizing or discouraging their potential buyers. Many preachers today have become so concerned with making the sale that they have removed all the so-called negatives from their messages. They talk about preaching a positive message so that they can appeal to their potential customers and not antagonize them in any way. The only negative thing the modern preacher ever has to say is about the preacher who dares to declare God's will from his word without using a candy coating!

The Lord Jesus was not one of these salesman preachers. He often presented *negative* messages to his hearers. He told them that if they were going to be his disciples they were going to have to forsake all and take up the cross and follow him. He told them that if they followed him there would be conflict in their own families between saved and unsaved members. No modern day salesman-preacher would dare say things like this. They might offend his prospects for sales.

The work of God's preacher is to proclaim and declare the word of God – all of it – even the so-called negatives. The Ten Commandments are pretty negative aren't they? Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not! The world is full of gospel salesmen today. Religious hucksters are at work inventing new ways to promote their wares and inflate their statistics. Much preaching today involves little more than cheap sales psychology.

It is not the job of God's preacher to sell the gospel or to sell Christ. Selling is something that is totally unrelated to the preacher's work. Biblical preaching is proclaiming, not selling. Preachers are heralds not salesmen. True preaching is never doing a selling job on the natural man. The natural man can never understand the gospel without the Holy Spirit's work and so it is useless to try to sell him the gospel. Those who believe the gospel can be sold to sinners have already departed from the scriptures because they do not understand the depraved nature of man as God's word presents it. In a very real sense those who huckster or peddle or act as salesmen of the gospel inevitably corrupt the gospel just as the King James Version translates the word in II Corinthians 2:17.

Thirdly biblical preaching is not rapping with one's audience. Some churches have rap sessions instead of preaching in their services. A large Baptist church in the Metro Oklahoma City area quit having preaching on Sunday nights for awhile so that the preacher could *rap* with the young people. In these rap sessions the preacher would rap or discuss things rather than proclaiming

God's message as a herald. "Cry aloud and spare not" is not a description of rapping with one's audience. Proclaiming as a herald is not a description of rapping!

Finally, entertaining one's audience through jokes and interesting stories is not biblical preaching. Some preachers today think that it is impossible to communicate the gospel to young people without a lot of joking and storytelling. Many sermons today are mostly made up of joking and storytelling. Someone has said that modern preachers find it easier and more profitable to make people laugh than to bring them to mourn over their sins. Consider this and check the Bible to see if it is true. Neither the Lord nor Paul nor Isaiah nor Jeremiah nor Daniel nor Elijah nor Samuel nor any of God's preachers in the Bible ever told a joke in his preaching. You check that out and see if it is the truth!

Listen! God's holiness and wrath and justice and sovereignty and the matters of sin and guilt and Christ's suffering and blood shedding and death on the cross are not laughing matters! Many congregations today are hee-hawing themselves into hell because of their joking, storytelling, entertaining preachers. Biblical preaching is not entertainment yet so many preachers today are little more than comedians and entertainers. Many churches today don't want a preacher. They want a man who is a diplomat, a fur rubber, a joker, a storyteller, an entertainer. God's preacher is not sent to entertain his congregation but to proclaim God's message as a herald, to "Cry aloud and spare not."

Preaching, true preaching, biblical preaching, ought to be central in our churches. Northern Baptists or American Baptists as they are usually called have their pulpits over to the side in their auditoriums. The reason that we have our pulpits in the center of our auditoriums is because at least in the past we have recognized that the preaching of God's word is central in worshipping him. The Lord's supper table is down here and the baptistry is up there and the pulpit is right in the middle because the preaching of the word is central in our churches. Anything that takes away from the centrality of preaching in the church is wrong and unscriptural and not according to God's will.

We have seen a great decline in preaching in the last generation. Nothing is left in most churches but a sermonette sandwiched between announcements and musical entertainment. We desperately need a revival of preaching today! Many churches are led astray because when they call new preachers they do not know what preaching is and so they do not call men who are really preachers in the biblical sense of the word. May God raise up some preachers today who will proclaim God's message as heralds, who will cry aloud and spare not and lift up their voices like trumpets proclaiming God's message.

THE PREACHER'S CALL

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:13-15.

The highest calling in all the world is the call to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ! What an awesome and solemn thing it is to speak in the great name of God! To a God-called preacher any other job in the world whether it be president of the United States or even a denominational position is a step down from the ministry.

Many people today are so naïve as to believe that all who call themselves preachers are men of God who have been called of God. The sad fact is that many may be called to preach who are not called of God. There are many preachers abroad whom God has not sent. There always have been and always will be. In Jeremiah 23:32 we read, “Behold I am against those who prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their instability; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.”

Different preachers get their calls from different sources today. Some preachers are mother-called preachers. Their parents tell them in word or deed that they ought to preach and so they preach to please those parents. There are also some pastor-called preachers. Their pastors were impressed with their abilities and personalities and so they encouraged them to preach and they entered the ministry to please and at the urging of their pastors.

There are also some Satan-called preachers. That's right! Satan has his preachers. Paul says in II Corinthians 11:13-15, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” Satan's ministers usually base their call on some vision or light or voice and it is just as definite and real to them as it can be. They are convinced that God has called them to preach.

THERE IS A SPECIAL CALL FROM GOD TO PREACH

To many today the ministry is largely a profession, a vocation to be chosen from among others. Those who choose this profession go to seminary to learn how to be preachers. But no college, no seminary, and no ordination can make a man a minister of the gospel. Only as God calls a man with his special call can he ever be a true minister of the gospel! To those to whom the ministry is just a profession, honorable though it may be, the ministry sooner or later becomes for them a scramble for a bigger church and a larger salary and a position of honor in the denomination.

This attitude toward the ministry as a profession has brought about a degrading practice in some denominations. When I was in school at Oklahoma Baptist University I came across a paid ad in a national magazine which had been placed there by a large denomination that was having trouble getting enough pastors. The title of this ad was *Consider the Ministry*. Listen! God doesn't need to advertise for preachers! He always calls enough for his work. God calls his preachers to the gospel ministry with a special call.

Paul the apostle says in our text, "...how shall they preach, except they be sent?" How can they proclaim God's message unless they have received their commissions from God Himself? This statement teaches us that there is a special call of God to the ministry.

Several verses of scripture speak of a call to the ministry. For example Paul says concerning his own call in I Timothy 1:12, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me, in that he counted me faithful, pitting me into the ministry." In Acts 20:24 Paul speaks of "...the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." In Acts 20:28 Paul is speaking to the pastors, the bishops, the elders at Ephesus when he says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers..." Again Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:11 that certain individuals are given to the church as pastors. They are given therefore they do not place themselves in that position.

God is the One who calls and sends preachers. He is the Lord of the harvest. Look what the Lord says in Matthew 9:38. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." The descriptive term for the preacher that is used in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2:1, etc.) is the term angel which means messenger and messengers have to be sent by someone.

God does not call all Christians to be ministers! Some denominations and some cults teach that there is no special call to preach but that every Christian is a minister. One Baptist church in Oklahoma City has a sign out front which reads, Such & Such Baptist Church founded on the Rock Jesus Christ – Ministers: all the members. This certainly can be misleading at best and at worst is absolutely incorrect.

God calls each individual preacher of his with a clear and special call. God lets his preachers know definitely that he wants them to preach. Isaiah knew that he was called (Isaiah 6:8). Ezekiel knew that God had called him (Ezekiel 3:1-4). Paul knew God had called him because he said in I Corinthians 9:16, "...necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." God's people have always believed that no one should preach except those who are called of God with a special call.

HOW GOD CALLS MEN TO PREACH

How does God call men to preach and how can one know that he has been called of God to preach? Many people seem to believe that some voice is heard, some vision is seen, or some impulse is felt which forces a man into the ministry without reasoning or consideration on his part. But God does not speak to men today in visions or dreams or with an audible voice. God does not speak to men today by special revelation as he did in Bible times.

God speaks and leads and directs men today only through his written word and through his providence. The call to the ministry is heard, first of all, in the teachings of God's written word. As a man prayerfully reads and studies God's word God calls him to preach. Now as we look at what the Bible has to say about God's call to preach we realize that there are four essential things that God does for the man he calls to preach. And these are four things by which a man may know that God is calling him to preach the gospel.

First, God gives the man who He calls to preach a strong unshakeable desire to preach the gospel and to bring souls to Christ. Paul says in I Timothy 3:1, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." This word desire literally means an earnest desire, a strong desire and this is a strong desire not just to speak out but a desire to see souls saved from sin and hell, to see the gospel spread, and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

God gives the man He calls to preach an irresistible desire to spend his whole life in the cause of Christ. In the heart of one who is called to preach the word of God is like a fire that cannot be contained and must be proclaimed at any cost. This is the way Jeremiah described it long ago when he said in Jeremiah 20:9, "...his word was in mine heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones." If the word of God is not a fire in a man's bones he can never take the self-denial which preaching the gospel requires and discontent will overtake him at last.

A preacher must not enter the ministry feeling like a slave being forced to do something. He should be suspicious of his calling if he does. I have a real problem with those who make much of their resisting and fighting the call to preach and then finally "surrendering to preach."

Such is the desire that God gives the man He calls to preach that that man can never give up that call. Jeremiah was ridiculed and mocked for preaching the word of God so he decided to quit preaching but he could not quit because God's word was like a fire in his bones. In Jeremiah 20:8-9 we read, "For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not refrain." One who is truly called of God to preach feels with Paul in I Corinthians 9:16, "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" If a man can quit the ministry he ought to quit but if he is called of God he can't quit!

God never takes back his call to the ministry. This call is for life. Paul says in Romans 11:29 that "...the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Some men may come to realize after starting out to preach that they were mistaken about their calls and then quit the ministry but when God actually calls a man He never takes back that call.

Where does a man get such a desire as we are talking about here? God gives it to him through the man's own reading and studying of the word of God. God often uses such statements as those in Matthew 9:37-38 to create this desire to preach in a man. "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." God creates in all whom he calls to preach a strong and unshakeable desire to preach the gospel and bring souls to Christ.

A second thing that God does for the man whom he calls to preach is; He gives him the necessary gifts for preaching the gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ gives gifts to his preachers that equip them for preaching. To some he gives more and to some he gives less but to all he gives some. In every man whom God calls to preach there must be sooner or later some evidence of ability in things necessary for preaching, gifts such as knowledge of the word, speaking ability, strength for all the many difficulties along the way, wisdom for the work. Surely if the Lord sends a man to preach He will furnish that man with the gifts, the abilities necessary to do so!

And He does! Paul recognized this in connection with his own call to the ministry when he said in I Timothy 1:12, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, in that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” This divine enablement involves gifts that are necessary for preaching the gospel.

One of the main differences in a preacher and a private Christian seems to be in the possession by the preacher of the ministerial gifts which are given by God to him for the edification of others. Sometimes these gifts may not be clearly evident at first but they are gradually developed by the proper means. God doesn't call men to the ministry after they have failed at everything else. God calls men of ability and industry. A man who succeeds as a preacher would probably succeed as a lawyer or grocer or carpenter. Charles Spurgeon was commenting on this fact when he said, “There is scarcely anything impossible to a man who can keep a congregation together for years and be the means of edifying them for hundreds of consecutive Sabbaths; he must be possessed of some abilities and be by no means a fool or neer-do-well.”

A third thing that God does for the man whom He calls is; He enables him to meet the Biblical qualifications for a preacher of the gospel. Paul the apostle lists God's qualifications for his preachers in two specific passages; I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and if these qualifications are not met then the man is not called of God and cannot be called of God no matter how he may feel!

The man who would preach the gospel must be “apt to teach” for example. This means that he must have the gift of being able to get God's truth across to his hearers so that they may receive some measure of understanding of it. This gift may not be fully developed at first but certainly the preacher has such a gift in its rudimentary form at least.

A man must have strong convictions and not be an indecisive man or a man who cannot rule his own family. According to these qualifications God does not call a divorced man to preach. A man must be the husband of one wife and rule well his own household and be blameless before the world and so he cannot be a divorced person. God never calls a woman to preach because His qualifications for preachers say that the preacher must be the husband of one wife. It is a man who desires the office of a bishop, Paul says in I Timothy 3:1. For a woman to preach would also contradict I Timothy 2:12 and I Corinthians 14:34-35 where Paul says, “But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence...Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their

husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” God does not call men to preach who do not meet his qualifications for preachers as laid down in his holy word.

A man must judge himself by the biblical qualifications for preachers in determining whether he is called to preach but the church must also judge that man’s calling by whether his life conforms to the qualifications in God’s word. Serious consideration should be given by the candidate to the judgment of godly men and women in the church as to whether he meets the biblical qualifications for a preacher.

A fourth thing that God does for those whom He calls is that by His providence He leads him into the ministry. By some outward act or acts of His providence, God often makes his servant aware of his call to preach. When God calls a man to the ministry He always provides him a place of service and at the proper time He opens that place to him. Sometimes God opens this place suddenly but more often He works circumstances together gradually to provide the opportunity, the means, the time for actually going into the work.

When I fully realized God’s call I was asked to preach a revival meeting in McHenry, Illinois largely because the pastor said that he had much trouble getting preachers from down south to come and preach in that pioneer area. I had never preached a single sermon but had realized God’s dealings with me through his word about preaching, I accepted the opportunity which God provided in that invitation to preach and God in his sovereign providence saw fit to save 53 souls in that meeting. I took that as God’s providential leading in calling me to preach.

God calls men to preach through outward circumstances but these outward circumstances must always be viewed in light of the scriptures. We may properly interpret God’s providences in our lives by going to the word of God and to prayer.

The experiences of men differ as far as the call of God to the ministry is concerned. My brother’s call was obvious to me from the time that he was about eight years old. The Lord very obviously dealt with him during those early years. My own call was radically different in that I was 27 years old and only five months away from graduation from seminary when I realized God’s call.

One should not enter the ministry on a sudden impulse. It should be a matter of much deliberation and prayer. Prayer must be frequent and fervent. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him,” says James 1:5. Is God calling someone who is reading these words to preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ? Let me urge you to careful and prayerful consideration of the things we have just presented from the word of God.

The Preacher's Qualifications

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9.

How do we know who is qualified to stand and speak in the name of the Lord, to cry as a herald with the message of God? Or can just anybody announce one day that from now on he is a preacher of the gospel and began preaching and/or pastoring? God's word says that a man must be called to preach and God's word also says that there are certain qualifications a man must meet if he is to be God's preacher.

The scriptural qualifications for God's preachers are given in two parallel passages, one in I Timothy 3:1-7 and the other in Titus 1:5-9. The letters of I Timothy and II Timothy and Titus are sometimes called the Pastoral Epistles because they are made up of instructions for pastors and churches. In the two passages chosen as our text, Paul the apostle is giving instructions concerning ordination, telling Timothy and Titus whom to ordain and who not to ordain to the ministry. God's qualifications for his preachers are laid down in his word and they are very clear and definite.

In I Timothy 3:2, Paul uses the word “must”. “A bishop then must be...” and then he lists the qualifications for preachers. This word “must” means it is necessary. It is a very emphatic word and it means that these things are not optional. “Must” here refers to all the qualifications Paul is about to list below.

We don't have time in this chapter to deal with all of God's qualifications for his preachers so we shall just take several and look at them in some detail – seven qualifications God has for his preachers.

THE PREACHER MUST BE ABOVE REPROACH IN HIS PERSONAL LIFE

“A bishop then must be blameless...” I Timothy 3:2. The word blameless does not mean sinless because if this were the case no one would qualify. “There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not,” says Eccles 7:20 and “...all have sinned, and come sort of the glory of God,” says Romans 3:23. Blameless means not chargeable with any notorious crime or

sin. It certainly includes not being guilty of any of the vices mentioned or implied in the qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-7. Blameless means having nothing in one's life or background at which people may point the finger of blame. There must be no ugly rumors about his past. When Paul says that the preacher must be blameless he means that he must be of unimpeachable character. He must be of pure life and spotless integrity. It means that he must be above reproach.

The priests in Old Testament Israel were to be without any blemish even in their physical bodies as we read in Leviticus 21:17-23. God's preachers are to be likewise blameless, that is without obvious faults. God's preacher must be able to look the world in the face without blushing is something of Paul's meaning. What a preacher does must not speak so loud that people cannot hear what he says and a bad life will always drown out the voice of the very best preacher.

How can anyone ever listen to Jimmy Swaggart or Jim Bakker again when they preach on adultery or homosexuality or pornography? Recently I spoke with a lady from another city whose unsaved husband won't go to church but who watches TV preachers, or he did until recently. This man told his wife after the fall of Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker that if that is what Christianity is like then he didn't want any part of it. If Satan can wreck a preacher he can say as he has been saying again and again in recent months, "These are your holy preachers. Look what your spiritual leaders are doing!" It certainly can be said of those preachers who have fallen in recent days as it was said to David long ago, "thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme."

The first qualification for a preacher of the gospel is that his life must stand out against the darkness of this world. It must be blameless and above reproach.

THE PREACHER MUST BE A MAN OF MARITAL INTEGRITY

Verse two says that he must be "...the husband of one wife." Not the husband of *no wife* as Rome says. Not divorced from one and married to another but one wife. God's word forbids divorce except for one reason and thus divorce is unbecoming and scandalous in the life of a preacher. How can a man preach against divorce when he himself has been divorced? Yet today a growing number of churches are calling pastors who have been divorced and remarried. I know a man who pastors a Baptist church in another state who is divorced from his wife and married to a woman who is divorced from another preacher. The word of God says that the preacher of the gospel must be the husband of one wife.

THE PREACHER MUST BE A MAN WITH A SERIOUS VIEW OF LIFE AND THE THINGS OF GOD

Paul says that he must be sober. The use of the word sober in I Peter 5:8 tell us that to be sober is to be sober minded or serious minded. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The malicious and dangerous work of the devil is nothing to take lightly but rather is to be faced with a sober and vigilant mind. Sober means serious, solemn, reflecting the great gravity of eternity and hell and sin and the gospel. I know a preacher who tells so many jokes and spends so much time in levity that it is

hard to take him seriously when he tries to be serious. When God's word says that the preacher must be sober, it means that he must not be a comedian or an entertainer. One who is sober or sober-minded is one who is moderate in his dress and in his diet and in his view of himself. He takes a serious view of life and the things of God.

THE PREACHER MUST NOT BE A MAN WHO LOVES MONEY

"Not greedy of filthy lucre" as Paul says in verse three. The preacher must not love money for gain or making profit. He must not be materialistic or mercenary. He must not be covetous of getting more money and wealth because he deals with things that are heavenly and spiritual rather than temporal. The temptation to amass wealth is a particularly strong temptation for some preachers and it is thus mentioned twice in I Timothy 3:3 where Paul says, "...not greedy of filthy lucre;" and "...not covetous..." In Titus 1 Paul states this qualification like this: "...not given to filthy lucre." In other words gain must not be his main goal.

When I was in college there arose a company in the Oklahoma City area which was an investment company. This company promised to deliver 35% interest on all investments when the law of the state of Oklahoma allowed 12%. A number of preachers in the area sank everything they had in this company and then went broke and lost everything and of course had to answer to the law. One even lost his mother's estate that he had invested in this get-rich-quick scheme. Their own personal ministries and the ministry in general to a certain extent were brought into disgrace because of their covetousness and greed for gain. And by the way, a preacher who does not honestly tithe, who does not bring 1/10 of his gross income to the Lord in His house is greedy of filthy lucre. He is covetous.

THE PREACHER MUST MANAGE HIS OWN FAMILY WELL

Paul says in verses 4-5 that he must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" The preacher must have control of his own home! *Ruleth well* means that he may not be a divorcee because a divorcee has failed in managing his own home. The text says that if he doesn't know how to rule his own home how can he take care of the church? If he can't hold his own home together how can he hold the church together?

Ruling his own house means requiring his children to obey his teaching and especially the teachings of the word of God. We might paraphrase these two verses like this: "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family how can he take care of God's church?" In Paul's corresponding statement in Titus 1:6, he places some of the responsibility for behavior at home on the pastor's children themselves. Here Paul says, "...having faithful children not accused of riot (immoral behavior) or unruly (disobedient and not subject to their parents)." Faithful children are obedient and live as their parents guide them and faithful children are an evidence of faithful parents who have rightly taught them. A preacher's children must not be accused of riot, that is, they must not be chargeable with sins of immorality or drunkenness such as was the case with Eli's sons in I Samuel 2:22. "...They lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle." God said of Eli the priest in I Samuel 3:13, "For I have told him that I will judge his

house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.”

One time I held a revival meeting in a town in east Texas and the pastor there had a teenaged daughter who was in open rebellion against her father. That father did not approve of the rather shady character of the boy whom his daughter wanted to date. One night in defiance of her father that girl opened one of the windows of her father’s house and let that boy climb in and spend the night in that preacher’s own house unbeknownst to the preacher. Everyone in town found out about this terrible incident and the man’s effectiveness as a preacher was severely damaged.

If a man’s own children don’t obey him how can he expect the church to follow him in obedience to the gospel? A preacher’s family can easily undo all that the preacher says or stands for. A preacher of the gospel must keep his own family in order so that he may be a good example to all other families and so that his preaching on God’s requirements for the family will not be negated.

THE PREACHER MUST NOT BE A RECENT CONVERT OR IMMATURE IN THE FAITH

Notice Paul says in verse six, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” Novice is the same Greek word from which we get our word neophyte and it means new and inexperienced. A novice is a new Christian or one who has done little study of the scriptures or who is shallow in his knowledge and understanding of the word of God.

In this qualification God forbids new Christians to go into the ministry and a church must not recognize or set aside a new Christian to the gospel ministry. If the preacher must not be a novice then he must not be licensed or ordained immediately or shortly after his conversion to Christ. What about these boy-wonders, these child prodigy preachers who rise up from time to time?

I clipped a paid ad from the newspaper in Birmingham, Alabama where I once pastored and that ad featured a picture of a little boy about ten years old with a Bible in one hand and his other hand upraised as if preaching and making a point. The ad read like this: “Now for the first time in this area see and hear and be moved by Little Michael, ten-year old evangelist who has enthralled crowds all over the U.S.A. – in person, on record, and on network TV. Little Michael was hailed by Newsweek Magazine as a “commanding preacher, gospel singer, and faith healer.” God’s word says, “Not a novice” and is referring to the preacher when it says this. One who is a babe in Christ is unqualified and incompetent to teach other babes in Christ much less fathers in Christ.

Why can’t a preacher be a novice? Because the office of pastor has great dignity in the eyes of God’s people and when a young man and/or a young Christian suddenly finds himself in such a position of dignity, pride is likely to arise. The novice preacher is in danger of being lifted up with pride. Satan’s chief and first sin and the sin which was the cause of his fall was the sin of pride. “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” The preacher must not be a recent convert or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil did.

I once was a member of a church in Texas. In that church was a young man about 20 years old who had recently been converted and who said that the Lord was calling him to preach. Almost immediately the church decided to license that young man to preach. That young man soon became very haughty and a know-it-all and not long afterward fell into serious sin and finally left the ministry. That church had a part in the responsibility for that young man's fall because of its rush to place him officially into the ministry.

Novices can easily be carried away with the temptations of Satan. A young unmarried man who is set aside to preach is set up among an admiring crowd of young ladies in the church and is wide open to great temptation. So the preacher must not be a recent convert or one who is immature in the faith.

The final qualification we shall consider is found in Titus chapter one and verse nine.

THE PREACHER MUST NOT BE A THEOLOGICAL LIBERAL

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” The faithful word is called this because it refers to the word of God and the word of God is true and contains nothing but truth. It is pure, unmixed, and unadulterated with error. The Bible is the inerrant word of God. It is the amen, the faithful and true witness and therefore there are no errors, no mistakes, no inaccuracies in that word!

Paul says here that the preacher must be one who holds fast this faithful word. To hold fast means to cleave to, to cling to. It means to keep close to the doctrine of Christ in his word. It means to steadily and consistently hold to the doctrines of the word of God as taught by Paul and the other writers of scripture. Several times in his letters to Timothy Paul urged him to hold fast the faithful word. In II Timothy 1:13 Paul told him to “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” In II Timothy 3:14 Paul says to Timothy to “...continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them...” God's preacher must cling to, keep close to, hold fast the faithful word of God in his own belief and in his own teaching and in his own practice.

The liberals today say that there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible, that it is not inerrant, that it is not really the faithful word of God. But a Bible that is not inerrant is not faithful and thus cannot be held to. When the Elliot controversy arose in the Southern Baptist Convention many preachers swallowed what Professor Elliot taught. Professor Elliot taught that Moses did not write the book of Genesis even though the Lord Jesus said that he did. He taught that Israel did not really cross the Red Sea on dry ground but rather crossed a shallow marshy area which was actually called the Reed Sea. He taught that many of the miracles that are reported in the book of Genesis are actually myths that did not happen but rather are stories intended to convey some deeper truth. The preachers who swallowed Elliot's liberalism did not hold fast the faithful word as God's word requires in our text!

The reason God's preacher must keep close to and cling to the faithful word of God is because he has the responsibility of exhorting and convincing the gainsayers. The gainsayers are those who are opposers of God and of His truth. The preacher's arguments against the gainsayers, the opposers of God and His truth, must be based upon sound doctrine taken from the faithful pure truth of the word of God. Always a pastor must refute error and if he is going to be able to do so he must hold to the word of God. He must not be a liberal. How can the preacher convince those who are in error if he himself is unsteady and uncertain as to the faithfulness or truthfulness of the word of God?

In order for a man to be considered as called to preach he must meet God's qualifications for preachers as listed in his word. These are very high standards indeed and very difficult to meet. Everyone who reads these qualifications has to cry out with Paul in II Corinthians 2:16, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Before any man seeks to enter the ministry he needs to earnestly and prayerfully consider whether he meets these and the other qualifications for preachers laid down in God's word.

The Preacher's Message

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” II Timothy 4:1-2

One time a preacher friend told me, “Bro. Laurence, I don't ever plan to stay as pastor of a church more than two or three years. When I asked him why, he said, “Because I just don't have much more than that to preach.” John Gill was pastor of the same Baptist church in London for fifty-two years. During that time he systematically preached a sermon on every single verse in the Bible. Possibly the only man who ever lived that actually did this. It certainly took John Gill more than any two or three years to do this! It's just incomprehensible to me that anyone could think that there is only about two or three year's worth of sermons in the word of God! Friends, we have a whole book to preach and when a man has preached it through he needs to start over again because by then he will have an entirely different congregation.

In II Timothy 4:1-2, Paul the apostle gives a solemn charge to Timothy and to all God's preachers when he says, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom...” and preachers will answer to Christ when they stand before Him at the Judgment Seat as to how they kept that charge. The thing we shall be concerned with in this chapter is that which God's preachers are charged to do.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ...preach the word.” The charge of Paul to God's preachers is to “Preach the word!” Preach the word. Proclaim it like a herald. Declare the will of the King. Do it openly, publicly, with a loud voice, “like a trumpet.”

A herald delivers a message. He doesn't make up his message. He delivers it. And what is the message that the Lord's men are called to preach? “Preach the word” Paul says and the word is the written word of God, the Bible.

The message of God's preachers is not the social gospel of clean up the slums or fight poverty or root out racism or clean up the environment or feed the hungry. The message of God's preachers is not the message of positive thinking nor of human psychology nor of politics nor of book reviews.

The message of God's preachers is not that the Bible is God's book of success and that if you will follow its teachings you will be a success and will find happiness in life as one preacher often says in his TV commercials. Health, wealth, and prosperity is the message of many preachers today but this is not the message of God's preachers!

God does not leave his preachers to decide for themselves what they shall preach. He calls His preachers to declare a certain specific message. God's word makes up the subject matter of true preaching. “Preach the word!”

Nehemiah 8:1-8 clearly defines what the preacher is supposed to do in the pulpit and verse 8 of this passage says of Nehemiah that he read in the book of law of God distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading. True preaching involves making people understand what is in God's word. The preacher's business is to show people what is in the Bible. The preacher's business is to take what he finds in God's word and explain it and apply it to his hearers. It is the truths of the Bible that "are living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword." Preach the word. This is the business of God's preachers. Now, having said this we need to ask, "What does a preacher preach when he preaches the word? And the answer is that he preaches all of the word or what Paul describes as the whole counsel of God. When Paul was reviewing his ministry at Ephesus before the elders of that church he said in Acts 20:26-27, "Wherefore I testify unto you 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." The whole counsel of God includes everything in the written word of God.

There are several key things involved in the whole counsel of God. In this chapter we are going to consider seven things which absolutely must be preached if the whole counsel of God is to be declared. There are many others of course, but I have chosen seven which are of special importance to those to whom we preach. When a preacher preaches the word, he preaches what the Bible has to say about

THE NATURE OF GOD

He preaches on what the Bible says God is like. He preaches the fact, for example, that God is holy and therefore demands moral perfection from all men. God is holy and therefore will not tolerate any sin in his creatures but will bring judgment on all sinners and He won't make any exceptions. Today's preachers don't preach on the holiness of God. They spend their time on the love of God and the goodness of God but either cover over or pass by God's great and awful holiness.

In preaching the nature of God, God's preacher also preaches that God is sovereign. God does as He pleases, with whom He pleases, and when He pleases and no one can reply against his doing so. Paul says in Romans 9:20-21, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay? Of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?"

When a man preaches the word he declares also what the Bible says about

THE LAW OF GOD

The law of God to which we refer here is God's moral law, his ten commandments. Part of the whole counsel of God in his word which God's preachers must proclaim is the law of God, its demands, and the penalty for breaking that law. The law of God must be preached because preaching the law prepares the way for the gospel. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin," Paul says in Romans 3:20. People know what sin is and what is sin by looking into God's law. Paul illustrates this when he says in Romans 7:7, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not

known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” The whole counsel of God is not being preached when God’s law is not being made known and upheld clearly and regularly when a man preaches the word he declares also what the Bible says about

SIN

Sin is rebellion against God’s law. Sin is the transgression of the law says I John 3:4. Sin is an offence against a holy and righteousness God and the consequences of sin are alienation from this God and all that it involves.

God’s preachers are to preach against sin, to show people their sins and to show them how awful sin is in God’s sight. God said to the preacher Isaiah in Isaiah 58:1 to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” The preacher Nathan pointed out King David’s sin of adultery very specifically and very personally when he said to him in II Samuel 12:7-9, “Thou art the man...thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.”

God was displeased with the failure of the preachers in Jeremiah’s day to preach against and expose the sins of the people and He blamed Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem on those prophets who did not uncover the sins of the people. In Lamentations 2:14, God says, “Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not uncovered thine iniquity, to turn away the captivity...”

The Lord Jesus got very specific when preaching on sin. Who does not tremble when he reads the Lord’s scorching sermon to the Pharisees on their sins? Matthew 23:13-33, “...Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men... ye devour widows’ houses...ye fools and blind... ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith...”

Peter pointed out specific sins when he preached in the second chapter of Acts. Speaking to the crowd about the crucifixion of Christ, Peter says in verse 23, “Him (Christ), being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Paul says in our text that God’s preachers are to Reprove, rebuke, and exhort and reproving and rebuking are things that have to do with sin!

God’s ultimate judgment on sin is eternal hell for the sinner. This is an aspect of sin that is most often neglected in this day in which we live.

Then there is the total depravity of man or the fact that because of man’s fall into sin every part of his being has been ruined and thus he is unable to save or to help save himself and unless God in his grace intervenes, each and every sinner will go on being lost and end in hell at last. When sin is rightly dealt with the preaching brings a sense of helplessness to the sinner and then it is that the sinner realizes his lost condition and his need of a Savior and then he turns to Christ for everything in salvation. The lost sinner will never see his need of Christ till he sees his own desperate condition.

The gospel is the gospel of salvation from sin and its guilt and if a preacher says little of sin and God's judgment then people won't have much interest in a Savior from sin. The gospel is meaningless to people today because they don't know what sin is. Preachers are not preaching against sin nor even defining it. Someone has well said that it is much easier for a preacher to engage in the war on poverty than in the war on sin. Many preachers today have become so concerned about getting people to believe that alcoholism is a sickness that they don't preach on drunkenness as a sin anymore. Many preachers today even pretend that their love and kindness of heart prevents their preaching against sin. One who preaches the word, who declares the whole counsel of God, brings out what the Bible says about sin. The preacher who preaches the word preaches what the Bible says about

SALVATION

The message of salvation doesn't come from anywhere else but the written word of God. Paul says in Romans 10:17 that "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Three easy steps to salvation characterizes the preaching of many today but the whole counsel of God includes every aspect of salvation as revealed in God's word. It includes election, calling, regeneration, justification, sanctification, adoption, and glorification, all the things involved in God's glorious salvation. God's preachers make known to their hearers that God in His word calls men to repent and turn from their sins and turn in faith to Jesus Christ as Lord. He reminds them again and again that except they repent they shall all likewise perish. In Luke 24:47 the risen Christ gave His message to his preachers when he said "...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations". God's preachers call on their hearers to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Every one of God's preachers preaches the message of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without any works whatsoever involved. The preacher who preaches the word declares what the Bible says about

CHRIST

Preaching which has God's message in it centers men's interest in Christ. Many preachers today preach themselves, their own accomplishments, their own sordid pasts, their own wisdom. But Paul says in II Corinthians 4:5 what all of God's preachers have to say and that is "For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord..."

Paul says in Ephesians 3:9 that he was called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Preachers with God's message preach the Christ of the Bible, not the Christ of modern theology; the sickly, sentimental, effeminate Christ who is all love and no judgment and no wrath against sin.

God's preachers preach Christ as the exclusive way of salvation. They preach "that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," as Peter says in Acts 4:12.

Peter tells God's elders or pastors in I Peter 5:2 to "...feed the flock of God and that with which they are to feed God's flock is Christ." He is the "Bread of Life". Those who preach the word preach Christ in the dignity of his person, in the beauty of his holiness, in his ability to save those to the uttermost who come to God by him. They preach his virgin birth, his nature as fully God yet fully man, his demand to be Lord of all, his second coming to the earth someday. The preacher who preaches Christ looks at and explains everything in relation to Christ. He is always magnifying and promoting Christ and His glory. God's preacher dwells pre-eminently on Christ. Charles Spurgeon once said this about preaching Christ: "To harp upon the name of Jesus is the blessed monotony of a true ministry, a monotony more full of variety than all other subjects besides." To preach the word is to preach Christ! When a preacher preaches the word his message centers specifically in

THE CROSS

of Jesus Christ. Paul's testimony in I Corinthians 1:24 is the testimony of every preacher who has the message of God in his preaching, "...we preach Christ crucified..." Some preachers preach Christ without preaching Christ crucified. They speak of Jesus the teacher and the miracle worker but not of Christ crucified.

God's preachers preach like John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It is as God's Lamb, the sacrifice at the cross, that Christ must be preached.

The cross involves the substitutionary work of Christ, how he stood in the place of God's people and received the penalty that they so richly deserve for their sins. God's unspeakable wrath was poured out on Christ the substitute so that God's justice could be satisfied, his broken law honored, and at the same time His mercy and forgiveness provided.

It is in the cross of Christ where we see the ultimate revelation of the justice of God, the love of God, and the grace of God. Christ crucified, buried, and risen again must always be the sum and substance of the preacher's message. God's preachers preach

ALL THE GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

Doctrines such as God's grace and God's effectual call to sinners and the perseverance of the saints in salvation and God's election. I'm convinced that if some Baptists really knew some of the things that are revealed in the Bible it would scare them to death! But preachers today don't preach the whole counsel of God and as a result people don't know many of the great doctrines of God's word.

Some preachers today believe that if they just stuck to the Bible there wouldn't be enough variety in their preaching to create interest. Such preachers are shamefully ignorant of the multiplicity and variety of the great doctrines of God's word.

It is essential that God's people attend the preaching of God's word on a regular basis because they cannot get an adequate measure of the whole counsel of God if they don't. As a pastor it

grieves me that so many of our people attend the preaching services on such a hit and miss basis and because of this they can't possibly get any adequate measure of the whole counsel of God.

In Isaiah 40:6 God said to the preacher Isaiah, "Cry out! The preacher replied What shall I cry?" And the answer of God to all his preachers is, the message of God in his word. In Jonah 3:2 God says to the preacher Jonah, "Arise go unto Nineveh, that great city and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." This is what God's preachers are to preach, the message that God sends them to preach and the message that God sends them to preach is the word of God, all of it.

The average preacher seems to think in terms of "What kind of a building can we build?" This certainly is different from the preachers in the Bible. They had a message from God and their business was to proclaim that message! There is nothing in God's word that does not need to be preached by God's man. God's charge to his preachers today as in every age is "Preach the word!"

THE PREACHER'S EDUCATION

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15

Anti-intellectualism characterizes many Christians today. They're against an educated ministry. They almost glory in the ignorance of their preachers. Someone has called such thinking the “cult of the amateur” mentality.

Others who are not necessarily anti-intellectual nevertheless see no need for the preacher to get an education. This is due largely to the low view they have of the ministry in general. When people have a low view of the ministry they will naturally have a low view of the need to train for the ministry. The reason so many today see no need for formal education for the ministry is because they see the minister as basically the head of a social organization who has to have a good personality or as a go-getter promoter who knows how to get a lot of people to join the church, or as an entertaining speaker who works for an hour or two each week. With such ideas of the ministry we might as well close our colleges and seminaries because such preachers would only need a high school education.

God's word takes quite a different view of the need for an educated ministry. In II Timothy 2:2 Paul the apostle tells Timothy of the necessity of training preachers for the gospel ministry when he says, “And the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Historically Christians in general have always believed in the importance of an educated ministry. Did you know that originally our colleges in America were founded by Christians for the purpose of training ministers of the gospel? Harvard and Yale were both founded for that purpose. Almost every one of the schools which Baptists have founded in America was founded for the special purpose of training ministers of the gospel.

II Timothy 2:15 indicates how very important it is for God's preachers to be educated for the ministry. Paul is speaking to young preacher Timothy concerning things he needed to know about the gospel ministry and he says “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” This statement raises some very important questions.

WHAT IS THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE EDUCATION NEEDED BY GOD'S PREACHERS?

In what should they be educated? “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” It is the word of truth, the word of God, the Bible that men are to study in order to be able to rightly divide. What subjects do preachers need to study? First and foremost a preacher must be educated in the knowledge of God's word. It doesn't matter what else he knows if he doesn't know God's word. The preacher needs an education in the things of God. Other education is helpful and important but it is education in the things of God which is essential to God's preacher. The thing which makes a preacher complete spiritually and throughly prepared and fitted to every work he has to do is the

word of God. Paul says in II Timothy 3:16-17 that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

When my brother first started school at Oklahoma Baptist University he was standing in line to register and one of these liberal professors asked him what he was planning to major in. My brother replied with a little bit of surprise, “I’m going to major in Bible because I’m going to be a preacher.” That professor tried and tried to talk him into majoring in government or science or history or psychology saying that he could study the Bible later on but now he needed some other major. But the preacher, God’s man, ought to study and go to school and build his library with one thought in mind and that is to learn God’s word.

There are several subjects that interconnect and go along with God’s word that are important for the preacher to study, subjects such as the original languages in which the Bible was written; Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New. Christian history is another important subject God’s man needs to study. How to construct and deliver a sermon also is important. A preacher needs to learn how to preach and to teach the gospel. All these things help the preacher learn to better preach God’s word.

HOW IS A PREACHER TO LEARN THE BOOK HE IS TO PREACH?

God’s preacher needs two kinds of education. He needs a **formal** education in the things of God if possible; education received in a classroom situation with specific topics to be studied. And he needs what I am going to call **personal** education in the things of God. This kind of education is absolutely essential whether he is able to get a formal education or not. A preacher will, after the prescribed number of years, complete his formal education but his personal education in the things of God will never end. A preacher never completes this aspect of his education. He will never get through studying God’s word for himself and on his own.

In both his formal education and his personal education there are two essential aspects of education that must be present: There must be intellectual education. This is, facts must be placed into the mind. The head must be educated, and there must be devotional education, edification of the heart of the man. Either of these aspects without the other is totally inadequate and even dangerous to the preacher.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY FOR GOD’S PREACHERS TO BE EDUCATED?

First of all because God’s word commands his preachers to study. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The Greek word translated study here means to exert oneself, to give diligence, to use great industry, to do one’s best to be able to rightly divide the word of truth. This command certainly means to do private and personal study of the things of God in his word and it means to seek formal education in the things of God in his word if at all possible.

Secondly it is necessary for God’s preachers to be educated in the things of God because as Paul states in II Timothy 2:15 that God’s preachers are to be workmen for the Lord. “Study to show

thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed...” A workman needs training and study and tools for his craft. Preaching the gospel is a skillful work. Handling the word of God aright is a skillful work that requires a skillful minister. Anyone who learns a trade has to learn how to handle his tools and work the material that he has to work. When a man wants to be a mechanic it is usually best for him to start out working under the supervision, guidance, correction, instruction, and encouragement of people more experienced than he in mechanics. If a doctor has to study in order to be able to cure the body, why shouldn't a preacher study for the much more difficult task of ministering the word of God to the souls of men?

If a preacher's duty is to declare God's message then he must know what God's message is and know it thoroughly. The preacher must know the Book, must know it first hand, must know it through and through. No preacher can preach what he does not know. God doesn't give men special revelations anymore therefore it is essential that a preacher know what he preaches. I Timothy 3:2 says that one of the qualifications for a bishop is that he must be *apt to teach*, that is he must have the ability to explain God's word correctly. If a man is going to teach and explain God's word to others he needs to learn all he can about his subject.

Augustine was a great preacher recognized by all but he did not know Hebrew and only knew a little about Greek. In his preaching and writing he misinterpreted and mistranslated the word repent as “do penance” and the word faith as “it is done” and because so many blindly accepted what he said it took 1100 years and the great Protestant Reformation to clear up these errors.

There are many doctrines in the Bible all of which must be preached if the whole counsel of God is to be proclaimed. These doctrines must be studied and learned. For example, there is what we call Christology or the study of the doctrine of Christ; who he is, truly man and truly God yet one person undivided and unconfused in these two natures. There is the doctrine of the atoning death of Christ. To be adequately understood this great doctrine must be studied. The atoning work of Christ involves such things as substitution, reconciliation, and imputation.

Then there is the doctrine of the Trinity. One must have some basic knowledge about this great doctrine if he is to preach the gospel. This takes real and serious study! In this sense the gospel is not simple at all!

Preachers are charged with defending the faith and it takes a skilled workman to do so. A man must have every possible intellectual tool to do so. Nowadays pulpit committees usually ask, “Can he build a building? Can he put on a program? Can he get along with people?” Rather than “Does he know the Book?”

Every man who is preparing for the ministry needs three things. He needs time, he needs direction in his studies, and he needs spiritual knowledge. Most men do not have the time or the tools or the self-discipline to educate themselves in God's word to the point of adequately preaching the word.

Sometimes those who are against an educated ministry will say “After all Charles Spurgeon was perhaps the greatest preacher who ever lived and he never went to college!” Well, this is true! Spurgeon started preaching at the age of 19 and never got a college education. Others have also

been good preachers without formal educations and training but they could have been so much better had they had college and seminary training. Charles Spurgeon, however, was the first to recommend to others the need of formal training for the ministry and he started a Bible college at his church for that very purpose.

ARE THERE ANY BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF GOD'S PREACHERS RECEIVING A FORMAL EDUCATION?

We read often in I & II Samuel and I & II Kings of the sons of the prophets. Sons of the prophets means disciples of the prophets and these young men evidently lived in a building together according to II Kings 6:1. There was a school or college of these disciples of the prophets at Ramah which was evidently founded by the prophet Samuel according to I Samuel 19:20. These were also schools of these disciples of the prophets at Bethel and Gilgal and Jericho and these schools were under the supervision of the prophet Elisha. Elisha evidently trained young preachers to read and to teach God's word and in the history of God's dealings with Israel. Some students of the Bible see evidence in God's word that sacred music was taught in these schools of the prophets.

In the New Testament the twelve apostles sat in the school of Christ at the feet of Christ for three and one half years of formal specialized training for their work. The twelve received intellectual training in the Lord's sermons and other instruction and devotional training in their personal daily contact with him. Paul the apostle spent two years teaching in a school. It is called in Acts 19:9 the school of one Tyrannus at Ephesus.

Paul tells us in II Timothy 2:2 that the local pastor has a great responsibility in providing training for preachers that God calls in his own congregation. *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* Men who are called of God to preach should study under their own pastors. Spurgeon met once a week with his preacher boys to instruct them until there came to be so many that he had to organize a school just for them.

ARE THERE ANY BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL STUDY AND EDUCATION OF GOD'S PREACHERS?

In I Peter 1:10-11 we read how the Old Testament prophets studied much concerning the salvation of the Lord. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the suffering of Christ, and the glory that should follow." The prophet Daniel studied books in order to understand the prophecies of the seventy weeks. Daniel writes in Daniel 9:2, "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."

Paul the apostle read and studied much even in the very late years of his life and even though he received many special revelations from God. In II Timothy 4:13 while he was in prison at Rome

he wrote to Timothy and asked him to send him his books and parchments thus revealing that he wished to read and study them. “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou come, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.”

In Timothy 4:13 Paul instructs the preacher Timothy to spend much time in the private reading of the scriptures. “Til I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

All of God’s preachers must constantly spend the major portion of their time in personal study of God’s word. Pastors must serve their churches as full-time pastors if at all possible. Serious study of God’s word requires more time than a man with another job and a family can ordinarily find. Tragically many preachers do not study. They spend an hour maybe on Saturday night getting something together for Sunday morning. This is totally inadequate.

WHAT ARE SOME DANGERS INVOLVED IN A PREACHER GETTING A FORMAL EDUCATION?

There is a danger of the preacher letting formal education create pride in the heart. “I’m somebody. I hold such and such a degree from such and such a school!” True education does not make a man proud. It makes him more humble because it brings him to realize how very little he actually knows. Education ought to produce humility because it is only by the grace of God that a man has the desire and the opportunity for an education. Education that causes a man to forget his utter dependence on the Holy Spirit is harmful rather than helpful. Pride is Satan’s primary sin. Pride is number one on the list of things God hates in Proverbs 6:16. “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him...” and number one on the list is “...a proud look...”

Secondly, there is the danger of shrinking back from his opportunity to preach the gospel when a preacher does not have a formal education; having an inferiority complex so to speak because of his lack of a formal education. I read about a preacher down in Louisiana who told a friend that he was going to resign his church because a lot of his people were college students. He wasn’t a college man and he thought that his church needed a college man as its pastor. That preacher’s friend told him something very important when he said, “Preacher, there is one thing that those college men and women don’t know and that is the Bible. God didn’t call you to preach science or government or math. He called you to preach his word and the word is what those people don’t know. On that basis you should never resign.” No preacher who does not have a college or seminary education should feel inferior to those who have these things if he is conscientiously *studying* God’s word.

Thirdly, there is the danger of a church concluding that a seminary education or a doctor’s degree automatically qualifies a man to be the pastor of their church. I know of a church in Oklahoma City whose pulpit committee set as its very first requirement for their next preacher that he had to be no older than 42 and that he had to have a doctor’s degree. It is wrong for a church to make holding a doctor’s degree a major consideration in whether it calls a man as its pastor! A man may be an educated lost man, an unregenerate preacher with a doctor’s degree. The pulpit committee needs to find out if its candidate knows the Lord and knows the Book. Charles Spurgeon was certainly correct when he said the degree of S.S. (Saved Sinner) is more

important than M.A. or D.D. If a man does not know Christ he cannot preach Christ no matter what degree he has after his name!

A fourth danger involved in a preacher's getting a formal education is the danger of seeking his education at some liberal institution where God's word is doubted and questioned and attacked. The Bible does not sanction ministerial training at any institution which casts doubt upon or repudiates God's verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible word. This is one of the things at stake in the controversy that rages in the Southern Baptist Convention today; shall we continue to tolerate professors in our schools who question and deny the inerrancy of God's holy word? Originally our colleges in America were founded to train ministers of the gospel. Now they are apostate centers of humanism, socialism, and Marxism.

GOD'S PREACHER AND FALSE PREACHERS

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” I Timothy 4:6

The apostle Paul tells us in II Corinthians 11:13-14 that Satan has his ministers, his apostles, and his doctrines. There have always been false prophets or false preachers in this world. The word of God gives an amazing amount of space to these false preachers. In Acts 20:29-31, Paul describes the work of these false preachers. “For I know this,” says Paul addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus “that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” Paul says here that false preachers do three things.

Not sparing the flock means that they will fleece the flock instead of feeding it. They will make merchandise of the flock, devouring widow's houses in the name of religion. Thomas Brooks said, “False prophets eye your goods more than your good.”

A second thing Paul says false preachers do is speak(ing) perverse things, that is they will teach all kinds of damnable doctrines. They will deny the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the scriptures. They will deny that Jesus Christ the virgin born Son of God came in history, lived a sinless life, performed mighty miracles, died for sinners, and rose again from the dead.

Albert Schweitzer who is often portrayed as a great Christian missionary said in his book *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* that “The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the kingdom of God, who founded the kingdom of heaven upon earth and died to give his work its final consecration never had any existence.” This perverse thing was uttered by a false prophet!

Awhile back I heard about a liberal preacher who told his congregation that what Christians need to tell their hearers as they witness to them is not that those hearers are lost and need to be saved but rather that those hearers are already saved and just need to realize this fact. Again this is perversity uttered by a false preacher!

A third thing Paul says false preachers do is “draw(ing) away disciples after them,” that is they cause divisions and offences among God's people. All three of these things point out the destructive nature of the work of false preachers.

The purpose of false preachers in Satan's plan is to deceive the saved and prevent the salvation of the lost. Now these false preachers don't have a sign on the outside of their churches which says “False Preacher Is Pastor Here.” No, these preachers are sneaky, crafty, cunning, they are “crept in unawares” and “come in privately” and “privately bring in damnable heresies” as the scriptures describe them.

Earl Goff a former communist testified several years ago before a congressional committee, “We received training on how to work in the churches and guide them to the left in their thinking. Following our training we were assigned to leading churches to carry on this task of boring from within.” Here is a man who confessed that he and his comrades stealthily and dishonestly wormed their ways into positions of leaderships in the churches in the United States in order to turn the churches toward communism in their thinking.

False preachers are also characterized by God’s word as often being immoral men. Paul describes them in this way in Philippians 3:18-19. “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” The Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:15-16 that the fruits of false preacher’s lives, their immorality, reveal their true character. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” The fruit of fornication bear witness to the true characters of Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert.

In the book of I Timothy Paul is instructing preachers in how to handle themselves in the church and he says, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” In I Timothy 4:6 Paul deals with how God’s preacher is to behave in relation to the false doctrines and false preachers which arise. In considering the subject of God’s preacher and false preachers let us try to answer three important questions:

HOW SHOULD GOD’S PREACHER RESPOND TO FALSE PREACHERS?

What should he do about false preachers when he discovers them and their false doctrines? At least three things according to the scriptures. First, he should faithfully and earnestly warn the sheep under his care of these false preachers and their false doctrines.

I Timothy 4:6 says, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ...” These things are those things of which he had just spoken in verses 1-5 of this chapter; those who depart from the faith and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, and who speak lies in hypocrisy, etc.

In Acts 20:29-31 Paul says that he took great pains to warn the people at Ephesus of the dangers of false preachers. “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” Paul consistently and continually warned those in his charge night and day. He ceased not to warn them even when some may have sought to get him to quit. Paul was at Ephesus three years and all that time he never ceased warning God’s people of the false preachers who arise. Paul warned every one of the people at Ephesus.

Furthermore, Paul warned them with much love and concern because he ceased not to warn them with tears. Paul shed tears at the thought of what damage would be done by false preachers among God's people. Oh that all preachers had this much concern for God's people. Paul speaks of his tears over this matter again in Philippians 3:18 where he says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame."

A second thing involved in the proper response of God's preacher to false preachers is that he should clearly expose them for what they are. In Romans 16:17 Paul says "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them (identify them) which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." False preachers and their followers are to be marked and identified or exposed and then avoided as if they had the plague. If we are to avoid them then they must of course be identified as false preachers.

In II Timothy 3:1-5 Paul warns God's people to turn away from false preachers "...from such turn away." If you watch those people on TV you can't help but be affected by their errors so I urge you, I implore you, turn away from these TV preachers who preach a perverse gospel of easy-believism and who seek to fleece you with all their schemes and programs!

A third thing God's preacher should do about false preachers is to zealously stand up to them and do battle for the truth. Jude is dealing with false preachers in his little book and he says in verse three, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." The Greek word that is translated "contend" here means contend strongly. Earnestly contend for the faith means contend strongly. Earnestly contend for the faith means contend with zeal, a serious and solemn and urgent zeal for the truth. God's preacher and people are to earnestly contend for the faith because of the extreme dangers posed by false prophets. We are not told to ignore or to tolerate false doctrine but to earnestly contend for the true faith, to do battle in defending the faith from Satan's attacks.

HOW DID GOD'S PREACHERS IN BIBLE TIMES RESPOND TO FALSE PREACHERS?

The Old Testament prophets constantly and faithfully warned people concerning the false prophets. They exposed them for what they were. They contended strongly with them on occasion. In Isaiah 56:11, Isaiah describes false prophets in graphic terms depicting their covetousness when he calls them "...greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain."

God's preachers in the New Testament repeatedly warned of false prophets. In Matthew 7:15 the Lord Jesus graphically described the awful danger of false prophets. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves." Should God's preacher today point out the dangers and false doctrines of other denominations in his preaching? The Lord Jesus did! The Lord pointed out the sects in his day and denounced them. In Matthew 16:6 he said to his disciples, "beware of the leaven (corrupting influence) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." In Mark 8:15 he warned of the dangers of a sect called the Herodians. In

Revelation 2:6 the Lord denounces the Nicolaitins. Here he speaks of "...the deeds of the Nicolaitins which I also hate."

How did other preachers of the New Testament era respond to false preachers? Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, pointed out a false prophet named Bar Jesus when he spoke of "...a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus." Peter warns his readers in II Peter 2:1-3 that many shall be deceived by false preachers and that these false preachers will make merchandise of their followers. In Jude 17-19 Jude tells his first readers to remember how the apostles had warned them against false prophets who should arise.

In Philippians 3:2 Paul is talking about false preachers when he says, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of concision." Paul constantly contended with the Judaizers.

Some people just don't like the preacher naming names of false religions and false preachers. Paul named names in his preaching and even wrote some of those names down in God's word. In II Timothy 2:17-18 Paul names Hymenaeus and Philetus who erred concerning the truth of the resurrection. "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of who are Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." In II Timothy 4:10 Paul names Demas who had forsaken him and his gospel because Demas loved this present world more than the things of God. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." God's preachers should not hesitate in naming those persons or religions who deny the inerrancy of the scripture and God's special creation of the world, the deity of Christ, the substitutionary death of Christ and who teach other heresies.

WHY SHOULD GOD'S PREACHER RESPOND TO FALSE PREACHERS IN THIS WAY?

Why should God's preacher warn the sheep concerning false preachers in this world? Why should he expose those false prophets for what they are? Why should he be ready and equipped to do battle against these false preachers in the interest of the truth?

First of all he should respond in these ways because Paul says in our text that good ministers of Jesus Christ respond this way. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ." A major part of the preacher's work is to put his hearers in remembrance of certain things because people are so apt to forget. Timothy would be a good minister of Jesus Christ Paul says if he would determine to warn against and expose and oppose false preachers. A good minister of Jesus Christ points out false preachers and false doctrines and the dangers involved. When a preacher warns his people of these things he shows himself to be a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, God's preacher should respond to false preachers like this because of the danger false preachers present to the souls of men. False preachers deceive and delude and forever ruin the souls of men. One of Satan's most effective weapons is the false preacher who preaches a false gospel. "False teachers are hell's greatest enrichers", said one of the Puritans. The best way to prevent poor souls from being deceived and deluded by false preachers is for God's preacher to expose these false preachers for what they really are so that people may avoid them and run from them. Paul would have the preacher Timothy remind his hearers of the dangers of these false

preachers Paul compares the errors of false preachers to deadly gangrene. In II Timothy 2:17, he says, “And their word will eat as doth a canker (or gangrene): of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus.” Gangrene cannot be tolerated in a body. It will bring great damage and soon death.

Thirdly God’s preacher should respond to false preachers as we have shown here because his job as shepherd requires that he protect the sheep. Faithful shepherds give clear warning when danger is near. God’s word teaches that God’s preachers are to warn their flocks. They are to put them on their guards against the wolves, the false preachers. Thus they are to protect their sheep from the wolves in sheep’s clothing, from the dangers of false preachers and their false doctrines.

Finally God’s preacher should respond to false preachers in this way because he loves his sheep and loves his Lord. Preachers who name the names of false preachers are often called intolerant and unloving. Today we have become so tolerant that we will overlook almost anything in our churches except a preacher who takes this God given responsibility seriously! A shepherd guards his sheep and warns them concerning wolves, false preachers, false religions, and false doctrines because he loves his sheep and he loves his Lord. Such a faithful pastor is not being unloving at all! It is love for his sheep and love for his Lord that causes the shepherd to rip off the disguises of the false preachers and reveal the real characters of the enemies of God’s people.

Many preachers and other Christians today are afraid to zealously contend for the faith because they don’t want to be considered unloving or harsh or intolerant. Isaiah describes preachers who keep quiet about the more unpleasant aspects of God’s word when he says in Isaiah 56:10, “His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.”

PAYING THE PREACHER

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” I Corinthians 9:14.

The subject of paying the preacher is rarely dealt with in today’s pulpits. I personally have never heard or even read a sermon of this subject. So why preach a message on the matter of paying the preacher?

This subject must be preached because the matter of paying the preacher is a part of the whole counsel of God in his written word. This subject must be preached because it falls within the responsibilities given to the churches in the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20, where the Lord Jesus commands us to teach them “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” One of the things the Lord Commands the local churches to do is pay their pastors. Preachers must preach on this subject because if they don’t the matter usually will never be properly considered by God’s people.

As we look at I Corinthians 9:14, there are three things to which I believe the Lord would call our attention. First,

GOD’S WILL STATED

In verse 14 Paul the apostle plainly states God’s will concerning the matter of paying the preacher. “Even so hath God ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”

What does a pastor do? What is his God-given work? A lot of people have it in their minds that a pastor doesn’t really have much to do except stand in the pulpit on Sunday morning and let the Holy Spirit fill his mouth with a message for that hour. A lot of people actually think that a pastor doesn’t work. It always pains me very deeply to hear people say that so and so doesn’t work anymore, he’s a preacher now!

One time a woman told me when I went to work in a factory that now I would find out what it was like to work for a living. At the same factory a man said to me, “If I could preach like you, I would never work again.” Well, on the contrary my friends, a good pastor, a God-called pastor, works as hard or harder than anyone in his congregation. And by the way, one who makes such statements shows a total lack of a scriptural concept of the gospel ministry.

God’s word says in Acts 6:4 that the pastors are to give themselves continually to the ministry of the word and to prayer. This includes a lot of things. This is what the pastor is to be doing and our text tells us that it is God’s will for a church to take care of its pastor’s temporal and material needs. In short the church of Jesus Christ is to pay the preacher. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” God himself has appointed that his churches pay their preachers, that they take care of the material needs of their pastors.

Some people seem to have the idea that since the preacher is God's man he can somehow get along on less than others because after all God will take care of him, even miraculously if necessary. It is true that in Bible times God sometimes miraculously provided for the material needs of his preachers. Such was the case with Elijah when God sent ravens and an angel to feed him in the wilderness. But it is also true that God has chosen ordinarily to use human means to feed his preachers today. God's chosen means for meeting the temporal needs of his preachers is the local church paying his salary or the equivalent thereof.

The pastor has the same needs as every other member of the church. He has the same utility bills as you do. He has to buy the same expensive groceries for his family as you do. He has to burn the same expensive gasoline in his car that you do and much of it is spent in ministering to the members of the church. The pastor has to pay the same taxes you do. Yes he does! Some people have gotten the idea somewhere that preachers don't have to pay taxes. I don't know where this idea originated but it is absolutely without any shred of fact to back it up. Preachers get no tax relief for being preachers in any way, shape, or form. And friend if you ever find out how a man can get a tax break for being a preacher, please come and tell me because I want to take advantage of it!

Some people think the preacher doesn't have the same material needs that other people have. I once heard a man say when discussing the salary of the new pastor who was coming to his church, "Well Bro. So-and-So doesn't have any of the bad habits some of us do and so he doesn't need to be paid as much as other people might."

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Why has God ordained that preachers in his churches shall live of the gospel, that they shall be full-time pastors with no outside employment?

From a practical standpoint the Lord has ordained that a church pay its pastor a living wage so the pastor can have adequate time for the ministry of the word. No pastor can do justice to a church or to God when that pastor has to give his time, his thought, and his energies to secular duties. A pastor must have a lot of time, full time, to study and pray and prepare himself for his messages. Many churches get poor preaching because they don't pay their preachers a living wage and thus their pastors don't have adequate time to prepare. Matthew Henry said, "Scandalous maintenance makes scandalous ministers." I attended a church in Oklahoma City on several occasions whose pastor worked full time for the government and this fact was very obvious in his preaching and in the condition of his flock. His sermons were stale and repetitious and his flock was often in confusion.

The Lord has ordained that a church should support its pastor in a material and financial way so the pastor will not be distracted from his ministry by the fact that he does not know how he is going to support his family. A pastor is distracted from giving himself continually to the word and to prayer when he has to constantly wonder how he's going to meet this week's bills. The sad fact is that many churches don't take care of their pastors in the way the Lord ordained. Paying the preacher a living wage is ordained of God. Notice that the scripture says "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." It says live,

not just survive. “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”

I know of a certain deacon’s wife in a church in Oklahoma City who was always opposed to raising the pastor’s salary. But that woman quickly changed her mind about the matter when the Lord called her husband to preach! When a member of the church gets a cost of living raise at his place of employment he ought to be concerned that his pastor get one at the same time because the fact that he got a cost of living raise means that the cost of living is going up for everyone.

The value a church places upon the ministry of the word and the preaching of the gospel of Jesus can be seen in its attitude toward paying the preacher. This is an unchanging, infallible principle. I know of a church which not too long ago had one of these toe tappin’ Stamps Baxter stomp faster quartets come and sing about six or seven little shallow ditties which they called Gospel music. That church gave that quartet \$75, put them up over night in a motel, fed them, and then several members gave them more cash as they left after the service. But the next Sunday that church had a visiting preacher come and preach unto them the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and they never even so much as verbally expressed their appreciation to him. That says something about where that church places its values!

Some people are just against paying the preacher anything like a living wage. They just believe a preacher ought not be paid much so that he will remain humble and not become a big-shot. These people have the attitude of the deacon who was fond of praying “Lord keep our pastor humble and we’ll do everything we can to help!”

Many churches send to their missionaries what actually ought to go to their pastors. A church ought to adequately provide, first for its own pastor so as to have a strong home base from which to work and then as the church grows it will be able to help support missionaries around the world. I have a preacher friend in the state of Virginia whose church sponsors 25 missionaries and they really like to tell you about what a great missionary church they are. But their pastor has to sell tractors on the side in order to make ends meet for his family. That doesn’t make sense! It’s certainly not scriptural! Such churches have missed the scriptural order of mission work that the Lord has given to the churches in his Commission to them. Our Lord tells us that we are to begin in Jerusalem (at home) and then go to Judea and Samaria and then to the uttermost part of the earth.

Some people are always overly concerned as to whether their churches can afford to pay their pastors a living wage. But listen! Just ten tithing members can support a pastor full time at a salary which is the average of all those tithing. If God’s people would all honestly tithe, if they would all bring in ten percent of their gross incomes to God’s storehouse which is the church, there would never be any problem with having enough financial means to do God’s work right. The Lord Jesus taught the principle of a pastor not having to work at a secular job on the side when he sent the disciples out on a preaching mission and said to them in Matthew 10:9-10, “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”

“Even so that the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” We need to be careful to note here that this principle works two ways. Not only does this verse teach that the church is to pay its pastor a living wage, it also teaches that the pastor is responsible for living on what the church provides for him. A pastor is responsible for being a full time pastor and not being involved in money making schemes and occupations outside of the church. He is required by God to live of the gospel!

It always bothers me to hear of these preachers who work at lucrative jobs such as selling insurance along with their pastoring. It always bothers me to hear these men announce very proudly and even self-righteously that they don’t take money for their preaching or that at the end of this year they are going to give back to their churches the salaries which their churches have paid them. The word of God says, “They which preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.”

It is interesting to note in I Corinthians 9:12 that Paul exempts himself and Barnabas from this command for the church to pay the preachers a living wage. The reason he did so was that at this particular time in this very unique situation Paul was under strong attack and criticism by some who said that he had no right to preach to them because he was not even an apostle. These people were looking for any little thing in his life and work to criticize. Paul exempted himself and Barnabas so that he could not be accused of blowing his own horn when he dealt with the matter of paying the preacher. Even Paul’s critics would have to recognize that he was dealing with this matter because what he was teaching was right and just and not because he was seeking any advantage for himself.

GOD’S WILL ILLUSTRATED

You will notice here that our text begins with the words “Even so hath the Lord ordained...” “Even so” refers us back to what has preceded this statement.

As we look back over verses 7-13 we see five illustrative arguments Paul uses to demonstrate the necessity of paying the preacher. In verse 7 he asks, “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?” Paul is saying here that a soldier expects to be paid when he goes to war. “Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?” The man who plants a vineyard expects to eat the fruit of that vineyard. “Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” The owner of a flock expects to be supported by the sale of the milk of that flock. The people in all three of these illustrative occupations expect to get a livelihood from their labors Paul says. It is reasonable for them to expect to do so.

These three illustrations reveal how reasonable it is for God’s pastors to expect to get a livelihood from their Spiritual labors. The pastor is to give himself to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine as Paul says in I Timothy 4:13. Thus it is only reasonable that while he is giving to others his labor in Spiritual things he should reap of their carnal things as Paul says in verse 11.

In verse 8-10 Paul goes on to say that paying the preacher is not only a matter of being reasonable but that the law of God teaches it as well. “Say I these things as a man (or just because they are reasonable to human wisdom)? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.

Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written..." The law says in Deuteronomy 25:4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." In Bible times grain was separated from the husks by having one's oxen walk back and forth over it on the threshing floor. Some farmers evidently were so greedy that they would muzzle the mouths of their oxen to keep them from eating the grain as they walked over it so that they could get every bit of profit they could possibly squeeze out of their crops. God sees such a practice as cruel and inhumane and so he forbade his people in Israel to do it.

But Paul goes on to say here that in this law God is not just taking care of the dumb brute beasts. He is teaching men the principle of humanness. He is teaching a divine principle that a laborer should have his reward, that he should partake of the benefits of his labors. Those pastors who labor for our souls' good should not have their mouths muzzled. They teach us the way of eternal life. It is surely no great thing for them to expect that while doing so they should receive from us adequate support for their own temporal lives.

This brings us to Paul's fifth illustration of God's will that the preacher be paid when he says in verse 13 "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" And the "even so" with which our text begins in verse 14 refers immediately back to this statement. "Even so" refers back to what we might call the law of the temple to which Paul refers in verse 13.

According to the law the priests in the Old Testament tabernacle were to receive their livelihoods from their work in the tabernacle. In Deuteronomy 18:1 God says that, "The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire and his inheritance." So the priests were to receive part of the offerings made by the people in the tabernacle. Numbers 18:21 says that all the tithes brought into the tabernacle were to go to the priests and Levites, for their support.

There is so much concerning the fact that those who worked in the tabernacle were to receive their support from their work there that I want to give you a list of some of these and ask you to read and study them at your own leisure. Deuteronomy 18:1-8 and Leviticus 6:14-17 tell us that the meat offering was to go to the priest. Leviticus 6:24-26 says that the sin offering was to go to the priest who offered it. Leviticus 7:1-10 says that all the offerings were to be used in support of the priest and so there was always plenty for the priests. Numbers 18:8-21 says that all the offerings and all the tithes were to go to the priests for their support and also that they could even sell the skins of the animals which they sacrificed. II Kings 12:16 says that the trespass money and the sin money was given to the priests so the priests not only had food provided for their tables but money for their pockets. The priests were to be well paid for their work in the Lord's service.

It is to this fact that Paul refers in our text when he uses the words, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." God's will is the same in the New Testament as it was in the Old and that is that God's ministry is to be supported by his people. Both under the law and now under the gospel God has taken care that his ministers be

well provided for. The sacrifices and offerings and tithes in the tabernacle were to go to support the priests in Israel and even so are we in Christ's churches today to support the gospel ministry.

THE TESTIMONY OF SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES CONCERNING THIS MATTER

In Galatians 6:6 where Paul says "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." "Him that is taught is the church member and "Him that teacheth" of course is the pastor. The word "communicate" means literally contribute. Here we have a command in God's word for the church member to contribute to or share with and support the pastor who teaches him in all good things. All good things here refers to temporal and material things, things needful for a comfortable existence.

In I Timothy 5:17-18 Paul says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward." The elders are the pastors of the church and "honor" is a word that includes in its meaning the matter of financial remuneration. We know this because verse 18 tells us this is what Paul is talking about. "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward." Did you know we get the word "honorarium" from this word in I Timothy 5:17? An honorarium refers to a fee for a preacher.

Actually this passage in I Timothy 5:17-18 deals with raising a pastor's salary. It says "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." Double honor is to go to the pastor who rules the church well and labors in the word and doctrine the scriptures says here. The thing in the preacher which merits double honor, a substantial raise in his salary, is not the crowds which he attracts. The thing which merits a raise in the preacher's pay is not his charm or his administrative ability. It is his ruling the church well and his laboring in the word and doctrine. The scripture says nothing about raising the preacher's salary when he golfs during the week and coffees every day up and down mainstreet and as a result preaches shallow sermons on God's love and being good. I could also mention here such verses as Matthew 10:10 and Luke 10:7.

According to the scriptures it is the duty of Christians to support with a living wage those whom God appoints over them as pastors. God has ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. Thus those who profit from a preacher's ministry and yet are not concerned about supporting that preacher are deeply in the wrong. If God ordained it then a church is not within the revealed will of God if that church is not supporting its pastor with a full time living wage. If God has ordained this then woe be to the church and to the pastor who will not carry out this instruction. Those who allow their pastor to suffer rather than have comfortable provision God will require it of them another day.