

PREACHING WITHOUT PRESSURE

Preaching no doubt is our only hope for salvation. Without it we are doomed! And yet with the knowledge of such a needful and essential commodity we ignore, abuse, misuse, and fail to protect the sanctity of its intended use. Preaching is a word that really in most circles has lost its archaic or original meaning and definition. Originally it was intended to warn, instruct, protect, teach, and guide mankind. And yet in the world we live in it's no more than a cheap form of entertainment. And at best it's an academic challenge to stimulate one's intellect. And that's within the Apostolic ranks. What is it then out there in the world? The conclusion though multifaceted, is simple. No doubt when the Bible warned of the day when there would be famine in the land of hearers of the Word, it was and is indicative of the preachers and preaching of the Word also. We would be fools to ignore the fact that the populace of a society and their desires do in fact determine what there will be an abundance of or dearth of. The great elders of the past declared and were absolutely correct when they said "*you get what you preach.*"

I would suppose that wouldn't determine *quantity* as much as it would *quality*. I am sure it is with most other preachers, I am struggling for the answers for this generation. The purview I am referring to is not outside the oneness ranks but within. The Baptist really aren't a bother to us, neither are the Catholics nor any other denominational false religion. What really is the irritant among us is the seemingly imbalance among ourselves. In other words *if what I am preaching is so right, then why is the compromiser across town growing and having what looks like success?* And what about the national mega oneness churches that attract from the four corners? Inevitably we end up trying to justify our position by condemning their practices. And no doubt for the most part, we are in part correct. But the crux of it all is never really dealt with. Really it's not just any one thing or a few things, but it is much more than that. So the real question, whether we admit it or not, that keeps echoing in the back of our heads, especially as we get on in years is, "If what I am preaching is so right, then why am I not growing like them?" Excuse me if I sound a little too flippant and I am seemingly over simplifying, but they have "*Preaching without Pressure.*"

They say that people who dive must absolutely be careful while leaving a high-pressure area, on their ascent to the top. They must do so very slowly so as not to get what they call the bends. And often in extreme depths divers are put in a decompression chamber, and they slowly release the pressure as to not kill the divers. Changing depths too quickly can give you the bends or even kill you. Please excuse the allegory if it is too silly for you. More often than not the average person seeks out an environment that has *less pressure* not more. Especially in this generation, that has convinced us that it is all right to trade off hard living for soft. And that this is the blessing of God. It's no wonder then when things get hot and heavy in a pressure filled environment that people tend to run. And if the change is too abrupt, they suffer the discomfort of the bends or death spiritually. It seems to me that the mega churches and rapid growth gurus have a common denominator, that being it is less pressure to be here instead of where you came from!

Though it is out dated, the belief used to be that *pressure built character* and that hard times developed greatness in people. The people that are the most quoted from our past are usually men who endured incredibly difficult situations. Many of them were not and would not be welcomed in many pulpits today if they were alive. And yet the very verbiage and essence of these great notables are heralded like they were their personal friends.

It is a fact even in the world spectrum that during the Great Depression and catalysmic times, people headed to churches and synagogues in tremendous numbers. And during times of prosperity and peace attendance to places of worship declines along with the morals. Even in outward dress and styles as far as modesty, they have noted changes. During hard times they say the hemline gets longer, and then the opposite occurs during prosperous times. It gets shorter. Persecution never made the church weak or extinct, but magnified it. Prosperity??? You draw the conclusion.

The modern confluence is that we all get along. The *old hardliners* are now standing up in national conferences and stating that they don't want to be known as mean preachers. Go learn what that means? It seems that many men have just given in. No one wants to stir up the commodious chamber, or put any pressure on. *Preaching without pressure* will be the demise of many! But will it be our demise, I pray not. *Preaching without pressure* is nothingness! Deep depths and pressure all around us gives us certain definition. It limits movement and activity. It makes or conforms the individual to *the desire of the pressure*. Actually in physics, certain life has form and definition because of atmospheric pressure. Given an environment void of that pressure it would have no definition or form. Really water takes on the form of whatever container it is in, and this is a type of pressure. It is restricted and confined as long as it is in the glass. It will conform to the curvature and shape of the glass. Take away the glass or the containment surrounding it and it will splatter every which way, and no longer resemble the glass at all. *Preaching without pressure* is much the same way. With no discernible perimeters and pressure, man just flows in the direction of least resistance. When a man says that God did not call me to be a policeman, and that *I'm just going to preach it and let the people decide*. Then he is *preaching without pressure*.

If preaching means no more to him than that, then he is a hireling who will run (like water with no perimeters) when the wolf comes. I say that if it was anointed and worth preaching, then it is worth enforcing or policing! Did Paul say "ask for the oversight?" No he said take it! Did he instruct Timothy to suggest, sympathize, and request when he preached? No he said Reprove, Rebuke with all long suffering! If what we preach is just suggestive then we had better shut our doors and forget the whole thing. Even the Independent Baptist has a better understanding than you. Attorney Gibbs made famous "Preference or Conviction" he said a conviction you will die for! But a preference you will change. So why you may ask, is the other church growing by leaps and bounds? Why is everyone so seemingly attracted to them? Is it the preacher's magnanimous personality? Is it their dynamic music department? Is it their large ostentatious and opulent buildings? Is it the geographic location? Is it the large family center? Is it all the exciting programs? While all or any of these could and probably lend credence to the fact, the real reason

is, they have *Preaching without pressure!*

How many times have we tried to deduce their operation and say, well it's this or that? ***It's hard to define something that has no set parameters or definition.*** They say, we will preach and you define your own parameters. No doubt at all, in these kinds of churches it varies. Each has a greater or lesser amount of room to navigate. But both are headed toward apostasy. The ascent may be gradual and not all that noticeable at first. But no doubt they are headed that way. If there was ever a time, dear saint of God that you need to pray for your preacher, it is now! If ever you have had the thought of holding up his weary hands it better be now. Thank God if you go to your church and the atmosphere is charged with the Holy Ghost, and the anointed preaching puts pressure on you to change and not remain the same. Oh that He (the Holy Ghost) would not only change us from what we once were or are (undefined-unrecognizable) to transforming us by the renewing of our minds! Preaching that no longer demands and no longer challenges us to be more like Him, but allows you to remain what you decide is right, *is not preaching.* It's just good sermons and speeches by hireling orators. All they care for is furthering their careers, reputations and wealth. *Preaching without pressure* is the call of the hour! They will continue to leave your church and mine to ascend to a level of less pressure. That's why when you see these purveyors of the *great falling away*; they will say I am happier than I've ever been! And why not? ***There's no pressure!*** Seldom in comparison to what is happening around us, there are some who are seeking greater depths. That is to say that not every growing church is a "*Preaching without Pressure*" church! ***But how you grow, and what you grow makes the difference. Water seeks its own level, when left to itself.***

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