

## **Strokers and Sirens**

The design engineer of any production type machine designs not only for the proper function of the machine but also its malfunction. Wired into the overall electrical plan of the machine are sensors that do nothing else but signal a malfunction. These sensors that wail the siren, or whatever, are extremely necessary for the welfare of the machine.

These guardians of improper operation sit passively by (unless alerted by a malfunction ) while their many other electrical cousins keep the production belt moving along.

I have come to realize, via the course of some 50 odd years in the ministry, that the preacher that is ONLY (please notice the word, I said “only” ) a siren that wails loudly at a malfunction in the church. Can never perfect a church! Likewise, a preacher that operates without the malfunction sensor will fail to produce a holiness church.

On close scrutiny of the Bible, it becomes clear that God’s man is not “either, or” but a

combination of both. The Apostle Paul is an excellent case study. In the book of Corinthians, he wails the siren of malfunction.

We are alerted to the Corinthian's improper operation of the Lord's Supper. When the misuse of Christian liberty is detected, Paul amply warns all. The production belt jumped the track in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, and once again, Paul sounds the siren. Thank God for the sirens!

As we observe more of this remarkable man, we also see the strokes of production. In the awe-inspiring book of Hebrews, we witness the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ unfold from the Old Testament. The Thessalonians are comforted over their fear of having already missed the resurrection. Ephesians paints a tapestry of heavenly places in Christ Jesus by the strokes of the apostle. The epitome of a preacher seen in the life of Paul who was both the siren and the stroker in God's great plan—the church!

It was Paul who illustrated the workings of the body of Christ. "If the whole body *were* an

eye...?” Where, he questions, “*were* the hearing?” The point is that the proper operation of the body requires all these diverse parts. Is not the church the body of Christ? Proper operation, therefore, must require the nerve endings that sense harm, and the hand that grasps the toddling child; the eye that detects danger near and far, and the eyelid that shields from some airborne threat; the ear that receives the anguished cry, and the lips that speak the words of comfort; the feet that trod the path, and the heart that furnishes health to match the pace. The body was designed by its creator to not only sense the dangers of life but also to live life.

Children raised in homes where parents are only sirens and never strokers are maladjusted children. They are easily identified because they nervously walkabout guided only by the harsh cry of the siren. Likewise, children raised by parents that never sound the siren are just as maladjusted; these children are wild and unmanageable. Certainly, the proper rearing of children is done by parents who are strokers and sirens, for their children know the boundaries and yet enjoy their life therein. Jesus had about

as many “blessed” as He did “woes.” Who can argue the fact that Jesus Christ warned with great severity but also comforted with great compassion?

The siren, by far, is the greater attention-getter, as it should be, and yet the strokes of production sometimes receive little acclaim. Maybe it’s for this reason that some set themselves up to be only a siren and proclaim themselves of more importance than the quieter strokes of production. Sir, God never called you to be just a siren, but a combination of stroke and siren. The quiet voice of the “peacemaker” many times is overwhelmed by the scream of the “warrior.”

There are individuals that have set under strong godly men and never opened their mouths in appreciation for the lifesaving preaching and teaching, and yet wail to all about them over a human shortcoming ( not sin ) of their pastor. Their voice was never heard in testimony service, thanking God for a watchful shepherd. The vicinity of their pew seat was silent while others rang with a hearty “amen!” to a pastor’s message of hope.

The lips that criticize can never be right until they have spoken in appreciation of the same thing beforehand! In other words, if you can't be a stroker, don't be a siren. Only until you have "wept" over Jerusalem can you "curse" it.

Many afraid of the dreaded title of "compromiser" have set themselves to "siren only" mode. They wail unrelentingly at every fellowship meeting, every gathering of peers. To hear them tell it, the church has never been right and never will! And if the next preacher on the agenda doesn't join in with the same voice, then he's no doubt a compromiser. It could be, my friend, that he's just a stroker today in the great plan of God! What bedlam would prevail in a factory where every machine did nothing but sound forth the alarm of a malfunction.

God give us the grace to be all that we should be for you. A "siren" in times of malfunction and improper operation that refuses to sit quietly by in the face of false doctrine and spiritual debauchery, to "cry aloud and spare not." Let us also be "stokers" of compassion and concern that can reach the unreached, love the unloved, and teach the unlearned.

When we descend from the mount of correction,  
may we reach out to the leper along the way.

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