

Victorious Preaching

It was Saturday afternoon. The minister was visiting a nearby penitentiary and had been invited to preach on Sunday. When he was taken to the chapel in the prison, he noticed 2 black-draped chairs near the front of the auditorium. Curious about them, he asked the warden what they meant.

“These chairs,” explained the warden, “are the chairs of death. the two condemned men occupying them when you preach tomorrow will never hear another sermon.”

Circumstances such as these call for preaching that counts. Yet, while many of us may never be called upon to preach in a penitentiary to men awaiting execution, every preacher will at some time preach to someone for whom that sermon will be the last. Never knowing when that may be calls for perpetual preaching in victory.

I. Why Do We Need Victorious Preaching?

1. We hear much about Victorious Christian living, but tragic little about victorious preaching.
2. If a life of victory is expected of the man in the pew, should less be anticipated for the man in the pulpit? Should not the preacher's victorious life eventuate in victorious preaching?
3. How can the defeat in the pulpit bring security in the pew?
4. Without victorious preaching we will have carnal, fleshly, weak, preaching without the power of the Holy Spirit.

II. What Is Victorious Preaching?

1. It is what Paul described in his Corinthian letter; (II Cor. 2:1-4) *“And, I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God . . . and my speech and my preaching was not with persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*
2. That's it -- preaching that is of God, unhampered by the preacher's display of homiletic fireworks, but it is God demonstrating Himself to men through a man. The preacher becomes simply a tool in the hands of the Master as He perfect His work of art.
3. Preaching viewed from this perspective is never defeated preaching.

4. In vital preaching, one encounters the Enemy in active combat. That battle lines are drawn, not, of course, between the preacher and the congregation, but the unseen enemy is there, and any man of God who preaches without sensing his presence is probably not fulfilling his function as a warrior of the Word.
5. The challenge presented by our antagonist demands nothing less than preaching that wins.

III. How Do We Enter Into Victorious Preaching?

We preachers need to take a lesson in God's military tactics, -- II Chron 20 relates the story of an amazing military victory. Alien forces posed an ominous threat to King Jehoshaphat and his people. The successful outcome of that event reveals **four secrets**: When preaching is viewed as a battle engaging spiritual forces, the application of these secrets of victory will lead to victorious preaching.

1. **First, relax from self-effort:**

- a. Over the mountains of Judea that day King Jehoshaphat could hear the rumbling of a foreign military force of tremendous dimensions and power.
- b. His army was dwarfed by the encroaching legion, Jehoshaphat's army was totally inadequate. But just at this dismal moment, God's prophet, Jahaziel, appeared to announce, *"Be not afraid nor dismayed by the great multitude for the battle is not yours, but God's."*
- c. In other words, God was saying to the king, This is my enemy. The battle is my responsibility. The privilege of routing this intruder is mine."
- d. To the preacher of the Word, this is tremendously reassuring. *The battle is not yours, but God's.*
 - It is true that the preacher converts no one; he transforms no one; only God has this prerogative.
 - The preacher himself is God's purchased possession. He did not *save himself*. He did not *call himself to preach*. He did not *send himself* to minister.
 - He is the Lord's possession by right of creation and redemption.

When in the spirit of Romans 12:1,2 *"By the mercies of God he presents himself a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God -- he may relax from self-effort,* knowing that, though forces of opposition are great, the battle is not his, but God's. This leads to the kind of preaching that wins.

2. A **Related Secret** for Victorious Preaching **is to rely on God.**

- a. Victory will not come by relaxing self-effort unless he is at the same time actively casting himself in total reliance upon God.

- b. To rely on God does not indicate inactivity. Nor does it imply giving up. Nor does it signify that the preacher does not need to study.
- c. He is consciously admitting his limitations to win God's battle for Him and has put his life at God's disposal.
- d. He has placed himself at the Lord's command in much the same way that one's hand is voluntarily under the dominance of the mind.
- e. II Chron. 20:17 *"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. . . tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you."*

There was personal participation, but it was God's intervention that made the difference. The preacher will recognize that his consistent Christian life and prayerful preparation give God an opportunity to demonstrate His power to men.

Evidence is there that Jehoshaphat did rely on God-- seen in the manner that he went to bed on the eve of the conflict. *"They rose early in the morning and went forth."* II Chron. 20:20) His commitment to God was complete and his rest before the battle was undisturbed.

The modern day preacher may need to learn to rely upon God. One author pictures the modern 20th century preacher as a harried, overworked individual whose knees are buckling and whose nerves are snapping. Fighting God's battles in his own strength, fearful to relax his efforts lest the whole fabric of his work may unravel. We need to learn to walk in reliance upon God.

3. Third principle of victorious preaching is to **give God's message -- not our own.**
 - a. He did just that, *"Jehoshaphat stood and said, . . . believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."* (II Chron. 20:20.)
 - b. The king knew the need of ascertaining the authority of his message to his people because a nation's destiny rested on one word in that message: *believe!*
 - c. Sending an army out to battle armed only with a couple of *beliefs* is either sheer madness or mighty faith. Before passing on such instructions to others, one must be absolutely sure that this is God's message for the crisis hour.
 - d. Preaching victoriously involves this necessity --
 - the preacher must be confident of his message.
 - Is it man-made or God-given?
 - He must be sure, for only the Word from God is worthy of hearing in the 20th century crisis. For it can meet modern man's need.

There must be clear perception at this point for . . . *if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?*

- e. God's purpose cannot be accomplished through the preacher who does not know God's message for the hour.
 - The question needs to come often to the heart of God's prophet! What is God's Word to those who face the crises of their need?
 - When the answer is clear, the pulpit must proclaim it ***fearlessly and vigorously.***

4. A final secret of Victorious Preaching is to Rejoice in the Lord.
(Cf Neh 8:10)

As Jehoshaphat led his people forth into battle, they were rejoicing. *"And when he had consulted the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord . . . that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the enemy."*
(II Chron. 20:21.)

- a. Triumph was not the cause of rejoicing. Rather, trusting God for triumph, they brought forth their song. Their music was an act of faith because they had already claimed the victory.
- b. Imagine an army with carefully advancing to battle on the heels of a chorus of singers praising the Lord.

This is precisely what you would have seen if you peered over the lofty heights of Mount Zion to view the battle. They were rejoicing in the Lord in the face of direst human circumstances. But for them, circumstances were more incidental than crucial. The Lord was all that mattered.

- c. The preacher needs that attitude as he stands up to proclaim the Word of God. Circumstances will confront him that often savor of Satan.
 - Victorious preaching demands a sanctified optimism that will produce rejoicing and praise under the most adverse circumstances.
 - Victorious preaching then, begins with the preacher humbling himself before God in the release of self-effort and a conscious reliance upon His power.
 - Then, as he relates God's message in the joy of the Lord, preaching that wins is inevitable.

They saw an amazing victory! God so confused the enemy that their armies massacred one another, while not a hair of the heads of the Israelites was disturbed (20:22-25) the man of God needs to follow these secrets for preaching.

Pastors -- Feed The Flock

Elders (deacons) cannot teach the flock of God if they have not been taught. They cannot feed the flock of God unless they are given the opportunity of doing so. Elders or deacons will not even try to care for the flock scripturally unless they are encouraged, perhaps even pushed to do so.

Many and varied are the exhortations found in the Epistles of Peter, but his one is particularly direct and appealing: “*Feed the flock of God which is among you.*” (I Pet. 5:2).

- The Apostle wrote his message to the elders of the church.
- We wrote not as an apostle, but as an elder.
- He brought himself down to their level and spoke as one of them.
- He understood their problems, knew their difficulties, valued their fellowship and appreciate the opportunity which were theirs to minister to the flock.
- He first stated his position as an elder, as a witness of the sufferings of Christ and as a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, then launched into the exhortation to “*feed the flock of God which is among you.*”

I. *Feeding is a command.*

1. All life depends upon food for its growth and continued existence.
2. Plants feed upon the elements in the soil and upon air, water, light, and heat.
3. They cannot grow nor reproduce or even continue to live without food.

In the tundra of the north there was utter desolation -- no plants; not even a tree, nor shrub or even a blade of grass -- bare rocks, etc., plant life impossible.

Animals also need food for growth, domestic animals look eagerly to feeding time; shake the feed pail at the pasture gate and the calves come running, come to the hog pen with food, and they come running. Expectancy of the horse is seen by neighing and stamping when the trumpet sounds the familiar feed call.

4. As humans need food to sustain life, the church of God likewise needs food for growth, existence, ability to maintain spiritual life; ***men, feed the flock!***
 - a. Thank God, he has provided the excellent nourishment in His own Word.
 - b. But that Word must be given-- ample, well prepared food.
 - c. Given regularly and in large doses.
 - d. The church cannot thrive on reports, on lectures, on little addresses; for there is no substitute for the food the Word of God;
 - e. Deprive the flock of God of its life-giving sustenance or substitute the husks of human wisdom and that church will suffer. Those people will have spiritual malnutrition and may eventually die of starvation.

2. Feed the Flock of God is a privilege.

- a. He does not say, feed the herd, quite a difference between a herd and a flock. Many times the Scriptures refer to the people of God as the flock.
- b. Consider these portions.
Psa 77:20 *“Thou leadest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”*
Isa 40:11 *“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.”*
Luke 12:32 *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”*
Acts 20:28 *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*

Yes, there is the need of missionaries, evangelists, etc., but when someone is saved, he has entered into the family, a special ministry is laid upon the pastors to feed them. Feeding the flock means a great deal more than merely leading, administration, etc., -- for we are to feed the Word of God.

How Preachers Preach and Convert Nobody!

By Charles G. Finney

1. Their motive is to secure their own popularity, then, of course, the preaching will be adapted to that end and not to the conversion of souls to Christ.
2. The sermon contains too little truth to convert a soul.
3. They make no distinct points, and take no disturbing issues with the consciences of the hearers, thus the hearer remembers no issues and are not alarmed about their souls.
4. By avoiding preaching doctrines that are offensive to the carnal mind people remain in their lost condition.
5. By neglecting to preach about the spirituality of God’s holy law, by which is the knowledge of sin, the sinner will not see his lost condition and flee from the wrath to come.
6. They preach the Gospel as a remedy but conceal or ignore the lostness of the lost.
7. Many preach about the grace of God, but ignore the condemnation and lostness of the lost and thus they are not urged toward salvation.
8. Direct, pointed preaching to those present is neglected.
9. Searching sermons that convict and convert are not preached.

Helps for PREACHING

10. Impressions that God commands the hearers now and here to obey the truth is not felt nor urged.
11. Such preaching does not impress the hearer that he needs to commit himself on the spot and give his heart to God.
12. Give them the feeling that leaving the service and considering the subject is sufficient.
13. Make no appeals to the fear of sinner, but leave the impression that they have no reason to fear.
14. Saying so little about hell, the lost are not impressed with their need.
15. Sometimes we preachers make impressions that God is too loving to allow anyone to go to Hell.

Yes, Preachers... feed the flock!