

Wrong Reasons Why Men Enter The Preaching Ministry

by Michael Jeshurun



“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied” - Jeremiah 23:21

Many wrong reasons as to why men enter the Preaching Ministry and one of them (at least in the country where I live) is the UNEMPLOYMENT problem! Contrary to popular opinion, the world in which we live is not irreligious but VERY religious. But they seek to have a RELIGION OF THEIR OWN, and in order to maintain that false religion preachers and pastors are always in demand!

Did not the Apostle say so nearly two thousand years ago? “For the time will come when they WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they HEAP TO THEMSELVES TEACHERS, HAVING ITCHING EARS; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” [2Tim 4:3,4]

A.W. Pink wrote in his letter to Lowell Green - “Where GOD works, he always does so consistently with his own Word. What I mean by that is this: when he raises up, equips, and sends forth one of his servants, that servant will necessarily preach the WORD, and DENOUNCE ALL THAT IS OPPOSED TO THE WORD: hence, his message is bound to be UNPOPULAR, in fact hated by all who are not regenerated. Was it not thus with the Old Testament prophets? Would even the Israelites of their day endure SOUND doctrine? Would they do so when the Lord Jesus preached it? Would they when the Apostles taught it? Would they in the time of Luther and Calvin? And poor, fallen human nature is the same now! Mark it well, my dear friend, that the people to whom the Old Testament prophets, Christ and the apostles preached were not irreligious! No, indeed far from it! THEY WERE VERY RELIGIOUS: BUT THEY WERE DETERMINED TO HAVE RELIGION OF THEIR OWN, WHICH SUITED THEM, and they would not tolerate anything which condemned them. SO IT IS NOW.” [Letter to Lowell Green, August 19, 1934]

All that to say, there is money to be made in the preaching business, if only one is willing to preach what the PEOPLE want to hear. And what is it that religious people want to hear? What is the general cry from the average pew? Why this – “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits!” [Isaiah 30:10]

But the man who is truly called of God can NEVER do this. As the Apostle said – “For we can do nothing AGAINST THE TRUTH, but FOR THE TRUTH.” [2Cor 13:8]

Others have entered the ministry because their father was a preacher and the family ‘EXPECTS IT OF THEM’. Moreover, not to follow in daddy’s steps and become a preacher is to lose out on all the property, wealth and assets that daddy has amassed in the name of the Lord. John MacArthur, Jr., says in one of his sermons – “I was raised in a Christian family. We are preachers in our family five generations. I am the fifth generation preacher. If you are a boy in our family and not a preacher, you got a duck you know, I mean they EXPECT that. So I was raised in the church, but you know, you can be raised in the church and not know the Lord.”(GC-2033).... How true!

A.W. Pink wrote long ago – “Passing through a SEMINARY and putting on the ministerial garb does not transform the unregenerate into regenerate men. When our Lord announced, “The truth shall make you free,” it was the religious leaders of the Jews who declared they were never in bondage; and when He affirmed, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,” they replied, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” (John 8). [The Doctrine of man’s Impotence]

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied” (Jer 23:21):

Commenting on this verse A.W. Pink writes – “False prophets, preachers never called of God, who uttered “lies” in His name (v. 25). Men who rejected the Divine Law, ignored the Divine holiness, remained silent about Divine wrath. Men who filled the churches with unregenerate members and then amused them with speculations upon prophecy.

It was false prophets who wrought such havoc in Israel, who had corrupted the throne and called down upon the land the sore judgment of God. AND THROUGHOUT THE PAST CENTURY THE FALSE PROPHETS HAVE CORRUPTED CHRISTENDOM. As far back as fifty years ago Spurgeon lifted up his voice and used his pen in denouncing the “Downgrade movement” in the churches, and withdrew his tabernacle from the Baptist Union. After his death things went rapidly from bad to worse and now “a whirlwind of the Lord” is sweeping away the flimsy structures the religious world erected. Everything is now in the melting pot and only the genuine gold will survive the fiery trial. And what can the true servants of God do? Lift up their voices, “Cry aloud, and spare not” (Isa. 58:1). Do as Elijah did: fearlessly denounce sin in high places.

A message pleasant to deliver? No, far from it. A message likely to be popular with the hearers? No, the very reverse. But a message sorely needed and criminally neglected. Did the Lord Jesus preach a sermon in the temple on the love of God while its sacred precincts were being made a den of thieves? Yet THIS is what thousands of those who pose as His servants have been doing for the last two or three generations.

With flaming eye and scourge in hand, the Redeemer drove out from His Father's House the traffickers who deified it. Those who were the true servants of Christ refused to use carnal methods for adding numbers of nominal professors to their membership. Those who were the true servants of Christ proclaimed the unchanging demands of a holy God, insisted on the enforcing of a Scriptural discipline, and resigned their pastorates when their flocks rebelled. The religious powers-that-be were glad to see the back of them, while their ministerial brethren, so far from seeking to strengthen their hands, did all they could to injure them and cared not if they starved to death.

But those servants of Christ were FEW IN NUMBER, A NEGLIGIBLE MINORITY. The great bulk of "pastors" were hirelings, time-servers, holders of an easy and lucrative job at any price.

THEY CAREFULLY TRIMMED THEIR SAILS, AND DELIBERATELY OMITTED FROM THEIR PREACHING ANYTHING WHICH WOULD BE DISTASTEFUL UNTO THEIR UNGODLY HEARERS.

The people of God in their congregations were famished, though few of them dared to take their pastors to task, following the line of least resistance. And the very passage from which we have quoted above declares, "but IF THEY HAD stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:22). But they did not, and therefore "a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind." Can we wonder at it? God will not be mocked. It is the churches who are responsible for it, and there is no denomination, no party, no circle of fellowship that can plead innocence." [A.W. Pink 'The Life of Elijah']

"Another wrong reason as to why men enter the preaching business IS AN UN-CRUCIFIED LUST FOR THE AUTHORITY AND ATTENTION CONNECTED WITH PUBLIC MINISTRY. The scribes and Pharisees provide us with a classic example of this. In Matthew 23 The Lord begins by saying that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, that is, in the place where they administer the Law of Moses. 'All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe'. (v 3) To the extent that they expound the law of Moses and bind your conscience by divine revelation, they do well. BUT THERE IS A WORM IN THE GOURD OF ALL THEIR MINISTRY:

'But all their works they do to be SEEN OF MEN: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief

places at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market places, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi!' (w 5-7). Here were men whose own un-crucified lust for authority and attention fed upon the carrion of men's praises and men's adulation. Men such as these look upon a teaching situation as a pedestal upon which they may stand to gain the admiring glances of men. They have a lust for attention that feeds upon the supposed glamour of leadership. True God-ordained leadership in the church has inherent in it such dangers, demands, responsibilities and pressures that only a man constrained by the Holy Spirit – often against his own inclinations – can long endure. Such leadership affords no glamour.

You will notice that in almost every instance in Scripture in which God called men to office, they did not jump up and say, "Well, Lord, I just wondered when you were going to wake up to the fact that all my gifts and talents were lying here unused and unnoticed." Instead, when God called them they wanted to run away. They said, 'Lord, not me! Not me, Lord; send somebody else'. The all-too-commonplace spectacle of a man venturing into the sacred ministry with the 'Alright, Lord, let's get on with it' attitude bespeaks tremendous areas of un-crucified lust for the authority and attention connected with public ministry." [Albert Martin – "Wrong reasons for entering the Christian Ministry]

"How many a young man, never called of God, has been pressed into the ministry by well-meaning friends who had more zeal than knowledge. None may rightly count upon the divine blessing in the service of Christ unless he has been expressly set apart thereto by the Holy Spirit [Acts 13:2]. One of the most fearful catastrophies which has come upon the churches (and those terming their's "assemblies") during the past century has been the repetition of what God complained of old: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran" [Jeremiah 23:21]. To intrude into the sacred office calls down heaven's curse!" [2 Samuel 6:6-7]. [A.W. Pink – 'Gleanings from Elisha]
