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Let the Preacher First Be Fed

The early preachers were compelled to speak about what they had seen and heard—things they had personally experienced. They could not stop. It just could not be helped. They understood what Jeremiah meant when he said, “His word burns in my heart like a fire. It’s like a fire in my bones!” (Jeremiah 20:9, *NLT*).

This brings us to a simple principle.

- God first feeds the preacher.
- The preacher then feeds the flock.

Read John 21:15-16. Our scripture begins with, “So when they had dined...” It was only after they had eaten that Jesus ventured to ask Peter a number of questions. Once a man of God has been spiritually fed he is in the best position to feed others. God’s Word should abide in the man of God. He must first be fed before feeding the flock. He needs to keep Himself full of the Word, and be in touch with God.

Jesus asked, “Lovest thou me more than these?” The Lord may have been referring to Peter’s boat, fishing equipment, and/or his employment as a fisherman. He was wondering if Peter was willing to forsake

his material possessions and employment to do the work of preaching the gospel.

Shepherds take care of their flock by providing guidance, protection, and food. When Jesus said, “Feed my sheep,” He was asking if Peter would give suitable food to the flock to keep it healthy, and cause it to grow. The preacher supplies spiritual nourishment to the souls of men.

Warren Wiersbe in the *Dynamics of Preaching* says, “Effective preaching is personal; it’s people talking to people about something that is really important to them.”

Before God speaks through the preacher, He first does a work in the preacher. God will not use someone in public, until He has taught the person in private. It is difficult to lead others to places we have never been ourselves.

Wayne V. McDill in the *Moment of Truth* said, “Unless he first hears the message for his own life, he will be ill-prepared to proclaim it to others...He is the proclaimer of God’s Word, but he is first a hearer!”

Preachers should be able to show their listeners that there is a close association between what is said from the pulpit, and what is lived in their personal lives.

Obedience to your own sermon is a necessity.

Alex Montoya in *Preaching with Passion* stated that the preacher's study was for the discovery of truth, and that the pulpit was for the sharing of that truth. He said, "The simmering of the week boils over in the pulpit on Sunday."

Do you get the picture? Preachers are like full pots of water put on the fire. Eventually they will boil over. We should preach with passion what God has been heating up in our lives.

PREACHER PREPARATION

The biggest challenge in preaching is not in the preparation of a sermon, but in the preparation of the preacher. As men of God we need to experience what is being preached first. It is often said, "Practice what you preach." A better version is, "Preach what you practice."

One preacher was asked, "How long did it take you to prepare that sermon?"

He received a short, but fitting response, "A lifetime."

Benjamin Franklin wrote in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, "A good example is the best sermon."

Charles McKay in *The Call of the Harvest* claims, "The power of the preaching of the preacher lies in the depth of his spiritual life."

C. H. Spurgeon once commented, "I cannot believe that you will ever pluck a brand from the burning, without putting your hand near enough to feel the heat of the fire...I do not think the preacher ever speaks well upon such subjects until he feels them pressing upon him as a persistent burden from the Lord."

"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9).

In ancient Greek races it was not the one that crossed the line first that won the race. It was the one who crossed the line first, and still had his torch burning.

Dr. Dan Reiland in his article, *Young Leaders in the Local Church* states, "The greatest gift you have to offer is the quality of your own spiritual life. Your spiritual life is your leadership."

An often-neglected part of a preacher's life is his spiritual discipline. Paul said, "I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27, NLT).

Preaching should be backed by a godly lifestyle. This includes personal integrity (honesty), holiness in conduct, and in speech. Preacher, respect God's Word. Preach it! Live it! Let the preacher first be fed!