

**General Topics :: Ministry struggles****Ministry struggles - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/18 10:47**

Hello to all,

I have a question and thought this might be a good place to post it and get some feed back from other brothers who may have experienced the same.

The question is this...Have you every struggled in your preaching ministry? I am a minister and assistant pastor at my church, and lately for about six months I have experienced feelings of depression regarding my preaching. After having relatively freedom in preaching over the years, it's as if it has gotten very hard and I find myself feeling as if I've helped no body. My greatest fear is that I dis-honor God and mishandle the precious word of God. I have a burning desire to show people the glories of Christ but just can't seem to express it. I ask for prayer as I believe this is a season of struggle and examination regarding my preaching and my prayer life. Please pray for me and thanks in advance!

In Christ,

Bro. Neville

Re: The Minister's Fainting Fits - posted by docs (), on: 2016/4/18 11:18

I hear what you are saying and have meet preachers and other workers before who have come to these truly painful times of depression and discouragement. Just from reading your words, I doubt that your ministering of the word has been as bad as you may perceive it to be. And the fact that you are concerned about dishonoring God or mishandling the precious word speaks to me that in all likleyhood you haven't. Your heart is too tender and sensitive on this subject it seems for you to have done that. You are just wanting to be MORE effective I would think and it's a godly desire. I've heard from those who have gone through this that it is inevitable for ministers of the word and usually turns out to be a prelude for being used even more effectively by God. Your words brought to my mind a article by Charles Spurgeon I last read probably 25 years ago or so. Spurgeon knew very well the ministerial depression you speak of. It may not have the full answer you seek but I think in some way it may help you during this time which is not just another time like others but can be truly painful. May the Lord bless, build up and encourage you richly as you two commune together on this time in your life. You are beloved in His sight.

<http://www.the-highway.com/articleSept99.html>

Re: Ministry struggles - posted by Sree (), on: 2016/4/18 11:35

With little bit of preaching that I have done. I don't believe that such doubts can come if you have an assurance that the word you spoke from is received from God.

1Peter 4:11:- Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God;

If this assurance is not there then you should not speak brother no matter how much you lose. It is better to keep quiet than to speak our own words and bring death to Church. I believe 99.99% of preaching in American Churches are bringing death and not God's word at all.

If God has called you too preach then he will not desert you. He will always fulfill his plans in your life. Just be faithful to Lord not to your senior pastor or any other man.

Also I would suggest you to submit to any senior brother in Christ whom you believe is anointed by God. Ask them to rate your messages. I always ask my wife's view on my sermons and also seeked the views of elder brothers whom I respect. My wife was more frank and correcting in most cases.

Re: - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/18 11:37

Thank you for sharing the article, it helped very much. I remember reading it, but it has been some time ago. These words pierce my heart right now..."The man shall be emptied of self, and then filled with the Holy Ghost." I feel that is where I'm at. I've admonished others to empty self, but when it comes your time, not so easy. The Lord is sufficient and I will trust that He will make me nothing in my own eyes so I can better lean on His strength. Thanks for your thoughts and prayers.

Re: - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/18 12:22

Thank you for your words of admonishment and encouragement.

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2016/4/18 15:53

Brother,

Your feelings are common and useful.

Common in that most every preacher reaches this point, probably quite often. So, take courage that you are not alone. I think it is safe to say all believers who are serious about Jesus reach this point where you are, even if they are not "preachers," per se, in the sense that you currently serve. Again, take courage. I am in much the same sort of place now as your feelings expressed.

Useful in that God ordains all of this to form Christ in us. None of us enjoy times like the ones you now walk through. We cannot become like our Lord without them.

Lean in, pray in, stay in. :). He is faithful who called you.

Re: Tim - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 9:40

Thank you dear brother. I appreciate the call to lean on Christ! I am truly learning to depend on Him for all things! May Christ be glorified in our lives

Re: Ministry struggles, on: 2016/4/19 10:16

Bro Neville writes.....

"I have a burning desire to show people the glories of Christ but just can't seem to express it."

Ultimately brother, the glories of Christ must be experienced. You cannot show people God's glory, you don't have that power. Does that make sense? Is there freedom within your assembly to allow the Lord to move and to show His glory? Is He preeminent in your gatherings would you say?.....bro Frank

Re: Frank - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 10:42

Yes that makes total sense. I understand that, I guess what I meant was that I want to point people to Christ so that they can experience Him. I believe preaching can and should do that.

As far as freedom in our assembly, I would say yes most of the time, it seems to go up and down...most likely determined by my own preparation, the hunger of the people and the spirit of prayer, etc. But we do seek to make Christ preeminent. I have found it to be a difficult thing to consistently strike the balance of robust doctrinal preaching, and an overall openness for the move of the Spirit of God. It seems to be a struggle between two extremes...stiffness/intellectualism or unbiblical emotionalism. Hope that makes sense.

Re: , on: 2016/4/19 12:07

Hi bro Scott,

"Yes that makes total sense. I understand that, I guess what I meant was that I want to point people to Christ so that they can experience Him. I believe preaching can and should do that."

Amen to that Scott. Can I ask you a brutally honest question? How often does your preaching lead to the presence of God coming down on your gathering where people actually experience the glory that you seek for them to experience? I do not ask that question to lay a snare on anyone, it is a simple basic question.

"I have found it to be a difficult thing to consistently strike the balance of robust doctrinal preaching, and an overall openness for the move of the Spirit of God. It seems to be a struggle between two extremes...stiffness/intellectualism or unbiblical emotionalism. Hope that makes sense."

On balance Scott, how many times in your own gathering have you witnessed "unbiblical emotionalism," and one last question, can you tell me what your definition of emotionalism is that you have witnessed in your own assembly? Thank you brother.....bro Frank

Re: Frank - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 12:33

I have no problem with those questions as I ask myself these same questions often.

The answer to the first question would be...not nearly enough as I would like to see. I'm not looking for one particular thing to happen other than people drawing closer to God. However sovereignly the Lord choose to attend and bless His word, then so be it. But lately it's been a struggle, I do believe that God is walking me through something regarding my dependency on Him. I feel myself trusting more in my own abilities rather than relying on His Spirit. The Lord is teaching me right now, pressing me to pray more, to re-evaluate WHY I'm preaching, it's painful but He is crushing the "idol" of preaching that I raised it to be.

As far as the second question in regard to balance...I define emotionalism as superficial response worked up by man. I believe that God no doubt moves our emotions, but they should be moved by His word, His truth! I don't just want tears, or even rejoicing...I want life change, deep and real repentance, more conformity to Christ. My heart grieves over the "dry" and "dull" church that may be doctrinally pristine and over the "spiritual" church that discredits sound biblical exposition. In my own assembly and/or circles, I have witnessed both extremes. She is messy at times, but I love the bride of Christ. I hope you understand what I'm saying.

Re: , on: 2016/4/19 13:37

Hi brother Scott (Neville?),

There is nothing wrong with desiring both "emotional reactions" to the anointing of the Holy Spirit in a church gathering as well as ongoing maturity whereby the saints desire to be conformed to the image of Christ. Many sitting in pews however are stale and lethargic and their desire to be more like Christ has waned. No amount of preaching/lecturing to appeal to their intellect will bust them out of this cycle.

This is why we must seek for the anointing or the "unction" to be upon us when we preach. A doctrinally correct, perfect exposition cannot "affect" the hearts of men unless there is an "unction" upon us when we preach. Dry sermons may do many things but they cannot change the hearts of men.

For that we need the power of the Holy Ghost.

And I can find no better example than the first "sermon" preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost. The crowd was "cut to the quick"...there was a deep stirring within them, emotional no doubt but it was even deeper than their emotions, it went to their heart...to the seat of their will.

How much time do you think Peter spent figuring out that sermon and typing it up? How many pages of notes and/or slides did he use? None at all I am sure. The man was endured with Power from on High and anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are many sermons on this very site that deal with this and you can google and find books and articles on this subject. Look up EM Bounds works and his statements on "the unction". Now, I say this gently but if you are of the more reformed persuasion and gravitate towards men such as our brother John MacArthur then you may be inclined to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" as JM and others seem to have done.

I pray that you will cast all previous notions aside and cry out to the Lord to pour out His Spirit on you again and again and again so that when you stand in the pulpit you will not merely be bringing eloquent words but will be "dripping" with the power of God.

May the Lord bless you brother, I know what it feels like to go through what you are experiencing but I also know that the Lord is faithful and will not deny the cry of His beloved.

Re: Mark - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 13:50

Thank you my brother for these words. This I believe is the crux of the issue. I can honestly say there was a time I sought after the unction of the Spirit rigorously. But as of late I have picked up a book before hitting my knees. The Lord is graciously humbling me yet again so that I may be a more effective servant in His kingdom. Your exhortation is helpful and timely...thank you! Grace and peace to you!

Re: , on: 2016/4/19 13:57

Bro Mark writes.....

"I pray that you will cast all previous notions aside and cry out to the Lord to pour out His Spirit on you again and again and again so that when you stand in the pulpit you will not merely be bringing eloquent words but will be "dripping" with the power of God."

Amen. And of course the key to the hearers being "stabbed in the heart," the day that Peter preached to the crowd was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Can I ask you Scott, do you believe and are you Baptized in the Holy Spirit with signs accompanying? (Not just speaking about tongues here)

Many denominations are fundamentally opposed to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.....bro Frank

Re: Frank - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 14:17

Yes sir, I indeed do believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and have been a blessed recipient of this wonderful promise! Our church is not affiliated with any denomination, but would fit into the "classical Pentecostal" tradition. I consider myself first and foremost an evangelical Christian. We believe in the Pentecostal experience of the new testament. We seek to preach the gospel in a way that glorifies Christ. With gifts we seek to be balanced while applying biblical parameters.

Re: , on: 2016/4/19 15:48

Excellent brother. And it now makes sense how guarded you are against emotionalism, given the pentecostal background. Can I ask you another question :) Is the gifts in operation at some point during your services?.....bro Frank

Re: Frank - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/19 15:57

Yes the gifts are in operation, but not in an excessive manner. And not at every service but pretty consistently.

Re: , on: 2016/4/19 16:18

Amen brother, this topic is I dare say one of the most important things we should wrestle with in our lives as ministers of the gospel...the anointing of the Spirit.

I too am encouraged by you...your brutal honesty and willingness to receive from the Lord. It inspires me to press into God and never be "satisfied"...thank you!!!

Re: To All - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/20 8:59

May God be glorified in our lives and ministries! His will above ours is what I pray for myself and for each of you brothers . Let us decrease and He increase and may our cry always be..."Behold the Lamb of God"

Thank you all for the help and godly counsel I received, the Lord has worked through your words to lead me to greater revelations of who I am and who He is!

In His name,
Grace and Peace!

be instant in season, out of season - posted by dohzman (), on: 2016/4/20 9:15

2Ti 4:2

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

The Word of God is anointed. End of story, our call is to give it obediently and before we give that Word to go before God and plead for mercy on behalf of those who would hear. Occasionally the Lord allows us , like He did Moses, to see His glory, be content in that.

Re: be instant in season, out of season, on: 2016/4/20 14:34

We are called to share the word by the power of the Holy Spirit. Scott, you mentioned Act 2 earlier on and specifically about the crowd being stabbed in the heart. I wrote a piece back in 2008 entitled " Stabbed in the heart." I think you may find it interesting Scott, let me know what you think.....bro Frank

https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=23735&forum=34&start=10&viewmode=flat&order=1

Re: Frank - posted by brotherneville (), on: 2016/4/22 10:52

It was a good read. I agree that the power of the Holy Ghost is much more than just miracles, signs, etc. It is an authority it proclaiming Christ! The "unction" is what distinguishes cold lifeless lectures from fiery sermons that cut the heart and demand a response. This is what we need. Martyn Lloyd Jones termed it "logic on fire." We need both...logical doctrinal preaching set ablaze by the fire of God!

Thanks for sharing brother! I appreciate the questions, and the back and forth.

Re: , on: 2016/4/22 12:27

God bless you Scott, I am, for lack of a better phrase, Pentecostal who went to a Baptist College :) I used to think that the best Christians in the world would be Baptistostals.....bro Frank