

Articles and Sermons :: E.M. Bounds ~ Successful Ministry**E.M. Bounds ~ Successful Ministry - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/12/22 9:03****A Praying Ministry Successful**

The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual and inward than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience and faith are never disappointed. I have long since learned that if ever I was to be a minister faith and prayer must make me one. When I can find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer, everything else is comparatively easy. -- Richard Newton

It may be put down as a spiritual axiom that in every truly successful ministry prayer is an evident and controlling force -- evident and controlling in the life of the preacher, evident and controlling in the deep spirituality of his work. A ministry may be a very thoughtful ministry without prayer; the preacher may secure fame and popularity without prayer; the whole machinery of the preacher's life and work may be run without the oil of prayer or with scarcely enough to grease one cog; but no ministry can be a spiritual one, securing holiness in the preacher and in his people, without prayer being made an evident and controlling force.

The preacher that prays indeed puts God into the work. God does not come into the preacher's work as a matter of course or on general principles, but he comes by prayer and special urgency. That God will be found of us in the day that we seek him with the whole heart is as true of the preacher as of the penitent. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry that brings the preacher into sympathy with the people. Prayer essentially unites to the human as it does to the divine. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry qualified for the high offices and responsibilities of the preacher. Colleges, learning, books, theology, preaching cannot make a preacher, but praying does. The apostles' commission to preach was a blank till filled up by the Pentecost which praying brought. A prayerful minister has passed beyond the regions of the popular, beyond the man of mere affairs, of secularities, of pulpit attractiveness; passed beyond the ecclesiastical organizer or general into a sublimer and mightier region, the region of the spiritual. Holiness is the product of his work; transfigured hearts and lives emblazon the reality of his work, its trueness and substantial nature. God is with him. His ministry is not projected on worldly or surface principles. He is deeply stored with and deeply schooled in the things of God. His long, deep communings with God about his people and the agony of his wrestling spirit have crowned him as a prince in the things of God. The iciness of the mere professional has long since melted under the intensity of his praying.

The superficial results of many a ministry, the deadness of others, are to be found in the lack of praying. No ministry can succeed without much praying, and this praying must be fundamental, ever-abiding, ever-increasing. The text, the sermon, should be the result of prayer. The study should be bathed in prayer, all its duties so impregnated with prayer, its whole spirit the spirit of prayer. "I am sorry that I have prayed so little," was the deathbed regret of one of God's chosen ones, a sad and remorseful regret for a preacher. "I want a life of greater, deeper, truer prayer," said the late Archbishop Tait. So may we all say, and this may we all secure.

God's true preachers have been distinguished by one great feature: they were men of prayer. Differing often in many things, they have always had a common center. They may have started from different points, and traveled by different roads, but they converged to one point: they were one in prayer. God to them was the center of attraction, and prayer was the path that led to God. These men prayed not occasionally, not a little at regular or at odd times; but they so prayed that their prayers entered into and shaped their characters; they so prayed as to affect their own lives and the lives of others; they so prayed as to make the history of the Church and influence the current of the times. They spent much time in prayer, not because they marked the shadow on the dial or the hands on the clock, but because it was to them so momentous and engaging a business that they could scarcely give over.

Prayer was to them what it was to Paul, a striving with earnest effort of soul; what it was to Jacob, a wrestling and prevailing; what it was to Christ, "strong crying and tears." They "prayed always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." "The effectual, fervent prayer" has been the mightiest weapon of God's mightiest soldiers. The statement in regard to Elijah -- that he "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" -- comprehends all prophets and preachers who have moved their generation for God, and shows the instrument by which they worked their wonders.

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(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid45>) E.M. Bounds

Re: E.M. Bounds ~ Successful Ministry - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2005/12/22 10:36

Thanks for posting this Mike. I hadn't realized there was so much of E.M. Bounds material on this site. I have enjoyed reading his books very much, this man certainly was qualified to write on prayer. Here's a bit about him from the introduction to his book titled Purpose in Prayer.

EDWARD McKENDREE BOUNDS was born in Shelby County, Mo., August 15, 1835, and died August 24, 1913, in Washington, Ga. He received a common school education at Shelbyville and was admitted to the bar soon after his majority. He practiced law until called to preach the Gospel at the age of twenty-four. His first pastorate was Monticello, Mo., Circuit. It was while serving as pastor of Brunswick, Mo., that war was declared and the young minister was made a prisoner of war because he would not take the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government. He was sent to St. Louis and later transferred to Memphis, Tenn.

Finally securing his release, he traveled on foot nearly one hundred miles to join General Pierce's command in Mississippi and was soon after made chaplain of the Fifth Missouri Regiment, a position he held until near the close of the war, when he was captured and held as prisoner at Nashville, Tenn.

After the war Rev. E. M. Bounds was pastor of churches in Tennessee and Alabama. In 1875 he was assigned to St. Paul Methodist Church in St. Louis, and served there for four years. In 1876 he was married to Miss Emmie Barnette at Eufaula, Ala., who died ten years later. In 1887 he was married to Miss Hattie Barnette, who, with five children, survives him.

After serving several pastorates he was sent to the First Methodist Church in St. Louis, Mo., for one year and to St. Paul Methodist Church for three years. At the end of his pastorate, he became the editor of the St. Louis Christian Advocate.

He was a forceful writer and a very deep thinker. He spent the last seventeen years of his life with his family in Washington, Ga. Most of the time he was reading, writing and praying. He rose at 4 a.m. each day for many years and was indefatigable in his study of the Bible. His writings were read by thousands of people and were in demand by the church people of every Protestant denomination.

Bounds was the embodiment of humility, with a seraphic devotion to Jesus Christ He reached that high place where self is forgotten and the love of God and humanity was the all-absorbing thought and purpose. At seventy-six years of age he came to me in Brooklyn, N.Y., and so intense was he that he awoke us at 3 o'clock in the morning praying and weeping over the lost of earth. All during the day he would go into the church next door and be found on his knees until called for his meals. This is what he called the "Business of Praying." Infused with this heavenly ozone, he wrote "Preacher and Prayer," a classic in its line, and now gone into several foreign languages, read by men and women all over the world. In 1909, while Rev. A. C. Dixon was preaching in Dr. Broughton's Tabernacle, Atlanta, Ga., I sent him a copy of "Preacher and Prayer," by Bounds. Hear what he says:

"This little book was given me by a friend. I received another copy at Christmas from another friend. Well, I thought I, there must be something worth while in the little book or two of my friends would not have selected the same present for me." So I read the first page until I came to the words: "Man is looking for better methods, God is looking for better men. Man is God's method." That was enough for me and my appetite demanded more until the book was finished with pleasure.

This present volume is a companion work, and reflects the true spirit of a man whose business it was to live the gospel that he preached. He was not a luminary but a SUN and takes his place with Brainerd and Bramwell as untiring intercessors with God.

H. W. Hodge