

The Kind of Sermon I Like

So many kind things have been said about my sermons. Very few ask me what kind of sermons I like best. Here's one.

Doug Nichols went to India to be a missionary, but while he was just starting to study the native dialects, he became infected with tuberculosis and had to be put in a sanitarium. It was not a good place to be. It was unclean and conditions were difficult because there were so many sick people and so few caregivers. Doug decided to do the best he could in that situation, and took a bunch of Bibles and tracts trying to teach the gospel to the other patients in the sanitarium.

But when he tried to pass out tracts, no one wanted them. He tried to hand out Bibles, but no one would take them. He tried to talk with them, but he was limited because of his inability to communicate in their dialect, and was very discouraged. There he was; his illness meant he would be there a long time. And it seemed that the work that he went to do would not be done because no one would listen to him.

Because of his tuberculosis, every night at about 2 o'clock he would wake up with chronic coughing that wouldn't quit. One night when he awoke, he noticed across the aisle an old man trying to get out of bed. The man would roll himself up into a little ball and teeter back and forth trying to get momentum to get up and stand on his feet. But he just couldn't do it. He was too weak. Finally, after several attempts the old man laid back and wept. The next morning Doug understood why the man was weeping. He was trying to get up to go to the bathroom and didn't have enough strength to do that. His bed was a mess and there was a smell in the air.

The other patients made fun of the old man. The nurses came to clean up his bed and they weren't kind to him, either. In fact, one of them even slapped him in the face. The old man just laid there and cried. Doug said, "That next night about 2 o'clock I started coughing again. I looked across the way and there was the old man trying to get out of bed once more. I really didn't want to do it, but somehow I managed to get up and I walked across the aisle and I helped the old man stand up. But he was too weak to walk, so I took him in my arms and half carried him to the bathroom, which was nothing more than a hole in the floor, stood beside him to balance him while he took care of himself. Then I carried him back to his bed and laid him down. As I turned to leave he reached up and grabbed my face and pulled me close and said what I think was 'Thank you.'"

"The next morning there were patients waiting when I awoke, and they asked if they could have some of the Bibles and tracts I brought with me. Others had questions about the God I worshiped. Over the next few weeks, I gave out all the literature brought, and many of the nurses and patients ended up obeying the gospel."

Doug writes: "Now what did I do? I didn't preach a sermon. I couldn't even communicate in their language. I didn't have gifts or money to offer. All I did was take an old man to the bathroom, and anyone can do that."

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1John 4:7-8).

The most profound and effective sermons are not preached by me in that pulpit, but by you in your treatment of those who are weak, or suffering, or are in want. Why do you think Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth."?

"From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16)

Mighty Fine Dinner

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1Thes. 5:16-18)

A young man shared an apartment with three other graduate students who also had part-time jobs while in college. Each took turns preparing the meals, which usually consisted of canned vegetables, hamburger meat, baked potato, and was barely edible. No matter how poor the meal was, Joe always said, "THAT WAS A MIGHTY FINE DINNER." One evening the meal was worse than usual, and Joe made his regular comment. One said, "Why do you always say that when this was hardly fit for human consumption?" Joe answered, "I come from a family of 11 children. My mother would spend all afternoon in the kitchen preparing dinner. One night when she called us to the table, there was only a plate, and straw on each plate. My father looked at it and asked, what is this straw doing on my plate? Mother said, "Oh! you noticed. This is the first time you have given any indication that you noticed what was on your plate." Joe then said, "I vowed that I would always express my appreciation to the person who had prepared my meal" (From "Dear Abby" 11/21/96). Let us take the time to express our gratitude to those who have prepared a meal for us.

Giving Thanks

"...In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1Thes. 5:18)

Here are Matthew Henry's, the well-known Bible scholar, comments after he had been robbed. "Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before; secondly, because although the thief took my wallet, he did not take my life; thirdly, because although he took my money, it wasn't much; and, fourthly, because it was I who was robbed, and not I who robbed." Let us give thanks in all things.

A Moments Wisdom

- While we spend time considering when to begin a good work, it becomes too late.
- Cast no dirt into the well that gives you water.
- It is easier for some people to do themselves an injustice than it is for them to do someone else a favor.
- An honest man is not the worse because a dog barks at him.
- The smallest good deed is better than the grandest intention.
- Rotten wood cannot be carved.
- Women are more irritable than men; the reason being is that men are more irritating.
- No man is a complete failure until he begins disliking men who succeed.
- Hatred and anger are powerless against kindness.
- No one can make another man a debtor against his will.
- Civilization is always in danger when those who have never learned to obey are given the right to command.
- He who adds not to his learning diminishes it.