

The Problem with the Preacher

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet sources)

Introduction:

- A. A look at preachers and some of their problems, to learn how the Bible distinguishes between the preacher and the message he preaches, to press members place their faith and trust in God and His word and not in any man.
- B. 2Cor. 4:5-7 - Paul defends himself against those who question his apostleship. He speaks of what it meant for him to be a minister of the gospel.
 - 1. Preachers don't preach themselves, but Christ Jesus.
 - 2. Preachers are merely servants of Christ.
 - 3. The gospel of Christ is glorious.
 - 4. Preachers have the gospel within themselves, as a treasure that is kept in an earthen vessel.
 - 5. This manifests that the excellency and power comes from God and not the preacher.

I. PREACHERS ARE HUMAN BEINGS

- A. Preacher's aren't special or unique people. They are not "super-Christians."
 - 1. Denominational distinction between clergy and laity; non-Biblical
 - 2. All Christians, regardless of their role in the local church, are equal before God - 1Peter 2:5
- B. When one becomes an evangelist, he doesn't stop being a human being
 - 1. Preachers are vulnerable to the same temptations as everyone else.
 - 2. They empathize with the human condition - 2Cor. 11:29
 - 3. Preachers are subject to the same needs and limits of the body as everyone else - 1Cor. 9:4
 - 4. Preachers experience the same emotions as everyone else: happiness, sadness, fear, worry, courage, tranquility, turmoil, etc.
 - 5. They have hopes, desires, dreams, aspirations, goals, favorites, dislikes, interests.
 - 6. Some preachers also engage in secular work - Acts 18:3.
 - a. In the 39 years I have been preaching, I worked secularly for 4 years and part time for 6 years to support my family.
 - 7. Preacher's need prayers - 1Thes. 5:25
- B. Preachers often marry and have families - 1Cor. 9:5
 - 1. Preachers' wives have the same life needs as non-preachers' wives; they deal with the human condition as does every woman on earth; they do domestic work; sometimes work outside the home; have the same sorrows and joys, fears and fun times
 - a. I will say this and do not care who I offend: they are often judged more strictly and unfairly than any other woman in the congregation, especially by other women. They live a fishbowl existence and often suffer for it. They are frequently shunted aside by the queen bees in a local church and then criticized for allowing it to happen. The preacher is often sustained by the

response he gets for his work; his wife gets nothing from it except the knowledge that she served the Lord and her husband. Preachers' wives who persevere are greater heroes in my estimation than their husbands ever will be, and when faithful, they manifest the spirit of Christ more clearly than any other man or woman in the local church.

2. Preachers' children are just like other non-preachers' children; they often do not realize they are "preacher's kid" (PK) though they are often stereotyped as such. While they have the same needs and dreams as all other children, they often must put up with more hardship and live with fewer resources than the other children in the congregation, because their father chose to be a preacher.
 - a. Like the childhood of our Lord, they experience the same things other children do as they grow up: eat, sleep, play, go to school, study, learn, etc.
 3. Preachers' family life is no different from other people's family life.
 - a. Preachers can make the same mistakes in their homes as other men. I thought that the expectations of the brethren superseded the needs of my family. Thirty years later, I finally figured it out, but that doesn't undo all those years of taking time that belonged to my family that deserved it and giving it to selfish brethren who did not. My wife and kids often did without my involvement, and what time I had with them, I was worn out and surly from dealing with others.
 - b. Preachers have to live with the consequences of their choices and actions just like everyone else.
- C. Peter the evangelist was married - Matt. 8:14; 1Cor. 9:5
1. As an elder, he had children - 1Peter 5:1; Titus 1:6
 2. He and Paul worked secularly on occasion - John 21:3; Acts 18:1, 3

II. PREACHERS, AS HUMAN BEINGS, HAVE PROBLEMS

- A. People expect their preachers to be free of problems
1. Many preachers think that, in view of these expectations, they must be flawless in judgment and perfect in example.
 2. This puts unnecessary pressure on preacher and family - 2Cor. 12:13-14
 3. I don't have to live up to (or down to) your expectations. I serve the Lord, not you, not the elders. While I am subject to the elders, I have only one Master to please, that is, Jesus Christ and what I believe He requires of me.
- B. Preachers often have personal problems.
1. Preachers are subject to the human predicament; they make mistakes; they sometimes use bad judgment and occasionally sin.
 - a. When they do, they fall under the same instruction as every other Christian - 1John 1:6-10

2. Preachers sometimes say things that they shouldn't. The worst trouble I have made for myself over the years has been by my mouth. We are bound by the same instructions as all other Christians - Eph. 4:29, 5:4
 3. Preachers can have personal crises, be forgetful, have mental and emotional troubles: depression, hypochondria, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, anger miss-management, substance abuse (drugs, food).
 4. They get bored, lonely, angry, and frustrated; they can even lose faith.
 5. Preachers can even have annoying personalities and irritating habits.
- C. Preachers sometimes have family problems.
1. There may be problems in a preacher's marriage; about one in ten preachers I've known had a marriage that ended in divorce
 - a. His wife may have personal, physical, or emotional problems.
 - b. It is more likely that he has problems, and she has broken under trying to bear with it
 2. Preachers aren't perfect parents. Sometimes his children have problems in school, or with social relationships, or even with serious discipline problems.
 3. A preacher's family, marriage, and children aren't perfect just because he's a preacher. In spite of how good they may be at trying to hide it from the brethren, sooner or later the effects of it will become visible.
 - a. Whether others secretly rejoice at his discomfiture or humbly say, "we be brethren," will follow them to the Judgment
 4. Sometimes brethren isolate the preacher and his family because they are afraid of an apparent contrast between the preacher's life and their own troubled lives. Preachers are just like everyone else
- D. Was Peter perfect?
1. Matt. 16:23; Mark 14:72; Matt. 26:74; Gal. 2:11; Acts 10:13-15
 2. John 21:7; Acts 12:5

III. PREACHERS PREACH THE GOSPEL

- A. In spite of the fact that they are people and have problems, preachers preach the gospel
1. Regardless of how the preacher or his family behaves, the gospel is still the same; it doesn't change.
 - a. Some preachers aren't as loving as they ought to be toward their families; some are lazy; some are bad fathers or poor husbands; some have been found guilty of crime; the list is as long as the catalogue of human weakness
 2. The gospel doesn't change because a preacher does wrong - Gal. 1:6-9
- B. The preacher shouldn't be believed simply because he is the preacher, but because he preaches the truth.
1. There are many who put faith in preachers instead of God and His word
 2. Acts 17:11; 1John 4:1; 1Thes. 5:21
- C. Expect a preacher to be a Christian, but don't expect him to be anything more than just that.

1. A preacher ought not to be a Christian because he is a preacher, but a preacher because he is a Christian.
 2. Everyone will sin - 1John 1:8; Rom. 3:23
 3. A preacher has an obligation to examine his life to make sure he is living what he is preaching - 1Tim. 4:16; 1Cor. 9:27; 2Cor. 13:5
- D. A preacher's life should be an open book, but so also should yours.

Conclusion:

- A. Preachers are people
 1. Preachers, as people, have problems.
 2. Preachers preach the gospel.
- B. If we remember this, we will not put our faith in man, but in God and His word.