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**THE PREACHER IN THE PASTOR
COL. 1:28**

"So, naturally, we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet and, we teach everyone we can, all that we know about him, so that if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ." J.B. Phillips.

The contemporary preacher must realize that many of the people who sit in pews on Sunday hope that the preacher may answer one critical question. It is essentially and substantially the same question that a king puts to a prophet in a time of trouble. "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jeremiah 37:17. Some who sit in the sanctuary may not know why they are there. But I submit to you that in spite of the wide spread secularism of the age; there are surprisingly large numbers of persons who still hope that some authentic tidings from the unseen may be delivered. Is there any word from the Lord which can help to illuminate the dark perplexities of our human situation? Is there any word from the Lord that can help to resolve the tensions, relieve the pressures, heal the hurts, eradicate the sense of guilt and fear which plague every man in this terrifying tortuous age?

Is there any word that God lives and that he cares about what happens to his human family? Is there any word from the Lord that will make sense out of innocent suffering? Thank God for hearers. Thank God for the hearers who come Sunday after Sunday.

As preachers who pastors churches how are we to preach? Negatively. We are not to preach ourselves! We are not "stars." Always Christ must have the preeminence! Preparation precedes preaching! There is a pastor in the preacher and there is a preacher in the pastor! The preacher preaches as an accredited herald of God and as a true shepherd of souls!

The preacher in the pastor prepares himself as carefully as he prepares his sermons. The preacher in the pastor prepares himself by constant reliance upon the one who called him. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, father, art in me and I in thee that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou has given me I have given to them, they may be one as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou has sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. John 17:20-23.

Always the preacher's prayer must be: Show me how thy gospel is possible in this day and age, so may I never renounce the good fight of faith . . . help me to scorn all power that is not pure and all force that is not in harmony with thy flaming will. Friend, stand by my side, sustain me. Many times I shall have no one but thee at my side. When my doctrine is purer and my truth is glowing, I shall be alone, but thou shalt press me to thy heart, thou who were lonely and forsaken. I shall see approbation only in thy look. Give me simplicity and give me depth. Free me from the temptation of being vainglorious or commonplace in my preaching.

The preacher in the pastor preaches with a sense of urgency as a dying man to dying men. The preacher in the pastor speaks for another. He is an ambassador. He represents another country! The preacher in the pastor preaches with a sense of having been chosen and under girded by precious promises!

The preacher in the pastor must preach persuasively. The aim of preaching is to win a verdict! Isaiah 53:1. Who hath believed our report? To preach persuasively is to appeal to the intellect. The will and emotions. The preacher in the pastor preaches with penetrating probing insight and understanding of the mental and spiritual climate in which our hearers live!

Ours is an age of anxiety. People are anxious about many things. Anxious about aging. Anxious about their jobs or anxious about their children. Anxious about their past. Anxious about their present. Anxious about their future.

The preacher in the past takes the truth of Christ and breaks it up into flames which kindle spiritual fires in the cold rooms of the soul.

Pastors. Let the preacher in you come out! What a blessing it is to be a pastor. What a blessing it is to be able to say, "My people." What a blessing it is to be addressed as a pastor. *My pastor*. Be all the pastor that God gives you the grace, the strength and the insight to be. But every now and then let the preacher come out. Preachers: Give yourself to God. When you stand up to preach, let God have his way. When you stand up to preach, allow God to melt the frozen rivers of the world by raising the temperatures of the local surroundings. Pastor, you will need to preach sometimes. Pastor, you will need to nurture the people in Christian character growth and maturity. It is growth from the lower to the higher and from the higher to the highest! It is a moving from self control to Christ control!

Pastors, as servants of Christ and the people we must do our best to measure up. To fulfill our ministry as pastors, the offices of pastor and preacher

must be kept closely related. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

The pastor-preacher and the preacher-pastor: What a happy combination.