

General Topics :: Effective Prophetic Ministry???**Effective Prophetic Ministry???** - posted by Christisking (), on: 2008/9/3 2:22**Effective Prophetic Ministry Through Suffering** - Zac Poonen

In the Book of Hosea, we find that God made Hosea feel His heart by making him marry an unfaithful wife. That was a painful way for Hosea to learn the truth. Which man would be willing to marry a girl who he knows, from the outset, will be unfaithful to him and will commit adultery with other men? It was a heavy price that these prophets had to pay in order to be prophets. When Hosea's wife was unfaithful to him, he was told to keep on loving her. At one point she even went and sold herself as a slave to another man. Hosea then paid money to buy her back. And he still kept on loving her. But even after he bought her back, she still kept on committing adultery. Hosea must have found it very difficult to bear with her. As he went through this struggle, God told him, "Now you can understand how I love my people. Now go and preach to them." As a result, even when Hosea spoke sternly to God's people, there was a note of compassion in his message of holiness. What did he emphasise? Holiness and God's unchanging love. These two themes were the burden of all the prophets: Holiness in God's people and God's unchanging love for His people even when they are in spiritual adultery and gone astray. God's desire was always to bring His people back. He disciplines them. But then He wants to bring them back to Him after the discipline is over. Jeremiah said, "After the discipline is over, God will bring you back." Hosea said the same thing. Holiness is what God demands. When He doesn't find that in you, He will discipline you. But His love is so great that He will then speak tenderly to you and bring you back into fellowship with Him, saying, "How can I give you up? How can I let you go? How can I forsake you? My heart cries out within me. How I long to help you!" (Hosea 11:8-Living)

This is how true prophetic ministry should function in the church too. A true prophet in the church today will have the same burden that the Old Testament prophets had for holiness among God's people. And He will be moved as they were, by God's unchanging, longsuffering, compassionate love, that perpetually desires to bring His backslidden people back to Him and to genuine holiness. There should be a prophetic ministry in every church, if it is to be kept alive and functioning for God as it should. That was Hosea's basic theme. And so God allowed Hosea to suffer. God told Hosea, "Go and marry a prostitute. Some of her children will be born to you from other men." (Hosea 1:2). What a price to pay to be a prophet! How many would want to be prophets? God may not require you to do today what Hosea did. But the principle remains the same that He has to take us through deep suffering in order to get us to feel His heart. Read the suffering that the apostle Paul went through - many dangers, many beatings, imprisonments, being beaten with rods, robbed, not having enough clothes to keep himself warm, not enough food to eat (2 Cor. 11:23-28). The purpose of all that was to make Paul live close to God's heart so that he could listen to God's heartbeat and feel as God felt. When we go through trials, we come very close to God's heart. We hear His heartbeat and we feel that, as we speak to His people.

There is a lot of difference between such a preacher and a man who has just acquired a lot of knowledge by reading books and by listening to sermons. Do you want to serve God? Do you want to preach the way God wants you to preach? Then ask God to help you to feel His heartbeat. That will not come by just studying the Bible in a classroom. It will come by going through trials. It will not come merely by attending meetings or reading good Christian books - even though all that is good. We all have a great lust for knowledge and we may think, "If only I can get more Bible-knowledge I can serve the Lord." You may look at some servant of God today and say, "I want to serve the Lord like he does." Yes, you can do that. But only if you allow God to crush you by taking you through deep sufferings that others may never know about. Every true servant of God has gone through hard trials that others know nothing about, and most of the time he won't even tell others what he has gone through.

Hosea teaches us that the only way to effectively minister is by going through deep suffering in one's personal life. God does this by different methods for different people. He does not have a standard syllabus for all of God's children. He taught Hosea through a difficult wife. but He taught Jeremiah without a wife, by putting him in deep pits. And He taught Paul without a wife too. So the procedure is not the same for everyone. But the principle remains the same: You have to suffer if you want to have a ministry from God. Paul said, "I have gone through many trials - and the strength I received from God in that suffering is what I can now pass on to other people" (2 Cor. 1:4). Without such experiences, we will only pass on dead knowledge to people.

From his experience of suffering, Hosea began to preach (Chapter 4 onwards). He used some very strong words in his message. But the background for all these strong words came from the sufferings he had been through. Our sufferings d

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onâ't make us soft. No. We have compassion for Godâ's people, but we will be firm with them.

In Hosea 6:5, God describes true prophetic ministry: "I sent my prophets to cut you to pieces. I have slaughtered you with my words, threatening you with death." It's not an easy ministry to cut people to pieces. But remember that Hosea himself had been cut to pieces by God's dealings with Him in his married life. And it was from such a school of suffering that Hosea spoke. If Hosea had not had all that suffering in his private life, he would have spoken these words in a harsh way. Don't try to imitate Hosea's words if God hasn't taken you through the deep valley of suffering. It is very exciting to act like a prophet in the pulpit. You can get honour for that. But if you try to imitate a prophet without God leading you into the sufferings that the true prophets underwent, you will be a false prophet. First of all, ask God to take you through deep experiences whereby you get to know Him - experiences of trials, sufferings and pain. Then God will make you His mouthpiece to many people. Walk with God in secret. Humble yourself under whatever God sends in your life.

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**Re: Effective Prophetic Ministry???** - posted by boG (), on: 2008/9/3 2:58

AMEN! Amen and Amen!

**Re: Effective Prophetic Ministry???** - posted by Fuegodedios (), on: 2008/9/3 11:09

What a powerful word from brother poonen. The verse in Hosea 6:5 is just crushing. With so many self proclaimed prophets in the church I wonder if they have read such verses.