

**General Topics :: Repentance preaching****Repentance preaching - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/29 21:03**

RobertW wrote:

Yesterday I spent the day asking myself a vital question that I'm having a hard time reckoning with. Have I personally ever witnessed anyone come to Christ and remain in Christ by the preaching of a fearful repentance message. As of this morning, I still cannot think of a single person I know that came to Christ and has stayed trusting in Christ through this method. Understand that I have been in ministry with many well known names on this site and I still can't think of a single person.

RobertW,

Having read your references to this thought a few times lately, I thought it could be a good discussion, provided it does not get sidetracked.

I don't have a lot of time right now, but I'll throw out a couple of thoughts for starters.

We must all repent, but when we do, we are then toward God. Once we are toward God, the emphasis then is to come closer to Him.

It is likely that there will be subsequent needs of repentance, but only to the extent that we do not come as close to Him as we should. The more we come to Him the less need for subsequent repentance. Conversely, the less we come, the more need.

A steady dose of repentance preaching seems like repeating step 1 over and over, when there should be more emphasis on moving on to step 2, 3 and 4. Step 1 gets us started. Steps 2, 3 and 4 keep us going.

My thoughts in nutshell version.

Re: Repentance preaching - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/29 21:26

One year I ministered for an entire year on repentance. It's the only message I heard in 2004. And repentance is truly necessary.

I did a little post on Finney's conversion and also mentioned Wesley's. It is interesting to me that these men did not come to God as a result of heavy handed repentance preaching, but as God dealt with them in their hearts and they saw by revelation the truth of the Gospel and responded.

I also read of (<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewarticle&aid19496>) George Whitefield's Conversion Experience in which after some time of God dealing he simply fell on the bed and cried out with a dry mouth, "I thirst! I thirst!". DL Moody was saved in a shoe store as I understand it.

I may be missing it, but it seems to me that the Gospel as presented as 'good' news tends to yield conversions, but when folk are told to turn now or face hell- there are very few converted. In fact, I have been in situations when it seemed so solemn- week after week and month after month and yet very few took any step toward God.

So there has to come that day of visitation- that point in which God has been dealing with the person to turn to Him and they turn. It seems to matter little what means of grace is employed, only that the person comes to that point of decision. It could be in the shoe store, the woods or a formal setting.

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Re: , on: 2009/1/29 21:51

Quote:
-----I may be missing it, but it seems to me that the Gospel as presented as 'good' news tends to yield conversions, but when folk are told to turn now or face hell- there are very few converted.

Brother, I would have to disagree with you to a certain extent. The great awakenings through the preaching of Jonathan Edwards would be a good example that I would call as a witness. Two of his most effectual sermons said to have created the most visible fruit were "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and the "Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners". Once people were awakened to their desperate need to turn or burn, terrified of their soon coming damnation, then the message of grace was preached as a precious jewel to the poor sinners. Edwards sermons on grace, the excellencies of Christ and God's undeserved mercy are only rivaled by his sermons on the just damnation of sinners and the terrors of an eternal hell. These really should work as one in the same message though. Repentance preaching in the proper spirit should cause the sinner to greater esteem the precious blood of Christ upon hearing of God's great love for such wretched, miserable, monstrous, hell-deserving sinners.

God bless you in Christ Jesus

-Jim

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/29 22:01

Quote:
-----Edwards sermons on grace, the excellencies of Christ and God's undeserved mercy are only rivaled by his sermons on the just damnation of sinners and the terrors of an eternal hell. These really should work as one in the same message though. Repentance preaching in the proper spirit should cause the sinner to greater esteem the precious blood of Christ upon hearing of God's great love for such wretched, miserable, monstrous, hell-deserving sinners.

I have found in my limited experience that people turn to God in a sense from this type preaching, but I 'personally' have not seen the conversions last. It may be good for an altar call, but then there is an ongoing need to keep preaching repentance week after week after week.

So what I'm really driving at is, I'm not convinced that folk lastingly come to God until they respond to the revelation of God working in their life on a very personal level. It seems to me that we need to preach in such a way that folk can 'begin in the Spirit' as did the saints at Galatia. I have often been taken by how folk seem to temporarily 'turn', but it is rarely enough for them to come into a self-sustaining Christian life. By self-sustaining I mean one that will of their own volition work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/1/29 22:11

I don't believe that there is a certain method that will work to save people. What works is when the Spirit of God is dealing with the one that you are speaking to, and you are not just speaking the right words, but there is an anointing on the word that is being delivered.

It is the Holy Spirit that convicts men, and regenerates them. It is not our methods or just mouthing the right scriptures.

The Word says "And some save by fire". There are some people that will respond to this, but not all.

There are a lot of different fish out there, and God knows the right bait to use to catch them with.

Mike

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Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/29 22:31

Quote:

-----There are a lot of different fish out there, and God knows the right bait to use to catch them with.

I think of the passage:

And of some have compassion, making a difference: (Jude)

It does seem that the Holy Spirit wants to meet people right where they are. I also recall the purpose of Christ's anointing :

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4)

I hear in this passage a willingness to deliver from bondage to sin and heal the brokenhearted. There is a tenderness here that really challenges me.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/29 22:33

Quote:

----- I have found in my limited experience that people turn to God in a sense from this type preaching, but I 'personally' have not seen the conversions last. It may be good for an altar call, but then there is an ongoing need to keep preaching repentance week after week after week.

I personally have experienced the opposite.

I had heard that Jesus loved me all my life. I never thought twice about Him giving His Son for me. I never needed it. It wasn't till years later when the reality of hell and the understanding that I deserved it came upon me that I was broken by His love.

A lack of hell, damnation, and repentance preaching provides no understanding of price paid. No understanding of divine justice. Folks I see don't view themselves as deserving or having ever been deserving of anything but love because they are basically good people.

There is a balance. Hell, eternal damnation, repentance, mercy, grace and love must all be preached.

In order to be saved, doesn't one need to be convinced of their need of a savior?

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/29 22:34

Quote:

-----It is the Holy Spirit that convicts men, and regenerates them. It is not our methods or just mouthing the right scriptures.

Amen. Preach it all, all the time.

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Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 4:07

Quote:

-----In order to be saved, doesn't one need to be convinced of their need of a savior?

To clarify as we peel back the layers here, I believe there needs to be more than a simple understanding of our guilt before God and that we deserved hell, etc.. We need to see the reality of it by *revelation*. We need to see by revelation our awesomely dreadful condition and God's unspeakable love in His answer to our condition. We need to know by revelation that He desires to put away our Sin and sins and reconcile with us.

What I am really driving at is that repentance preaching typically focuses on the fact that we deserve hell and on that basis seeks to secure the repentance of a sinner. I am not convinced that this is sufficient. Many people I know, if we went through a series of questions, would be forced to admit they are sinners destined for hell; but those same people have not repented after hearing about hell their whole life. They have likewise heard that God loved them their whole life.

Many people know to some degree or another that they are sinners and deserve hell. Here in the so-called Bible Belt, you will find that people age 35 and up typically understand they are sinners. But there has to be a point in time in the person's life when they *respond* to the drawing of the Holy Spirit. I think of the life of Abraham:

And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. (Acts 7)

This is Steven's sermon that we all know ends with him assuring them saying, Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. He began the sermon with Abraham yielding to God and ended with the unbelieving Jews resisting the Holy Ghost. That is an amazing contrast.

Yet there are some people that need to know that God can and will deliver them from their sin. Some are in severe bondage. Others have not yet reached a place where they are ready and willing to respond rightly to God. Abraham did not serve God because of a fear of hell, even though he knew that God was the Judge of all the Earth. He seemed to walk with God and love God almost independent of that fear. The focus of their relationship was on the *present circumstances* with a view of eternity.

The last few months have been a real time of reflection for me. But I am seeing one thing for certain, the last 5 years of my life have been seemingly relatively unfruitful years. I feel that God is showing me that there must be a deep heart of compassion for people and that includes sinners in my life. Not a lip-service. Not a 'they all deserve hell' attitude. But a deep compassion for people that springs from the love of God. I have to ask myself if my zeal to secure a sinner's repentance had been tempered more with good fruits (as James says), others may have been saved.

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/1/30 4:52

Quote:

RobertW wrote:

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So what I'm really driving at is, I'm not convinced that folk lastingly come to God until they respond to the revelation of God working in their life on a very personal level. It seems to me that we need to preach in such a way that folk can 'begin in the Spirit' as did the saints at Galatia. I have often been taken by how folk seem to temporarily 'turn', but it is rarely enough for them to come into a self-sustaining Christian life. By self-sustaining I mean one that will of their own volition work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

All I can offer is "my" experience and I cannot debate my experience.

I am one of those that RobertW speaks of. Under repentance preaching, if I went to the altar once, I went 50 times and most of the times by the next day the fear would wear off (is the only way I know how to say it).

When I heard a message by the "Spirit," I gave my mind, body, heart, and soul to Christ. What I heard was from the Father's heart to me that day and since.

Again, "MY" experience has shown me that the difference (take it or leave it, for what it's worth), is that a true father doesn't need to beat their child into submittance by fear but understands how the Spirit operates and so leads and feeds the children.

Re: Repentance preaching - posted by Limey153 (), on: 2009/1/30 4:55

Quote:
-----I don't believe that there is a certain method that will work to save people. What works is when the Spirit of God is dealing with the one that you are speaking to, and you are not just speaking the right words, but there is an anointing on the word that is being delivered.

I think this is well said Mike. The crucial element in winning souls to Christ is the working of the Holy Spirit. One thing that does strike me though is that in the presence of a Holy God our own un-holiness becomes very apparent and this is why I think that repentance is extremely important.

In regards to preaching a 'good news' message then I would kinda put that in the same league as 'Repentance' preaching since surely the good news is freedom from sin and hell through the sacrifice of Jesus and unless it is revealed to a person that they are filthy sinners they will fail to see what the good news is. Most people are unaware that they need saving.

If we look at the old revivals, particularly Lewis then we see that as the Spirit of God moved amongst the people a great awareness of one's own sin and wretchedness came.

I can certainly appreciate your question though brother. Personally my opinion is that Repentance preaching is extremely effective but that sadly many many people who preach this to people fail to lay hold of two things which are very much interwoven. These two are firstly the Holy Spirit and secondly compassion for the lost. We need to see more repentance preaching but only from those preachers who have been praying without ceasing being guided by the Holy Spirit and who are preaching with tears in their eyes.

Re: - posted by Mikey_da_rev (), on: 2009/1/30 5:11

Hey Robert,

Seems like you're picking up some golden lessons. Peter's epistles talk of never forgetting what we have been saved from so that we treat others with respect.

I have been relating to a guy for about 6 months now who is an ex morphine addict and me and my pastor have been sharing similar stuff about repentance but he always seems to be evasive.

This weekend just passed he came to the ministry of a guy who was visiting from China and I heard him hmm and nod in agreement through the message which emphasised repentance. He has since complemented me on my persistence and "purity of vision" I am praying he will come to know the fullness of Christ.

I remember one thing that my pastor commented on as worthy was "giving people room to change". Paul's letters to Timothy emphasise this 2 Timothy 2:24-26 "and a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do

his will."

In practical terms as well. Other good topics to raise with people are:

- assurance of salvation,
- what to you have faith in God to do?

These can be open doors to see where people are at and lead you share repentance AND faith in Christ to them.

Hope some of this is helpful.

God bless,

Mikey

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/1/30 6:51

I hate it when that happens. I had just about finished my post when I hit a wrong button and lost it.

Now briefly, as I do not have the time nor energy to recreate everything I had written, I first will say how refreshing to see so many good consecutive posts.

When I think of the term repentance preaching, the first thought that usually comes to mind is the 'turn or burn' type. But after reading all these posts, I see that it can actually also be about the love of God. Both messages can cause the effect of repentance.

One said they had heard of the love of God all their life, another said they had responded to repentance messages all the time and both with little effect. Each needed a different message and God in His wisdom and being given to variety, obliges us with both messages.

So I now, as a result of our conversation here, I see repentance preaching differently. Still I see it, regardless of the means, as step 1 that should lead to steps 2,3 and 4. Step 1 gets us facing toward God; 2,3 and 4 are the steps that keep us, not only facing Him, but draw us closer to Him.

Re: Repentance preaching, on: 2009/1/30 8:25

I agree that repentance is necessary for salvation but repentance is only a SYMPTOM of an enlightened heart to sin. As we all understand, only the Holy Spirit can do this. And salvation can only come when we know what we are being forgiven for and saved from. Many times there is a certain brokenness in true repentance that convicts the person that they have offended God. And the revelation of the Son comes that can turn that brokenness to pure joy. Preachers do the preaching, the Holy Spirit does the enlightenment and conviction of sin.

I know this doesn't pertain to the preachers and doctrine(s) here but Paul Washer used to say this about 'mainstream revivals' and gatherings especially when there are so-called 'manifestations' of the Spirit... I'll paraphrase here: "They would say.... well, Brother Paul, are you saying nobody can be saved by any of these gatherings or preachings". "I would tell them... No! I'm saying that God can save someone DESPITE the gathering and the preaching". This isn't to say that there is no good or bad preaching or doctrine doesn't matter, we all know that truth in love is essential. But it is to say that perhaps we should not get too hung up on doctrine, methods, or manner of preaching. The heart of the preacher preaching, the heart of the sinner listening, and the sovereign work of God via the Holy Spirit must all be considered.

I believe this battle is fought and won in the prayer closet. The Welsh Revival started with a preacher praying relentlessly to God for years before the event. He prayed for someone OUTSIDE of the mainstream bible schools and church to come and spearhead revival. It also took Evan Roberts many years of prayer for the Spirit to come and do His work. I'm not a pastor or a preacher, but I do want to be a soul winner for God and His glory. So I pray for anointed preaching in the Spirit by those who do this work like many of you. And I pray for the Spirit to open the ears and hearts of those unbelievers who listen.

Obviously preaching is biblical, mandated, and absolutely invaluable to the work of God. But it can't be, in my opinion, a contrived methodology of doctrine. I'm not sure the debate should be repentance vs. salvation, both have their place. I wasn't necessarily saved from repentance preaching or salvation preaching, I just felt this enormous wooing to give up r

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unning my own life and give it to God. It helped that I was in utter physical agony at the time and burdened by a sinful past that included bitterness towards those who ever hurt me. But being in the Catholic Church years ago I did know what sin was and that I was a sinner... so the information was there.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/1/30 8:36

Quote:
-----To clarify as we peel back the layers here, I believe there needs to be more than a simple understanding of our guilt before God and that we deserved hell, etc.. We need to see the reality of it by revelation. We need to see by revelation our awesomely dreadful condition and God's unspeakable love in His answer to our condition. We need to know by revelation that He desires to put away our Sin and sins and reconcile with us.

Amen. It should be our goal to live in a way that creates a desire in others. To manifest Christ's love in a way that is 'real'

Quote:
-----Many people know to some degree or another that they are sinners and deserve hell. Here in the so-called Bible Belt, you will find that people age 35 and up typically understand they are sinners.

I believe that they have heard it for so long and from so many sources that they say it...concede in speech. But I am not convinced they 'know' it at all. You are right, it must become reality.

Quote:
-----I feel that God is showing me that there must be a deep heart of compassion for people and that includes sinners in my life. Not a lip-service. Not a 'they all deserve hell' attitude.

Amen. For me it's not a 'they all', it's a 'we all' that motivates. This only happened in the last year or so. It's by His grace I am saved. I am no better than the most vile sinner on earth. I am simply forgiven. Very humbling. This is the reality I want to show/teach others.

I grew up attending a Nazarene 'holiness' church. 'Turn or burn' was all I heard coming from a bunch of 'sinless' people. What a mess. God is still working to release me from many harmful and destructive theological errors.

God bless you Robert. I hear your heart. I understand what you are saying. I am simply being my 'clear as mud' self.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/1/30 8:48

Thank you brothers for the excellent contributions that you have made to this thread.

What do the following scriptures say to us in regards to salvation?

The gospel is the same message to sinners, but people are different. This is why when we attempt to use any one method, many will slip through the net.

When I minister in the prisons, I know that it is impossible to prepare a message to reach every man. That is why I ask the Holy Spirit to bring to my remembrance the scriptures, and Words that will reach every man's heart. He knows what needs to be said, we don't.

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9: 19-22).

Mike

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 9:17

Quote:

-----Thank you brothers for the excellent contributions that you have made to this thread.

Amen. Lots of good stuff here.

It seems to me that many of us are constantly examining the content of our preaching to understand why we are seeing so few people truly come into a *viable* relationship with Christ. It seems to me that we are not seeing folk regenerated like we should.

I also have seen people repent 50X or more and still they don't seem to 'connect' (as it were) with God. I typically believed that this is because the person is resisting the Holy Ghost in what He is putting His finger on. Sometimes it seems that I have ministered and folk 'turn' but then turn back. I then assume it is because they did not come into 'godly sorrow'.

For me, I turned to Christ as God had already been dealing with me for some time. I came to service on an easter Sunday. My life was an absolute train wreck. It was very complicated. There were no cut and dry solutions. There were some catch 22 scenarios. I knew this when I came to God. I knew that I would not be able to unscramble the scrambled eggs (so to speak). Repentance for me was simply turning and surrendering to God and His will for me. The problem was, I did not know what direction to go. It took about 10 months of madness and searching to finally reckon with where I was and what I was going to do *going forward*. I wanted to do what was right and to please God.

So in a sense I am also saying that we need a Gospel that allows God to be God in the life of the person. It is so easy to back seat drive on the Holy Ghost. It is also easy to be a stumbling block in some people coming to Christ because they already feel they are in an impossible situation. A 'heck if you do' and a 'heck if you don't' type thing (if you will pardon the expression). I knew I could not repent enough to suit certain of the holiness folk in my family. As far as many are concerned, I still have not repented 'enough'. But it is as far as I can go. I have balanced the scriptures out in my life as best as I can. So here I am. Take me or leave me (type thing) because I can do no other.

There are people in prison with these types of situations. Their lives are complicated. Sin in our times has ravaged peoples lives until it seems like they can never be in a situation where they have dotted all of the 'i's' and crossed all the 't's'. That is where my life was and that is where God has brought me from. I turned to Him when I had a revelation of the cross and how He died for my sins. I knew I could not fix everything- but I also knew, that because of Calvary I didn't have to.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/1/30 9:50

Another important factor in the salvation of sinners is prayer. When we pray for people to be saved the Holy Spirit will prepare the ground in their lives to receive the incorruptable seed. The Lord will arrange the circumstances in their lives to get them to the place where the gospel will indeed be good news to them. I have seen this so often in the prisons. I have ministered to men in the prisons that were in solitary confinement that were so broken. Even before I arrived the Lord had been dealing with them.

Mike

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 9:58

Brethren,

I was just thinking about this incredible four part radio series from the late saint Rolfe Barnard. If you have never heard this brother preach you are missing out on a hidden gem of the Lord from the generation past. Here is the series, each audio is only about 15 - 30 minutes long. The first one is only about 15 minutes. I would encourage everyone to listen to it (though you will surely be compelled to listen to the other ones after it).

The series is titled John the Baptist Comes to Town and speaks much of the topic of repentance preaching. You will scarcely hear preaching like this even among some of the other Godly teachers on SI.

Part #1 (Preparatory Work)

Part #2 (Calling Men to Come Clean)

Part #3 (A Sermon that Cost a Preacher His Head)

Part #4 (Turn or Burn)

(<http://www.fleebabylon.com/featured/september08.htm>) Look at the bottom of the page

(The actual audio files are linked back to SI, I just organized them together on my site).

In Christ - Jim

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 10:03

"I knew I could not repent enough to suit certain of the holiness folk in my family. As far as many are concerned, I still have not repented 'enough'." Robert W

The one thing I've noticed in my walk with God in Christ is that the ONE THING people can not lord over brethren is God's mercy. This belongs unequivocally and exclusively to Him. Some may hear us talk about the mercy of God and consider it to be a cop-out, a weakness, a rationalization. But if one truly experiences the faithfulness and mercy of God (I speak of my own experience but am hoping it pertains beyond just my subjective case), they are so humbled by it that they cannot stop giving thanks and praising Him in their inner spirit. It is undeniably a soulful rest that one could never rationalize, contrive, or manipulate. It is truly gracious, sovereign, and faithful. For me, it puts obedience in perspective for my inner spirit wants to please Him as a demonstration of my love for Him and not out of legalistic obligation or self-willed determination. His mercy actually gives me strength to overcome and reminds me that I cannot do without Him. It also reminds me that only in coming to Him in weakness, lowliness, and humility will I ever be able to receive His victory already demonstrated through the cross and resurrection.

I've tried to 'claim victory' with my lips in 'confident confession' as some errant doctrines have taught, but claiming isn't receiving and confident lips give little honor. Am I confident in Him or my words... there is a difference and God's rod and mercy has taught me this.

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2009/1/30 10:26

Dear Brethren,

I have been blessed by reading this thread.

We all know that Jesus said that no one could come to him except His Father draw him. We know that the Spirit must convict and draw a person to Christ. The most effective witnessing is to be led by the Spirit and depending on the Spirit to work in the person you are witnessing to. We know that when we are witnessing to someone who is lost that they do not know the things that we know about the gospel (good news) of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The bible also says that it is the goodness of God that leads man to repentance. It also says that we love Him because he first loved us. I believe that people must see the goodness of God. We must be led by the Spirit to minister to others as

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about the goodness of God toward us in his Son Christ Jesus. The good news of Jesus Christ and what he went through for us should be told to the sinner in such a way as to convict him of his lost and sinful condition.

We must proclaim Jesus Christ in such a way as to draw that person to Christ. If we preach at them for their sins first, most of the times they want listen to us any further. Most of the time I tell them what Christ has done in me. I try to show them the necessity of Christ and why we don't want to be without Him. We must proclaim Christ and His goodness to sinful people allowing the Holy Spirit to convict them of their need of Him to save them and to give them eternal life. It is when their eyes have been opened to the glorious Savior that they will desire salvation. When we begin in the Spirit with a concern for that lost person then we must realize that they don't have that same concern that you have because they don't really know what they are missing. When they see Jesus they can believe and when they call upon Him they will be saved and repent of all known sin.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Repentance is on going in a persons life as more of the glory of Christ is revealed to them.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Blessings to all!

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 10:34

"The bible also says that it is the goodness of God that leads man to repentance. It also says that we love Him because he first loved us. I believe that people must see the goodness of God." rbanks

Amen. This is great truth and perspective.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 11:02

Quote:
-----Mike's: Another important factor in the salvation of sinners is prayer. When we pray for people to be saved the Holy Spirit will prepare the ground in their lives to receive the incorruptable seed

I also want to say that the old timers believed in 'praying through', that is until folk really touched God.

But I think there needs to be a simultaneous understanding that God loves us. In repentance preaching there is often an attempt to get the person to submit by fear. This does not typically cultivate an understanding that though we deserve Hell, Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. I guess I am pressing the point because I feel like when I was born again there were some 'complications' that caused some long term side effects in my life. One being that I had a very very hard time over the years viewing God as a loving Father.

I'm not convinced that many repentance preachers want God to be perceived as a loving Father, but as an angry Judge. That is fine for those that are in rebellion- but how does the born again come to know God as a loving Father once the notion of an angry judge has been forged in their minds?

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 11:21

"In repentance preaching there is often an attempt to get the person to submit by fear." RobertW

I have to agree with this. I don't see conviction and fear as bedfellows of salvation. Many have preached under a cloud of fear but does the Holy Spirit convict in this manner? I truly don't know for sure. Fear of a consequence doesn't change a heart in my opinion. I would like to think that my daughter obeys not because there's a consequence to misbehavior but because she knows I have consistently demonstrated my love for her and therefore consequence is out of love... not cold hearted discipline or simple behavior modification. You can change your behavior and still have a heart of stone and

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d rebellion. I don't see brokenness from simply getting out of an eternal consequence... if it's presented in this manner. I fear more now than when I was an ignorant sinner, simply because of what would have become of me had God not broken me. I don't obey out of this fear, I obey out of my love of the Father that never wanted me there but always with Him

If I had to pick between a sinner who repents out of fear and one who is sincerely convicted of their sin as an offense to God and are broken over it, I would say the latter sinner is on the road to redemption and relationship that produces much fruit.

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 11:40

True repentance preaching in the power of the Spirit will produce more than fear filled converts, it will produce tear filled converts. Our nation is not on the brink of collapse because of repentance preaching but because of a lack of true repentance preaching. Through love sin is atoned for and by the fear of God men depart from their iniquity.

Oh that men, especially unconverted and lukewarm church men would fear God again. But oh they are blinded by today's prominent false Gospel.

-Jim

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 11:41

Quote:
-----CCRider You can change your behavior and still have a heart of stone and rebellion. I don't see brokenness from simply getting out of an eternal consequence... if it's presented in this manner. I fear more now than when I was an ignorant sinner, simply because of what would have become of me had God not broken me. I don't obey out of this fear, I obey out of my love of the Father that never wanted me there but always with Him.

I wonder as I read this if a continual attempt to reach sinners in rebellion within local churches does not cause a misrepresentation of God? I also wonder how preaching repentance affects the preacher. I recall reading where Finney said that he could not live in the repentance preaching level. His relationship with God was far beyond that.

Now I think we may have stumbled on the importance of the whole 'word of His grace' thing that Ron Bailey taught on at Greenock. We need to be ready to come to God without presuppositions as preacher/teachers. If we have already determined that the 'word' for the meeting is 'repent' then we are liable to preach a good word out of season.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 11:44

Quote:
-----Oh that men, especially unconverted and lukewarm church men would fear God again. But oh they are blinded by today's prominent false Gospel.

I think this is true also. I actually did a study called "The Betrayal of the Ages" that deals with how we got here. But I am equally concerned that in an attempt to somehow balance the false Gospel some are presenting an equally 'false' Gospel only the other extreme. And because the typical attitude is 'stricter' = more spiritual- it passes off as legit. But the reality is, I don't see how any Gospel that does not balance the fundamental elements and apply them according to where the particular individual is could be considered the Gospel. :-?

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Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/30 12:18

Quote:
-----We need to be ready to come to God without presuppositions as preacher/teachers. if we have already determined that the 'word' for the meeting is 'repent' then we are liable to preach a good word out of season.

When I was younger in the faith and enamoured by Finney and Wesley and Whitfield (and I still love those guys), I would endeavor to preach the gospel just like they did, laying heavy emphasis on repentance and fear and hellfire. My heart was in the right place, but I still had an inadequate understanding of grace...and therefore the results I sought - and, yes, I did seek results - were not ultimately what I had expected. I would see short term fear, tears, transformation in the youth and adults I preached to, but these results would never last. It was like trying to start a campfire with wet wood and dry paper. The paper would blaze brightly beneath the wood, and for a moment you think the wood was aflame, but then the paper turned to ash and the wood smouldered and you realize it was just the paper making all those flames.

O, how I would burn with zeal and cry out and speak of hell as if I'd been there. How I would trumpet "Repent or perish!" and thump my Bible on the pulpit. I was 100% genuine; I really wanted to get that fire going. I would see the initial flames: the tears, the kids running to the altar, the warmth of people lifting their hands worshipping God as the guitars played and drums beat out a rhythm.

I had no understanding of grace at that time...because I hadn't failed. I was surging on victory; a victory that rested on my perception of sin, and how, up until that time, I had refrained from yielding to. I ascribed my victory to pertinacious Bible study and prayer. I would force myself to read, force myself to swallow the peas and carrots and spinach of God's Word in methodical fashion. After all, that's what my heroes, E.M. Bounds and Finney and Ravehill told me to do. I couldn't be of any use to God unless the Bible was beneath my nose 24/7 and I was prostrate and weeping.

Well, I praise God now for His grace. I bless God for the word of His Spirit in my life, and that His ways are not like ours. I bless the God that used Haman's gallows on Haman and instead exalted Mordecai and put him on Ahasuerus' royal horse. The most precious thing a child of God can have is a right view of the grace of his Father. Not a skewered view like many teach; not an antinomian view, or a blasphemous view that engenders lasciviousness and flesh, but a real, Biblical and accurate perception that leads to genuine holiness and a love for God's Word, to unfeigned humility and charity to one's neighbor.

I found that I couldn't have these growth spurts until God brought me through some failures. Notice I didn't say God "led me into" some failures. I led myself into them, He brought me through them. For me, they were necessary. I was so full of myself and my Whitefieldesque trumpeting, my Finney emulation, my fixation on Wesleyan piety. I had to be broken somehow. For men, this is usually accomplished via moral failure.

Now, because of grace, the Lord is using me in ways I never fathomed...and the results are different from before. I don't need guitars and drums and soul-hot pleadings. I can use them if I want, but they are not the cause for the effect. The Lord is now bringing people to me, and I just speak to them as led by God, and I don't worry about results; I have rest knowing the Word of God never returns to the Father empty-handed.

And the testimonies the Father allows to *return to me* are truly amazing. Never in a million years...

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/1/30 12:30

Quote:
----- I would see short term fear, tears, transformation in the youth and adults I preached to, but these results would never last. It was like trying to start a campfire with wet wood and dry paper. The paper would blaze brightly beneath the wood, and for a moment you think the wood was aflame, but then the paper turned to ash and the wood smouldered and you realize it was just the paper making all those flames.

This is very good Paul. I think you have your hand on what I'm saying.

Re: , on: 2009/1/30 12:38

I agree but I also believe that the fear of God can be taken out of context as literal fear, which we know is not 'to be scared or frightened' but respecting God as a sovereign authority over us and letting Him be Lord over our lives. We know the difference, many sinners do not. The so called church is comprised of both.... those who do understand this and those who do not. Although Paul Washer would say that the church is comprised only of those who lament over their sin and the sins of the church, and have a relationship that involves repentance and restoration as a process of fruit bearing. Those who know what it means when it is said that 'the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom'.

I'm not so quick to place all of the blame on the false preachers either. It is also the people with itching ears who demand a certain Gospel be preached and flock to those preachers. The Bible says many will seek out what they want to hear. That's a culpability that is theirs alone. Many mega churches are filled to the brim with a 'fluffy Gospel' and churches who preach truth in terms of sin and its eternal consequence are fading fast. We need prayer that ears are turned toward truth in love. But I think much of the old school Hell, Fire and Brimstone teaching the past seventy or so years came from coldhearted legalists who wanted to lump themselves in with the great teachers before them who preached sin and repentance as part of a whole Gospel of salvation and doing it in the love of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We hear of great preachers and some have named them.... like Rolfe Barnard. But we forget about the thousands and thousands of small churches peppered all over the country throughout the years who have had their pastors literally put them in a bondage of fear and call that salvation. It is not. But neither is lukewarmness, I understand this as well.

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/1/30 14:46

To me Psalm 96:9 is a verse that provides some insight into this topic, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness". As has been mentioned often in this forum, the trend in modern Christianity has been to emphasize the love of God over attributes such as his justice and his holiness. On the other hand, sometimes in the past, God's wrath was presented as so large as to leave no room for God loving humanity. I think that as we recognize God's key attributes and see beauty in both his love and his holiness, this is where a balanced view of God is found.

When I entered my first year of university, back in 1985, I experienced something I call my 'dark night of the soul'. Prior to this, I believe that I was a Christian, but God brought me to a place where I had greater desire to know him intimately, and to experience Him at work in my life. Without this, I felt like I could not go on, in fact, I went through a number of months where I could not focus much on my studies, because my need for a greater sense of God's power in my life, seemed so pressing a matter.

God used a sermon by brother David Wilkerson to accomplish the work he was wanting to bring about in my heart. This sermon focussed on the topic of Christian rock music. While Wilkerson's 'All Christian rock is wrong' stance is open for debate, what I received from this sermon went beyond the issue of Christian rock music. I'll never forget the tenderness and urgency in his voice when he preached this message. It seemed like for the first time, I was hearing a preacher preach a message where God's love and holiness were both held up at the same time, not one to the exclusion of the other, but in a way where both held their rightful place, and the beauty of both attributes was apparent.

I can recall Wilkerson addressing the young people who were present at the meeting and saying, "Young people, it's not about your rock and roll music. It's about that fact that you listen to music for hours on end and you won't give God 5 minutes of your listening ear. God's a jealous God. He wants your heart. He wants to put his arms around you and put you on a foundation."

For weeks, every time I listened to the taped message, there was a softness in me afterwards; a brokenness that God had worked in my spirit. It produced, both a greater sense of my sinfulness, and also of God's love for me.

I just wanted to share about this experience, as I felt it relates somewhat to the topic of repentance preaching. If repentance preaching is done in way that produces a tenderness of spirit, a conviction of sin, and a love for God, then I see it as good preaching.

In Jesus,
John

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2009/1/30 17:52

This thread has reminded me of a true story that I read to my children recently, I will share a condensed version of it here. It is a tremendous illustration of how we are broken by God's love and His goodness leads to repentance...

Many years ago two boys lived on a New England farm and their father assigned each of them many chores to complete each day. The younger boy, Tom, was to open the gate for the cows to come in from the field and be milked and then to allow them again to return to the pasture after milking. As this opening and closing of the gate all the time seemed a bit tedious to Tom, he sometimes left the gate open and the cows would get out and do some damage.

After this happened many times Tom's father told him that if it happened again he would get a whipping. So Tom was obedient for a while but time soon dimmed the vision of the whip to Tom's eyes and one night he left the gate open when it should have been closed and much damage was done.

Tom's older brother Joe came to his father and said, "I don't want to see Tom get whipped." The father said, "Tom must be punished for his disobedience." Joe then said, "didn't we read at morning devotions, 'He was wounded for our transgressions?' Well father, I will take half of Tom's whipping."

The father then called for Tom and told him that Joe had offered to take half his whipping. Tom was taken off guard and his face softened as he told Joe that he must not do that. Tom swung around to His father and told him that he alone was guilty and deserved the punishment. Tom's father, with eyes not very clear nor voice very steady said, "there will be no whipping today."

Tom never left that gate open again. It was Joe's offer - Joe's love - that held Tom steady at the gate. Nothing else but divine love can help us see our utter selfishness.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: , on: 2009/2/1 12:34

Quote:
-----I agree but I also believe that the fear of God can be taken out of context as literal fear, which we know is not 'to be scared or frightened' but respecting God as a sovereign authority over us and letting Him be Lord over our lives. We know the difference, many sinners do not.

I actually was talking about terror, exceeding fright that defies words. (In the way that a rebel anarchist in the land would be scared to death of a king who was about to hand him over to the tortures and executioners). If the Apostle tells believers to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear* of God", how much more should the ungodly tremble under their state of damnation before the just judge of the universe who will one day soon throw them into an eternal hell to weep and wail and gnash their teeth.

*1 Corinthians 1:7

Strong's reference

G5401

φόβος

phobos

fob'-os

From a primary φέβομαι phebomai (to be put in fear); alarm or fright: - be afraid, + exceedingly, fear, terror.

This word is used all over the new testament, and is distinct from:

G5399

φοβέω

phobeō

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fob-eh'-o

From G5401; to frighten, that is, (passively) to be alarmed; by analogy to be in awe of, that is, revere: - be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence.

I understand the reason for this thread, and that some may have experienced fleshly repentance preaching with bad results, but this is NOT the norm in the land. The "christian" gang members, prostitutes, and crack addicts on the streets that I minister to in Detroit are a result of asking Jesus into their heart under false love preaching... not repentance preaching.

-Jim

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/2/1 14:03

Do you guys think it would be true to say that the messages preached by Jesus and the apostles were 'tailor made' to the audience they were preached to ?

I think of the messages Jesus gave to the Pharisees. These were strong words, 'rebuking words'. The message he gave to Nicodemus might be described as 'instructive words'. To the woman at the well, you might say his words were 'searching words'. In Mark 10:21, when Jesus addressed the rich young ruler, it says that, "Jesus beholding him loved him".

Some have said that these differences are because Christ knew what was in the hearts of men and women. If this is true, it brings up another question. Should we as sinful people, with imperfect knowledge, preach a message with a slightly different emphasis, depending on our audience ? I wonder, if we examine the gospel messages delivered by the apostles, if this was as much the case, as it had been for Christ.

In Jesus,
John

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/1 15:16

live4jc,

I think your point is good. Jesus seemed to have a way of cutting to the chase. Out and out rebuke for the Pharisees, because of how ill they treated the masses, and then mercy to masses for how ill they had been treated. Then with Nicodemus, it was kind of a middle of the road approach.

I believe this thread supports that. Some have responded to a message geared toward repenting to avoid punishment while others have responded more to a message of love and God calling them unto Himself.

Whatever the message that initially draws us to God, and though there may be some times that fear keeps us, I believe ultimately, God desires that His love will keep us.

Paul says in Eph 3 'and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God'.

Nothing has ever constrained me like the awareness of this love.

Re: , on: 2009/2/1 15:45

Quote:
-----Do you guys think it would be true to say that the messages preached by Jesus and the apostles were 'tailor made' to the audience they were preached to ?

Excellent point brother. Ray Comforts ministry, the Way of the Master makes a good case for a biblical pattern of preaching.

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hing law to the proud, grace to the humble....

Quote:
-----Whatever the message that initially draws us to God, and though there may be some times that fear keeps us, I believe ultimately, God desires that His love will keep us.

I agree with this too.

-Jim

Re: - posted by Mikey_da_rev (), on: 2009/2/1 22:56

Hey guys,

Really enjoying this thread, particularly your story Ron.

I had an opportunity to share at the communion part of the service yesterday morning. I shared from Isaiah 53 and shared a possible story of child going up to Jerusalem for the passover feast in Jesus' time. At the end of the story after his father explained why a lamb had to die to atone for sin I proposed that the kid might say, "If a lamb has to die because of my sin, I don't ever want to sin".

I then used Isaiah 53:10 to illustrate how God made Jesus' soul to be an offering for sin and explained repentance by saying our response to Christ's sacrifice should be the same of the kid in the story. One lady came up and said, "I believe that story about the kid could've happened".

I'm glad this stuff is coming up. There is a time I would have jumped up and yelled repentance at everyone but I think over the years I've seen a biblical standard for preaching repentance that has changed my approach. I wonder if anyone else can pick it up...

John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:1)

Jesus: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:15)

Jesus: "...and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 23:47)

Peter: "repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:28)

Peter: "And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:42)

Do you see it? There's a combo in each of these either a call to repentance or a declaration of the judgement of God combined with the message of the good news i.e. the gospel or remission of sins (remember the kingdom of heaven or of God leads to explaining God's nature, his love, kindness, mercy, judgement and wrath).

Hope this stuff helps some. It's certainly helped me be more gracious and dare I say it relaxed in preaching and witnessing.

God bless yas

Mikey

Re: , on: 2009/2/2 9:03

Quote:

-----One lady came up and said, "I believe that story about the kid could've happened".

It is also just as probable that the same kid grew up to be among those shouting "crucify Him and let Barabbas go free". Some may find this comment unpleasent, but it is more realistic given the radical depravity of man.

-Jim

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/2 9:13

Quote:

-----Do you see it? There's a combo in each of these either a call to repentance or a declaration of the judgement of God combined with the message of the good news i.e. the gospel or remission of sins (remember the kingdom of heaven or of God leads to explaining God's nature, his love, kindness, mercy, judgement and wrath).

I think the thing we have to keep in mind is that there are times of 'visitation' when God deals strongly with individuals. If we consider what brought salvation to pass in Wesley's life I see some key things. One is the Moravian boat incident in the storm. In Finney's life it was the realization that he was 'ashamed' of God as it were or ashamed to be seen praying, etc. Other things as well. So God deals with folk for a while and then it comes down to a time of 'visitation'. Many of the Jews in the time of Christ had such a visitation- but missed it.

So I think it makes it all the more important to be hearing what God is saying and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Wesley responded to God as the preface to Romans was read out. Finney just seemed to be wrestling with God on a personal level. Other examples we could give. When Jesus met Paul on the road to Demascus He never told him to repent. When Jesus met the disciples He told them, "Follow me." The act of repentance is implied- but the words were not necessarily spoken.

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2009/2/2 11:28

It is interesting that much of the discussion in the thread about what to preach to "get more saved" or to realize true conversions is based on people's "experiences" and ultimately what motivates a sinner to come to Christ. I respectfully submit that this is the absolute last place to search for an answer to the question. Scripture is clear about what Jesus, Peter, Paul, Stephen and other biblical teachers preached (they preached repentance and faith). If you think we need a new way that is more effective (which is what a lot of these discussions drill down to)then you're going down rabbit trails. I may be overreacting to this post, but I'm heartsick.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/2/2 11:43

Quote:

-----Scripture is clear about what Jesus, Peter, Paul, Stephen and other biblical teachers preached (they preached repentance and faith). If you think we need a new way that is more effective (which is what a lot of these discussions drill down to)then you're going down rabbit trails. I may be overreacting to this post, but I'm heartsick.

There is no question we must preach repentance and faith...the question is *how* we preach it. We can recite word-for-word Peter's balcony message in Acts 2 and have no heart-prickings whatsoever. It's not a matter of repentance and faith per se; it a matter of knowing the God Who puts authority and divine unction behind our repentance and faith preaching.

This is where many new believers and zealots go wrong. They think they can just up and emulate Whitefield and Charles Finney and preach repentance, like copying a recipe off the internet to bake a cake. All their words are correct, all the doctrine is in place (all the ingredients are there), but the oven has not been pre-heated by God. I believe that unctionless

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repentance preaching does just as much damage as antinomian preaching in long run. A cold oven is a cold oven, period.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/2 12:19

Quote:
-----Scripture is clear about what Jesus, Peter, Paul, Stephen and other biblical teachers preached (they preached repentance and faith). If you think we need a new way that is more effective (which is what a lot of these discussions drill down to)then you're going down rabbit trails. I may be overreacting to this post, but I'm heartsick.

Certainly I'm not looking for new methods. But the thing we must realize is that Jesus and Paul were truly led of the Spirit and not in some superficial way. We are also trying to reckon with why many of us have preached our hearts out with repentance, faith, hell, etc. and have seen little *lasting* results (I.e. genuine regeneration).

So what we are seeking to pin down is exactly *why* it is that folk are not coming into genuine regeneration. I am not willing to assume it is merely hard heartedness on the part of the hearers. People have always been hard hearted.

I personally want to know that I am teachable enough to alter some idea I have or some approach I am taking that may be more of a hindrance than a help. I want to be used of God and not try to take the book and go it alone. So in short, we need to be sensitive to God and be ready for whatever scenerio presents itself.

I have lived long enough to know that simply thundering repentance is not the *only* solution. Some people are demon possessed or in dire mental straits, etc. Jesus and the disciples ministry cannot be reduced to something as simple as John the Baptist's. Steven preached *full* of the Holy Ghost with a disposition that is remarkable in the face of the experience. It is challenging to truly delve into the awesome depth of ministry that existed in the first century.

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2009/2/2 14:58

Brother Paul,

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation when the word is preached and combined with the Holy Spirit's power. Unctionless preaching and hearing is the problem, not what to preach. Jonathan Edwards read his sermons two inches from his face with absolutely no emotion to speak of. People were weeping in the aisles. George Whitfield cried during his pleadings for repentance.

The point is not what the men did but what the Holy Spirit did in the hearts of the people hearing it. I don't say this in a derogatory way to anyone. The Holy Spirit is like the wind, you can't cry Him up. He goes where He desires, not necessarily where we desire. I know you know all this so I'm probably missing the point. I don't preach by the way so take what I say with a mound of salt, but the Scriptures seem to say (much better) what I'm trying to say. This is why it is so difficult not to discuss the doctrines of grace. I think evangelizing and witnessing is a much easier task when you know that God sovereignly moves in peoples hearts to make them willing to believe versus the opposite which leads people to try to figure out ways to present the gospel in a way that will be better received.

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/2/2 18:09

Much truth to be gleaned from what's been written here. God bless you, brothers and sisters :-)

Someone shared earlier about their experiences sharing the gospel with people in the inner city, lamenting that many of these people claim to be Christians, despite not having evidence of a changed life to back up their claims. This experience is much like what I've encountered, during my visits to street missions.

Recently, I was talking to a man I've talked to a few times before at a mission, and he claimed to know Christ. He talked about marijuana being "nature's aspirin"- that sort of stuff. It seemed like nothing I said penetrated his heart much. When I brought up God's moral perfection compared to our utter sinfulness, it seemed to make a dent in his armour but still nothing that lodged an arrow in him. Truly, the Spirit is needed to open up a man's heart to the truth of his lost condition.

Here's a question. The apostle Paul said this, as recorded in Philippians 1:15-18 :

"15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contenti on, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I there in do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice"

If I am honest, when I read this passage I'm puzzled that Paul says that he rejoices when people preach Christ out of en vy and strife (because Christ is still being preached). Anyone else have any insights into what he had in mind that could help to clarify what Paul was and wasn't saying here ?

In Jesus,
John

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/2 18:13

Quote:

whyme wrote:
I think evangelizing and witnessing is a much easier task when you know that God sovereignly moves in peoples hearts to make them willing to believ e versus the opposite which leads people to try to figure out ways to present the gospel in a way that will be better received.

Consider the middle of that road. Paul said something to the effect that I become all things to all men that I might win so me.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/2/2 19:01

Just adding to thread

This 3 minute audio clip of J.C. Ryle is worth listening to.

(<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID1100994251>) The workings of grace in the heart

Re: , on: 2009/2/2 19:09

Quote:
-----There is no question we must preach repentance and faith...the question is how we preach it. We can recite word-for-word Peter's b alcony message in Acts 2 and have no heart-prickings whatsoever. It's not a matter of repentance and faith preaching per se; it a matter of knowing th e God Who puts authority and divine unction behind our repentance and faith preaching.

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I read this some time ago. I was wondering what your thoughts are on this:

Authority and Submission ~ Watchman Nee

"...SATAN'S BEGINNING

Satan became Satan because he overstepped God's authority. He wanted to compete with God and to stand in opposition to God. Rebellion is the cause of the fall of Satan.

Both Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:13-17 speak of the transgression and the fall of Satan. Isaiah 14 tells us that Satan violated God's authority, while Ezekiel 28 tells us that he violated God's holiness. Violating God's authority is a matter of rebellion; it is more serious than violating God's holiness. Sin is a matter of conduct; it is easy to be forgiven of sin. But rebellion is a matter of principle; it is not easy to be forgiven of rebellion. Satan, in trying to set up his throne above that of God's, violated God's authority. The principle of Satan is the principle of self-exaltation. Sin's coming into being was not the cause of Satan's fall. Rather, Satan's rebellion against God's authority, for which he was condemned by God, subsequently gave rise to sin.

Hence, if we want to serve God, we can never violate the matter of authority. To do so is to follow the principle of Satan. We can never preach the word of Christ under the principle of Satan. There is a possibility in God's work that we can stand in principle on Satan's side, while we stand in doctrine on Christ's side. All the while, we may think that we are still doing the Lord's work. This is a very evil thing. Satan is not afraid of us preaching the words of Christ. He is only afraid of us submitting to the authority of Christ. Our service to God can never be according to the principle of Satan. Once the principle of Christ comes, the principle of Satan has to go. Even now Satan is still a usurper in the air; he will not be cast out until the end of Revelation. Only when we wash ourselves spotlessly clean from the principle of Satan can we hope to serve God.

In the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 there is the phrase, "And do not bring us into temptation." Temptation speaks of Satan's work. There is also the phrase, "But deliver us from the evil one." This refers to Satan himself. Following this, the Lord said, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." This is the most important declaration. The kingdom is God's and so is the authority and the glory. Everything is God's. What sets us completely free from Satan is seeing this most precious thing—the kingdom is God's. The administration of the whole universe is under God. For this reason we have to learn to submit to God's authority. No one can steal God's glory.

Satan showed the Lord all the kingdoms of the earth, but the Lord said that all the kingdom of the heavens is God's. We need to see to whom authority ultimately belongs. When we preach the gospel we are bringing people under the authority of God. If we are to establish God's authority on earth, is it then possible for us not to meet authority ourselves? If we do not, how can we deal with Satan?.."

<http://www.peacemakers.net/unity/wnauthority&submission.htm>

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/3 5:41

RebeccaF,

I wasn't sure I was going to like your point when I first started reading it. But I read it twice and think I like it very much. I especially like and agree with the highlighted text, which is I guess why you highlighted it.

If you think about it, your point allows for both types of preaching that has been talked about in this thread - the preaching that emphasizes our need of repentance and the preaching that calls us to a relationship with a God that loves us (so that it is not misunderstood, when I say this, I don't mean that we emphasize the love of God and do not require repentance, I mean that the effect of the love of God in our lives will in itself cause repentance)

The key is proclaiming publicly what we hear in secret - there is a verse to that effect. And the key there is that we first hear.

Edwards message, who is known for one end of the spectrum, was effective because he heard it in secret. I think I rem

ember hearing Edwards wife though, commenting on how she liked the gracious style of Whitefields messages.

There is room for both and God in His wisdom and sovereignty is able to lead those who are sensitive enough to hear the living word of God, and not just the written one (meaning there is the aspect of God making His written word come to life when He speaks it to us). When we proclaim this living word, whether it hammers the need to repent or tenderly speaks of God's love and grace, it has the end effect of drawing those who hear it to God.

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/2/3 7:45

Robert W wrote :

"Certainly I'm not looking for new methods. But the thing we must realize is that Jesus and Paul were truly led of the Spirit and not in some superficial way. We are also trying to reckon with why many of us have preached our hearts out with repentance, faith, hell, etc. and have seen little lasting results (I.e. genuine regeneration). "

Robert, I wonder how many others feel this way as well. I do. We believe that we have shared a salvation message and have prayed much and sought for the unction of the Spirit, but have not witnessed the move of God we were hoping for. Was it because of sin in our lives ? Quite likely this has been part of the explanation.

I believe that when the Spirit is outpoured, as on the Day of pentecost and as he has been repeatedly throughout history , we see him accomplish in a small time, what has never been accomplished over a longer time through all our best efforts through organization and methods of one sort or another. This is the 'unction' we are looking for, the Spirit Himself.

I am interested to hear about the experiences of those who have witnessed God move in some powerful ways. In the past year, I have seen some signs of God doing a work of breaking up fallow ground and some other things which have been encouraging to see, but still I think of that song that says, "Mercy drops round us are falling, but for the showers we plead."

In Jesus,
John

Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2009/2/3 8:49

I would profer 1Cor1:17 through 2:10 for the definitive answer to the question of what should be preached to effect salvation. The verses also give a very sound explanation as to when and to whom you should expect the preaching to be effective. As to whether love or repentance should be preached, my humble opinion is that proclaiming Christ on the cross demonstrates His hatred of sin, His love of justice and His law, His judgement against those who reject the cross ("unless you repent you shall likewise perish"), His price for redemption earned and His love for His people. So it is not repentance or, it is both. The truth is spoken in love, the truth is not just love.

The gospel message is the "word of the cross" (1Cor1:17,18), the power is the Holy Spirit proclaiming that message through the speaker and the message into a heart that has been prepared by God. Take a look at the parable of the sower in Luke. The sower is a constant, the message is a constant (ie., the Word). It is the heart that is the difference maker. As Christ says in the explanation of the parable, only a pure heart receives the Word to root and bear fruit. We always reverse it. We say a heart becomes pure after it is saved. The parable of the Sower says otherwise. God opens the heart and prepares it for the reception (effective)of the Word unto salvation. If anyone suggests that it is the preacher or the hearer that makes the heart pure then I respectfully disagree.

Re: , on: 2009/2/3 9:34

Quote:

MJones wrote:
RebeccaF,

I wasn't sure I was going to like your point when I first started reading it. But I read it twice and think I like it very much. I especially like and agree with the highlighted text, which is I guess why you highlighted it.

If you think about it, your point allows for both types of preaching that has been talked about in this thread - the preaching that emphasizes our need of repentance and the preaching that calls us to a relationship with a God that loves us (so that it is not misunderstood, when I say this, I don't mean that

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I'm glad you didn't take it wrong. What I gather from reading this from Watchman Nee, basically is that there is a time and place for everything and only God knows that time and place and we must be walking in the spirit totally in reliance on Him or we could be in rebellion against His will.

I don't think Watchman Nee, is saying we need to pick ourselves apart and dissect every little thing we do for the Lord under a microscope wondering if it has His seal of approval is on it but it seems that he is just saying that we can't just operate any old way we like and expect God to bless it.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/3 9:57

Quote:
-----Robert, I wonder how many others feel this way as well. I do. We believe that we have shared a salvation message and have prayed much and sought for the unction of the Spirit, but have not witnessed the move of God we were hoping for. Was it because of sin in our lives ? Quite likely this has been part of the explanation.

I can say personally that I have preached repentance in times of the greatest victory I have ever known and it did not seem to matter. I don't think a person could really preach repentance with conviction if they had sin in their life. That's just always been my feeling. But there can be an underlying elitism as Paul West mentioned that may be in fact hindering the message? We can get proud and not see the sin that God truly hates? Brokenness and victory don't easily walk hand in hand.

I guess I am continually challenged as I look again to this thread by the fact that neither Finney or Wesley were hearing any kind of 'repentance' message when they turned to Christ and were born again. It just seems to me that there is no real cookie cutter type method of reaching folk. I think of Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Again, seemingly just God meeting the man where He was and visiting him with the Gospel. Almost as if God was preparing the man to hear and then led Phillip that way.

I also think of the passage that comes into play from I Cor 3:

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

There is a sense in which God is at work and the minister is at work *together* to secure the salvation of souls. It seems to me that the objective is to see folk turn to Christ in full regeneration so that they are free from Sin and are in Christ as New Creatures.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/2/3 10:43

Quote:
----- guess I am continually challenged as I look again to this thread by the fact that neither Finney or Wesley were hearing any kind of 'repentance' message when they turned to Christ and were born again. It just seems to me that there is no real cookie cutter type method of reaching folk.

I too am totally convinced that there is no cookie-cutter method. I am also continually challenged by not only the way guys like Finney and Wesley and Luther came to know God, but myself as well. There wasn't any repentance trumpeting, no soul-hot exhortations, no "turn or burn, get right or get left" broadcasts. I just somehow *knew* what I had to do, and the Holy Spirit sovereignly showed me that I needed to settle the account with God. It was a most sacred, solemn moment I shall never forget. I didn't know the Word of God, I didn't know theology, I didn't know how to pray, I didn't know about the principles of sanctification, or even what the sinner's prayer was...and especially what the meaning of the word "repentance" was: I just knew I was a sinner and that Christ had paid it all. And then faith took over, and I've never been the same since.

In the midst of my Whitefield, Wesley, Finney street-preaching days, I drifted away from that original conversion experience. I allowed myself to be bamboozled into believing I could somehow effectuate a similar experience in others simply by preaching repentance with a soul-hot fervor. But it never worked the way I had anticipated. I would see decisions, but the decisions amounted to nothing but a morning fog that slowly dissipated as the day wore on.

Should we stop preaching repentance? No. We do as the Lord tells us to do, governed by the Spirit. As brother Robert said, we have no account in the Word of God of Phillip preaching repentance to the Ethiopian eunuch. I understand this as the Holy Spirit's subtle way of showing us there are no cut-and-dry cookie cutter methods when it comes to the New Birth. The key, I believe, is to be sensitive to God's leading in all cases and circumstances; there may be times (as I have experienced) when God tell me not to mention a certain component of the repentance message to an individual, but rather lift up the unspeakable love and mercy of God. And this was exactly what the person needed to hear; it was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back that was keeping him/her from fully embracing the mercy of the cross. With others, God may instruct you to give your testimony. With yet others, God may forbid you to give your testimony. There is no cookie-cutter method. And we will spend the rest of our lives learning how to discern the perfect will of God for each situation. This is the difference between Christianity at the kindergarten level, and Christianity at the PhD level in the school of God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/3 12:19

Quote:
-----I would see decisions, but the decisions amounted to nothing but a morning fog that slowly dissipated as the day wore on.

I was thinking as I read Bro. Paul's post about various people I have watched that did not repent no matter what God did for them. I used to believe that if the circumstances with just 'right' and God intervened and saved them from their calamity- they would turn to Him.

I knew a man once that I had prayed for a lot. He had been diagnosed with cancer on 2 previous occasions and the Lord brought him through. On the 3rd occasion he had a tennis ball sized tumor in his lungs (lung cancer) from smoking all his life. I thought for sure that if God raised him up- he would turn to Christ. He was as good as dead. One foot in the grave and another on a banana peeling. Amazingly the Lord brought him through the chemo and radiation with about less than a full lung left. Did he repent at this time? No.

I was rattled by it. I was sifted in a sense, because I believed that if the miracle was powerful enough and God had manifested Himself enough then surely-, SURELY... the person would repent. When they did not, I was very confused as a young minister. So then I thought, if miracles won't do it- it must be the word of repentance preached with power and authority.

rity. Then I realized that the word of repentance was trod under foot at the same level as the Divine miracles.

In the midst of it all I also had thoughts along the lines of a previous poster that thought it must be 'sin' in our lives. Too much sin in the camp, etc. I knew that personalities like Billy Graham were not the answer, but just for good measure I was a counselor for a crusade in 2004 (?). Almost no fruit and millions were spent along with many months of preparation and fasting and prayer. What did I do? I blamed the 'sinners prayer' as the culprit. I traced the history of that prayer down and wrote about it; it was helpful- but still no answer.

So I think Paul West is right. We will spend the rest of our lives learning to be sensitive to God in seeing souls saved. Truly we have need of patience.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/2/3 13:35

Quote:
-----...myself as well. There wasn't any repentance trumpeting, no soul-hot exhortations, no "turn or burn, get right or get left" broadcasts. I just somehow knew what I had to do, and the Holy Spirit sovereignly showed me that I needed to settle the account with God.

My experience is similar. I had not been in a church for over ten years. I had not read a Gospel tract, been witnessed to, or cracked open a Bible for at least that long as well.

I was home all alone. My thoughts were far from God.

I had just finished pouring myself another drink when I encountered such Truth and Light that my life till that moment was exposed to me for the wickedness that it was. For the first time in my life I saw myself as a sinner. I knew God was real and that I desperately needed to 'get right' with Him.

I drove to three churches that night. One was full of folks having a New Years Eve celebration. No pastors, preachers, or teachers could be found. One "youth leader type guy" just stuttered and stammered when I explained my situation. The next church was dark but what appeared to be the parsonage next door was lit up with widows and doors open. I knocked for several minutes and waited in the parking lot for at least twenty more. Nothing. The next church had a few people in it, but like the first one, they just acted nervous and told me to wait around for the preacher. While waiting I read their billboard; it was littered with sayings and slogans. I immediately felt an almost palatable uneasiness and returned home.

During the next few days, few weeks...few months...God slowly revealed to me what I needed to know.

I still thank God that none of those preachers could be found that night.

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2009/2/3 14:06

Hi TJ,

Praise God ! That was a blessing to read of the work that God did in your heart. :-)

In Jesus,
John

Re: , on: 2009/2/3 15:05

Quote:

live4jc wrote:

Hi TJ,

Praise God ! That was a blessing to read of the work that God did in your heart. :-)

In Jesus,
John

Amen, thanks for sharing that. That is one of the best schools of God is a testimony. :-)

God knows just what it takes to draw us to Him. I was saved while listening to a preacher on a christian radio broadcast.

I like this testimony too from "Back To Jerusalem" about (<http://www.backtojerusalem.com/pdf/articles/MohammedAndTheBusDriver.pdf>) Mohammed and the Bus Driver I guess some would question it but I believe it's true. God is a very personal, intimate, loving heavenly father that knows just what it takes to bring you to Him. I have heard many times testimonies of those who lived in remote parts of the world without anyone to witness to them and the Lord would come to them in dreams or visions. Our God is an awesome God! He is definitely not a cookie cutter God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/3 22:33

I think it is important to point out that even though we may not have seen the results we would like in our preaching and teaching, etc., it is important that we remain faithful to continue in the ministry that God has given to us.

I thought also about the passage in Matthew:

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believe

d him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.(Matthew 21)

The word 'afterward' here could mean any range of time from minutes to years. We are not told how long 'afterward' actually was in this case. And it seems that many times folk 'afterward' turn to Christ, but the question is- how will we react to the *afterward* of a sinners life?

Re: - posted by graceamazed (), on: 2009/2/3 23:00

Quote:

-----We will spend the rest of our lives learning to be sensitive to God in seeing souls saved. Truly we have need of patience.

The Puritans described the role of a minister in the work of salvation as similar to the role of a mid-wife in a delivery. Labor and delivery progress through many stages and its important that the mid-wife is able to recognize what the birthing mother is experiencing and to then encourage her or take action as would be appropriate. It would be disastrous for the mid-wife to assume that she can make the pregnant woman give birth whenever she so decides. No, the mid-wife is only there to assist in the process.

Likewise, we ministers of the Lord can not assume we can effectuate the work of regeneration in the sinners life whenever we so decide. We must be wise and recognize how the Lord is working in the life of the sinner and then seek His guidance on how to be of assistance in the process.

Thinking in this manner has helped me significantly over the years.

Re: - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2009/2/3 23:46

Hi everyone,

Robert,

Quote:

-----But I am equally concerned that in an attempt to somehow balance the false Gospel some are presenting an equally 'false' Gospel only the other extreme. And because the typical attitude is 'stricter' = more spiritual- it is passes off as legit.

I think I can appreciate what you are sharing in that. If it was an error for **the Hebrews** to move the Ark on a cart, it wouldn't necessarily be better to stand on it and shout at people with an angry face and a loud voice.

Recently, a passage in 2 Corinthians has stood out to me, where the Apostle Paul writes,

"But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves *beyond our* measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:"

- 2 Corinthians 10:13-14(KJV)

I think also of how he said that God had made him and others 'able ministers of the new testament'(2Cor 3:1-6). And I think too of how he said he had fully preached the Gospel "through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God"(Rom 15:15-19).

Whether his speech was contemptible, or only to his adversaries(v10), doesn't seem to have made any difference.

I suppose in a topic like this John the Baptist comes to mind.

I think too of how in John the Apostle's record of the Gospel it says,

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*."

- John 3:34(KJV)

And how it was written of John the Baptist,

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

- John 1:6(KJV)

Re: A Piece in the Puzzle? : -) - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/4 3:47

I think graceamazed's point is good also. I think the Puritan's spoke of plucking unripe fruit. I know that if a banana is picked before it turns yellow it will never ripen. Store bought bananas have been picked while 'pale' (green) and transported thousands of miles. When they arrive at the warehouse they are 'gassed' with the essential element that they had not yet received from the tree. They then begin to turn yellow in a few days or weeks.

Chris,

I think you may be onto something here. I traced the word for 'measure' in the passage in the Greek and came to the familiar passage in Ephesians:

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4)

It is the effectual working in the measure of every part that makes increase of the Body. When each part of the Body is functioning properly in its own place, then we are in position for increase of the body as well as an edifying of itself.

I cross reference this with Ron Bailey's message on the Word of His grace (preached at Greenock) and it seems that the growth of the body is not the result of huge evangelistic campaigns, but a healthy Body in which each member is functioning in its proper place.

If one thinks about it, natural cell division will make increase of a 'body', but it has to be all of the cells increasing in equili

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brum or a 'tumor' or 'cancer' develops. This is an amazing picture and one that truly has the potential to relieve the pressure of thinking that I have to somehow duplicate myself en masse.

So we see once again that a properly functioning local body of believers in which each member is working effectually in love will increase and edify itself as a matter of course.

Make sense?

Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/2/4 5:14

John 8:28

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

John 8:38

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

We are to preach and teach what He tells us through His word. He tells us what,when,and where and the results are up to Him.

When was spending time with Him replaced by what man thinks?

Spend the time on your knees you are wasting here and you will not need to ask one another what one should preach.

In His Love
pastorfrin

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/4 7:01

Quote:

pastorfrin wrote:

Spend the time on your knees you are wasting here and you will not need to ask one another what one should preach.

pastorfrin,

That wasn't very nice. For a change, this has been a good and healthy discussion. Besides, I believe you have a 4 star, 'home away from home' rating with over 1,300 posts yourself.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/4 7:54

Quote:

-----Spend the time on your knees you are wasting here and you will not need to ask one another what one should preach.

Do you know how much time any one of us spend or have spent before God seeking Him in our callings to make such a statement?

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/4 8:08

I am wondering also about the importance of evangelism within the context of a local church. If a local church has some that actively go out to minister as the result of the Holy Spirit putting His hand on them for the ministry- it would seem that the process of building *that* local church would be realized.

One of the great problems with mass evangelism is where to send the new converts'. It becomes a situation where churches seek to gather these into their local churches so they participate in the meetings, etc. hoping to gain converts I am not convinced this is a biblical method.

I am thinking that God's design is much more pointed than that. There are specific individuals that are being drawn towards Christ that He has already purposed for them to be in a certain assembly. If we follow the direction of Ephesians 4 and examples in Acts it would seem that God would bring us to the right folk at the right time and build His church. It is what He said, "I will build my Church..." So it just seems to me that we need more specific direction from the ground up beginning with specific direction within a local congregation.

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/4 8:14

Before this gets too out of line, I would like to add a personal note.

Before I discovered SI, my morning time with God was the thing I thought of when I went to bed at night and the first thing I thought of when I woke the next morning. I have to admit, I caught myself the other day and realized that was no longer the case.

It had got to the point that the last thing I did before going to bed was check SI and the first thought when I woke up was about SI. The Lord didn't beat me up over it, but He brought it to mind and I had to admit the truth in it.

Since, I have corrected that mindset. I still enjoy posting, and lately it seems I have been doing a fair amount, but I have put it all back into perspective.

So as I understand where pastorfrin was coming from, I like RobertW was at least a little offended that it was assumed that since we spend time posting, that we are not spending time with God.

I am trying in my post's to see some of them as an opportunity for ministry. Some, like the one's in this thread are more just those who are somewhat mature in the Lord, sharing their thoughts with each other, which I might add is biblical as we build each other up.

Though I can relate to the feelings expressed by pastorfrin, for I have had them myself, I would at least like to make known that I have put it all back into it's proper perspective and would urge all to do the same if it applies.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2009/2/4 8:22

hi, my story is that after getting saved,i entered the ministry with the man who lead me to Jesus.i became associate evangelist in this ministry;preaching in churches around the country.because i had little holiness in my thought life, i quit....before i acted sinfully,bringing reproach on Jesus and the ministry and went back into the nightclub business. after being kicked out of the church i was attending and blasted often by 'christians' i began to hate the smug religious people telling me to repent.ron carter...God bless him came to me one day and asked me to dinner where he told me he was from my home and was a student at the seminary...nobts...oh oh...but then he told me that Jesus loved me just like i was... the Holy Spirit came on me so strongly that i wept uncontrollably and i have served the Lord for over 40 yrs ever since see thousands saved and blessed by God.jimp love has power ...fear has torment

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/4 9:58

Quote:
-----So as I understand where pastorfrin was coming from, I like RobertW was at least a little offended that it was assumed that since we spend time posting, that we are not spending time with God.

There are some people that frequent these forums that have no church home whatsoever. They are not in a house church or a local church. For them these forums are a great portion of the 'fellowship' (even though it is cyber fellowship) that they receive. I have become increasingly sensitive to this fact over the years here.

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and think about SI. I think about the discussions and conversations. I think about the fellowship. Having been able to meet many of the dear brothers here on SI and spend time with them I see it much more personally. Behind the avatars and code names these are *real* people that have real issues in life like everyone else. They have feelings. They are human. They need encouragement. They want to please God.

So I take these forums very seriously personally. Someone may need to be encouraged or someone may be acting out bringing discouragement and I react to that. We are real people here. We are not a number or a combination of numbers and letter. This is real fellowship and I try to be sensitive to that. To me it is as real as any past letter type correspondence- it only happens more swiftly.

That said I think we need to always be in a prayerful state of mind here on SI. We need the mind of Christ. We need compassion. It is when the conversations no longer edify that this forum denigrates to just another abusive internet forum or chat room.

Re: - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/2/5 4:48

Mike and Robert

Brothers,

If you would read my post again I think you will see that I was not criticizing anyone for number of post or time spent on SI. That would be a bit hypocritical.

How do you get this:

Quote:
-----So as I understand where pastorfrin was coming from, I like RobertW was at least a little offended that it was assumed that since we spend time posting, that we are not spending time with God.

From this:

John 8:28

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

John 8:38

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

We are to preach and teach what He tells us through His word. He tells us what, when, and where and the results are up to

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o Him.

When was spending time with Him replaced by what man thinks?

Spend the time on your knees you are wasting here and you will not need to ask one another what one should preach.

In His Love

pastorfrin

Brothers,

I hope this is easier for you to understand than my original post.

I was pointing out 'though you both left it out of your quotes' that we are to hear from God and not man and the whole idea of asking one another what you think works best in preaching the word is a waste of His time, and only continues to encourage man to trust in man.

The Lord tells you what works best for every given service and situation and all who wait on Him know that.

You are both right, I have no idea how much time you spend in prayer and or waiting before Him. I do not question either of you about such things.

I have found over the years that there is a truth to be told in the questions that people ask.

Please forgive me if I have offended either of you, I did not intend to do so.

In His Love

pastorfrin

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/5 6:40

Quote:

-----Pastorfrin's: Please forgive me if I have offended either of you, I did not intend to do so.

Hi Pastorfrin,

No apology needed. I agree heartedly with the need to be sensitive to God in prayer, meditation, study, and as I have ministered before, during and after the sermon or teaching. I have always tried to be consciously leaning upon God for His grace. I have nothing in myself to truly help anyone. I believe this is as was Christ's pattern and I have endeavored to do that over the years.

The real bottom line in this thread, as I have thought about it, is how sinners still have a free moral agency with which they must decide if they will or will not serve God. I have always believed that 'more light' is the solution. If we have enough 'light' then sinners will repent. Truly I have dedicated my whole life to understanding the Gospel and I still am in search for the silver bullet (as someone stated). What group of circumstances, what combination of effects (message, unctio, sensitivity to God, prophetic element, miracles, signs, wonders, etc.) are in play to secure the repentance of a sinner?

I have been particularly distraught in the past when I was a youth pastor to see such a very small percentage of young people serve God into their adult years. I blamed the statistics on pizza, Pepsi, popcorn and ping-pong parties. I blamed worldly self-seeking youth pastors. I blamed a weak and powerless message devoid of unctio. I blamed lazy workers unwilling to pray young people through.

So when I became youth pastor I took a broom to the ministry. I was in reputation as absolutely no-nonsense, sober, ministry. I believed that preaching with power and authority coupled with long altar calls was the answer. SO we prayed ma

ny times for a hour or more for folk until many parents were aggravated and some refused to allow the kids to come to evening services midweek.

So then I blamed the parents that if they wanted to keep their kids out of prison they would keep them in the service. I said many times that if it were a ballgame they would not care how long the service lasted. It's not as if ministers are paid by the hour and are trying intentionally to drag something out.

And after all is said and done I look back and see almost identical results. The catch word is now 'discipleship'. We need to 'disciple' them. So I have prayerfully taken on that role after almost a year of seeking God and will begin again seeking God for clear direction on how to proceed. I think we all just need to be faithful to continue to respond to any light the Lord gives us in the building of His Church. I suppose precious stones are a rare thing- yet I have presumed I could minister and they become commonplace. Perhaps that idea is what I must reckon with first.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2009/2/5 7:01

Baylus Benjamin McKinney
(1886-1952) C. 1940

LORD LAY SOME SOUL UPON MY HEART

Lord, lay some soul upon my heart,

And love that soul through me;

And may I ever do my part

To win that soul for Thee.

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/5 7:51

PastorFrin,

Quote:

RobertW wrote:
Baylus Benjamin McKinney
(1886-1952) C. 1940

LORD LAY SOME SOUL UPON MY HEART

Lord, lay some soul upon my heart,

And love that soul through me;

And may I ever do my part

To win that soul for Thee.

I think this poem speaks to the heart of what now drives my life. As I feel I have found God, I desire to help those who may be searching for Him. In addition, I enjoy conversing with others who have found Him; that part hopefully is a mutual stirring.

I take my posts very seriously, and more so as time goes on. I see it, not as a substitute for our need to hear from God, but as I have said before, what I have heard from Him in secret, I proclaim in public. In some cases it is for the purpose of possibly winning some. In other cases it is for the building and strengthening of the body - good fellowship.

I do hope and pray, and feel that I have even seen a change in this over the past couple of weeks, that we do become m

ore tender and less antagonistic. That this becomes a place for ministry, as I have seen that it can be, more than a place where we can air our differences, although I know there will be some of that.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2009/2/5 9:12

I appreciate the diversity within the Body of Christ. That God can use a many membered Body with different gifts and ministries. Each member has been given grace to build up, strengthen, and encourage the body under the headship of Jesus Christ.

The local church is not a one man ministry. The pastor has not been called to do it all. The Church is fulfilled and enriched when each member in the Body functions in a super natural - natural way.

The brothers and sisters on SI are a tremendous blessing, and as we all allow the Spirit of God to use us, and give out of that portion that He has given to us, the Body of Christ will be built up.

Mike

Re: - posted by MJones (), on: 2009/2/6 7:08

As it seems this thread may have played itself out, I have to say that I have actually learned from the different opinions that have been expressed here.

I have also been encouraged by everyone's ability to share their differing opinions graciously.