

General Topics :: Salty Preaching by E.M Bounds

Salty Preaching by E.M Bounds - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/11/16 15:19

Without salty qualities, preaching neither penetrates nor saves.

Sermons ought to have a mark to shoot at like the rifleman; that is, every sermon ought to have its end and be prepared to secure that end.

Christ's sermons always hit somebody. Sometimes they hit with convicting and convincing force that broke up the heart into sorrow and repentance. Some-times they enraged and induced bitterness, opposition, and hate.

Always intended to save, they frequently repulsed rather than attracted.

The first martyr, Stephen, was a heavenly minded man, full of the Holy Ghost; but his words went like chained lightning to the consciences of his hearers and cut them to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. His sermon was aimed at a mark and hit the center.

It is related of Mr. Wesley that his first inquiry about his lay assistants was: "Is anybody convinced of sin by their preaching? Is anybody made mad by their preaching?" If both of these questions were answered in the negative, he removed the preacher to another place.

True preaching lays the heart and conscience bare and reveals sins as they will be exposed--naked--in the day of judgment.

All forms of sin and wickedness grow up and flourish under preaching that never disturbs consciences nor awakens opposition. The preaching that has no repellent power will not have attractive force. The preaching that is not direct in its aim is a blank cartridge fired in the air.

Real preaching is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Real preaching deals with men's consciences and men's sins. It rebukes, reproves, exhorts, and has some of the fiery indignation of the Judge. It is clothed with some of the scrutiny and terrors of the judgment.

Preaching of this kind is salty preaching. It is felt. It demands a hearing. It is powerful.

Preaching that has no salt in it is not the preaching for the present day. Salt is pungent, salt penetrates; it saves from corruption. Without salty qualities, preaching neither penetrates nor saves. These times are too strenuous to be arrested by saltless preaching. Salt finds the sore and makes it smart. The great facts of God's revealed Word are the salt, and the preacher is to put the salt in contact with the world's corruptness.

It is appalling to think of the many forms of worldliness and sin that flourish under the eye and voice of many a modern pulpit. It would often seem that the pulpit had no mission to save--only to please and to entertain. The function of the pulpit to search and alarm consciences seems a lost function. The world, self-satisfied, without shame or blush, sits in its cushioned pew. Popular sins luxuriate among the church officials, and the pulpit seems to have no mission to bring conviction and salvation, or even to make these sinners in Zion afraid.

Something must be done. All forms of worldliness and many forms of sin are in our pews. The sins of indifference and sloth are there. The sins of selfishness, ease, indulgence, pride, dishonesty, covetousness, avarice, intemperance, and passion breed and swarm in our pews like insect life in the beams of the sun. Worldliness in myriad forms grows and luxuriates in the warmth of church air. The low tone of spiritual life and its lukewarmness take the savor out of church life, and corruptions multiply without restraint. Salty preaching is the only cure for this condition.

It is salt that has the savor, and that salt must be put in. Sell out your sugar and buy salt. Strike out the poetry from your

sermons and put in red hot, hard truth--truth that is rough enough to be strong and leave its smart.

Personal or Popular Pulpits?

Our gospel is a personal gospel. "Thou art the man" is the epitome of its purpose. To separate and purge the person from his sins is the chief aim of the gospel.

An impersonal ministry will never save, for under such a ministry, sin will thrive with its rankest and most poisonous growth. A personal ministry is not simply for the unregenerate, but it has its mission to the church and to the best in the church. The presence of sin in church members stays their advance in holiness and scatters or dims the light they ought to shed on the regions around.

This is the rub: men do not like personal preaching as a rule. Such a ministry often disturbs and annoys. It collides with one's desires, gratification, or interest. A personal ministry is often felt as an intruder; the rebukes are received as scoldings.

But the chief function of the ministry is personal. Its mission is to the man. Its design is to present every man perfect. Mr. Gladstone has spoken some wise words on this point. He says:

"One thing I have against the clergy, both in country and in the towns. I think they are not severe enough on their congregations. They do not sufficiently lay upon the souls and consciences of their hearers their moral obligations and probe their hearts and bring up their whole lives and action to the bar of conscience.

"The class of sermons which, I think, are most needed, are of the class, one of which so offended Lord Melbourne long ago. Lord Melbourne was one day seen coming from the church in a mighty fume. Finding a friend, he exclaimed, 'I have always been a supporter of the church, and I have always upheld the clergy. But it is really too bad to have to listen to a sermon like that we have had this morning. Why! The preacher actually insisted upon applying religion to a man's private life!'

"But that is the kind of preaching which I like best--the kind of preaching which men need most, but it is also the kind which they get least. The clergy are afraid of dealing faithfully with their hearers."

To deal in vague or splendid generalities, to deal with impersonal subjects or faraway sins seems to be the faulty and almost universal tendency of the pulpit. The modern pulpit is much intent on being a popular pulpit. It has the praiseworthy end of getting the people to church but the serious defect of impersonality.

The itching after popularity means that the pulpit cannot be plain, wholly honest, or personal in its rebukes. Popularity must be tolerant, apologetic, and impersonal in its censures. Personal preachers are the ones that reach hearts and consciences. They make men feel their sins. They expose the sin till the sinner realizes that the sin is part of himself, that its enormity and guilt are his, that its shame and punishment belong to him. The personal preacher does not preach to the times, but to the men who make the times and are responsible for the times.

Charles the First said: "I carry my ears to hear other preachers, but I carry my conscience to hear Bishop Sanderson." There are not many pulpits to which men carry their consciences. An impersonal pulpit will neither make nor guide consciences. The nation and the church need pulpits that will make consciences for men who have none, consciences formed after God's Word.

A personal pulpit is the only sin-convicting pulpit. A personal pulpit is the only sin-destroying pulpit. A personal pulpit is the only edifying pulpit. Holiness can only be advanced by a personal pulpit. Holiness and all its attendant graces are blasted and die under an impersonal pulpit.

Personal, salty preaching does not mean to call names, to be bad tempered, or to set the pulpit at war with the pew. The salt must be put in, not with bitterness but with tenderness. The salt need not be driven in with a sledge hammer, and the skin doesn't need to be torn off to apply it.

But personal preaching is to so classify and individualize the sermon that its whole force centers on each individual, and no one is able to lose himself in the crowd. Impersonal preaching is to entertain or please. Personal preaching is like a f

faithful mirror that puts the man with all his sins and weaknesses before his own eyes.

Preaching ought to individualize, search, and uncover us, as the great day of judgment will individualize, search, and uncover us. Surface preaching, dealing with the veneer of human nature, will not do that. Personal preaching, like the chastening of God, for the present is not joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

An impersonal ministry pleases, makes reputation, and is popular. A salty, personal ministry advances religion, saves sinners, perfects saints, and fills heaven.

Re: Salty Preaching by E.M Bounds - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/11/17 11:02

Thanks brother,
Just so happened to be reading E.M. Bounds lately:

"Stop! Pause! Consider! Where are we? What are we doing? Preaching to kill? Praying to kill? Praying to God! The great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all men! What reverence! What simplicity! What sincerity! What truth in the inward parts is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty! Prayer to God: the most noble exercise, the loftiest effort of man, the most real thing. Life-creating preaching brings the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth. It draws on God's exhaustless and open treasure for the need and beggary of man."

E.M.Bounds

Power Through Prayer