

What Does the Bible Teach About the Preacher?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction: 1Tim. 4:6, 9-16

A. Why does a man preach? It is not a life work chosen for its secular rewards.

1. He is seldom compensated as well as his skills would be were he to use them in secular occupations. In the past, evangelists often were paid in keeping with the income of the poorest member in the local congregation. While brethren's reasoning with paying the preacher has improved considerably, he will unlikely be compensated equitable to the level of sacrifice he will bear to do the job right.
2. He will not likely have a home of his own. Many congregations maintain a parsonage for the preacher and treat it as part of his salary. Thus he finds it difficult to purchase a home in which he can retire. In addition, preachers are often expected to move on after the local work considers his effectiveness there has come to an end. His wife and children will know no certain place as home and will have to develop new friendships all over again. The wives of preachers and elders are the true heroes of the faith in any congregation.
3. His profession is considered one of the least desired and least respected in the business community. Because some preachers have abused their position, most of the world and even some brethren believe the preacher is too lazy and too unskilled to do secular work.
4. It is a disappointing work in terms of productivity. The preacher will contact and teach many people only to see very few of them respond to his efforts. He will watch over time a significant number of the members of the church with which he works drift and depart the faith in spite of all of his efforts.

B. He preaches because he loves.

1. He loves God. All faithful Christians express their love for God in various ways, but the preacher manifests his love for God by offering his life in service to Him in this world. He is in awe of God's majesty and love for him and feels compelled to demonstrate that awe by reciprocating God's love with a life dedicated to telling others about it.
2. He loves Jesus Christ. He is daily moved by the preaching and sacrifice of Jesus to imitate Him by doing the same as much as he is capable. He never feels closer to the Lord in love than when he is emulating the life of the Lord in his own.
3. He loves the word of God. The preacher finds nothing on the earth nor in the heavens more fascinating and endlessly delightful than the God inspired words of truth. It is the book that occupies most of his mediation and reasoning; he constantly, in youth and in old age, finds new, exciting, and refreshing insights that feed his hunger for learning and wisdom. He is fulfilled by Bible study. He revels in the salvation he enjoys that is revealed in the word, and is overwhelmed with the

wisdom and complexity of a plan that began before this world was made and will continue until after this world ends.

4. He loves his fellow human beings. He fully understands the human predicament and recognizes that everyone is in desperate need of the message he is capable of bringing to them. No achievement in this world will ever rise to the level of joy he experiences as he shares in the role of bringing a soul to salvation. He finds great pleasure and personal satisfaction in seeing the light of understanding spread across the faces of those he teaches. He preaches because he loves.

C. Series of lessons on preaching:

1. Things that are not qualifications for preachers.
2. Things that are scriptural qualifications for preachers.
3. Things that are not part of the preacher's work.
4. Things that are the preacher's scriptural work.
5. Things the preacher must preach.

D. A call to arms for potential preachers everywhere.

1. The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few.
2. It is not hard to get started. Begin incorporating lesson preparation into your daily Bible studies.
3. Begin with extending an invitation and teaching a class.
4. Producing preachers used to be one of the works that elders in every congregation would encourage.

E. What on earth in heaven's name is a preacher? - Isa. 6:5-11.

F. He is:

1. An earthly man answering a heavenly duty.
2. He is an earthly man proclaiming what heaven has authorized.
3. He is on earth proclaiming heaven's will by God's grace.

G. Some are unwilling to accept this definition.

1. Hang titles, roles, and responsibilities on him that God never intended.
2. Let's examine this question from a negative and a positive approach.
3. Let's expose the error and expound the truth.

H. What is the perfect preacher? The world's view:

1. Preaches a riveting, profound lesson in only 25 minutes.
2. Condemns sin in such a way that no one feels any remorse or embarrassment.
3. He works from seven AM to midnight and is also the janitor and groundskeeper.
4. He makes \$200.00 per week, wears new suits, drives a big car, and contributes \$100.00 per week.
5. He is 28 years old with 25 years of experience preaching.
6. He is good looking with no defects in appearance, but is not vain.
7. He is wonderful with teenagers and spends many hours with the elderly.
8. He makes 15 visits daily and is always in the office when needed.
9. Facetious, but it makes the point that there are varied and conflicting expectations about preachers.

- I. Attitudes toward the preacher vary widely as well.
 - 1. Worship of a preacher. Rely on him entirely for the truth, accepting everything he has to say without question. Treat him as if he were two steps above the elders. This makes prima donnas.
 - 2. Belligerence and disrespect toward the preacher. Criticize everything he has to say. Refuse to cooperate or even be civil. Assume he is a parasite trying to live off of "MY" contribution.
 - a. Joe Winland - "Preachers only work on Sunday anyway."
 - 3. Disposable preachers -- wring everything out of him that we can and trade him in for a new one every few years.
 - 4. "He is the brother that preaches for us." I like that!
- J. Preaching is important business.
 - 1. God only has one begotten Son, and He made Him a preacher.
 - 2. Preachers have an essential role to fill in Church growth and function.
 - a. Eph. 4:11-12.
 - 3. 1Cor. 1:17-25 - Preaching is the medium through which God intended that the world might hear and be saved.
 - a. Rom. 10:13-17
- K. A misunderstood profession.
 - 1. We have many lessons on elders and deacons and their work; husbands and wives and their roles, etc.
 - 2. Why so few on preachers?
 - a. Some feel they would be tooting own horn.
 - b. Some are afraid of what some might think.
 - c. Conflict of interest. "He's looking for a raise."
 - 3. Important to preach on preaching anyway.
 - a. Both I and potential preachers need a yardstick to by which to measure ourselves.
 - b. Helps brethren to better evaluate and evangelist's work by the Lord's standards.
 - c. Part of the whole counsel of God.
- L. First, we must see what qualifies a man to preach in God's eyes.
 - 1. Sometimes difficult to live up to God's standards.
 - a. Much harm can be done by men who fall short.
 - 2. But it is even harder to live up to the arbitrary standards some folks establish for preachers.
 - 3. We would not accept personal preferences with regard to the qualifications of elders and deacons.
 - a. We must also use the Bible's list of qualifications for evangelists instead of our own preferences.

I. SOME MAN-MADE QUALIFICATIONS EXAMINED (Human nature revealed)

- A. Proper marital status
 - 1. Translation: Married with children; on some occasions... "We want a single man who won't need much support."
 - 2. This qualification would eliminate three of the finest preachers ever.

- a. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry - Jer. 16:2.
- b. There was no indication Jesus ever married.
- c. The apostle Paul was single - 1Cor. 9:7, 7:7.
- 3. Being married may have its advantages in some cases, but we cannot make it a qualification when God has not.
 - a. How many preachers in the Bible do you know were married?
- 4. Sometimes have a qualifications list for the preacher's wife, too.
 - a. Two for the price of one."
 - b. Only qualification in NT for preacher's wife is that she be a Christian - 1Cor. 9:5.

B. Proper education

- 1. Not against education; got quite a bit myself.
 - a. Valuable tool; can help effectiveness.
- 2. When insisted on, usually reveals denominational spirit of trained clergy instead of Biblical perspective of gospel preacher.
- 3. As far as we know, only two NT preachers had formal education (Luke and Paul), and one of them counted it a loss.
 - a. Apostle Paul - Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:7.
- 4. Most of them were like our Lord, ordinary working folk.
 - a. Acts 4:13; John 7:15.

C. The right age

- 1. Hard to determine:
 - a. Young; too young to be able to handle our needs.
 - 1) "Older, more experienced man."
 - b. Older; too old to have the energy we need to grow.
 - c. Seen congregations settle for a middle aged milk-toast, when they could have had young Timothy or an aged John.
 - d. Both have their strengths and could be an asset to any work
- 2. To set an arbitrary age limit is contrary to NT teaching.

D. A good personality

- 1. All Christians should try to develop a good personality.
- 2. Translation: "We want a good mixer."
- 3. 1Peter 3:8; Rom. 12:9-18
- 4. We want a social butterfly, dynamic personality, etc.
- 5. Tryout in Dallas 1989: "You preached the truth and know how to teach Bible classes, but you are socially awkward and have a lack of ability to communicate."
- 6. What draws people to Christ? - 1Cor. 2:1-5; 2Cor. 10:10
- 7. We are building a church of Christ, not a personality cult.

E. Must come well recommended

- 1. We need to learn something: One's friends will always speak favorably, and his enemies won't.
- 2. A man can be a marital cheat, a lousy worker, and a draft dodger and someone will recommend him.
- 3. Or he can be a hardworking, family loving, good citizen and someone will find something to attack.

4. Happens with preachers, too.
 - a. Unwritten rule among preachers to never say something bad, no matter how true or important. Old boys Network.
 - b. Or he could be a devout servant of Christ, run off by a church for his unwavering stand for truth.
 5. Recommendations are only valid when:
 - a. The one recommending is well acquainted with the person being recommended.
 - b. Well known to those seeking the recommendation.
 - c. A recommendation is only as good as the person making it.
 - d. Phil. 2:19-20
 - e. Paul with Corinthians: "examine my work."
 6. Not saying, don't investigate preachers; just be wary of glowing recommendations.
- F. And many others.
1. Bottom line: We should not require more of a man seeking to become an evangelist than the Lord does.
 2. Wonder how many have ceased preaching for this reason?
 3. Preachers should feel little need to live up to unreasonable standards.
 4. Count myself fortunate that I have yet to work with a church that required more of me than does the Lord. When I came here sole concern was that I preach the word.

II. QUALIFICATIONS GOD HAS GIVEN

- A. A genuine Christian
1. Not one who just wears the name, but lives the life.
 2. Paul taught this to protégé Timothy - 1Tim. 4:12-16, 6:11.
 3. This characterized other great preachers:
 - a. Jesus - Acts 1:1.
 - b. Paul - 2Thes. 3:7-10.
 - c. Ezra - Ezra 7:10.
- B. A careful student
1. Fundamental requirement for preacher is to teach - 2Tim. 2:24
 2. Not "you either have it or not," but a matter of growth - Heb. 5:11-14.
 3. 1Peter 2:2; 1Tim. 4:16; 2Tim. 2:15.
- C. Boldness and confidence
1. Eph. 6:19-20 - Paul asked for prayers for this.
 2. Going to need it - 2Tim. 4:1-4; 1Tim. 5:20-21; Gal. 2:11.
 3. Needs confidence in the Gospel rather than self - Rom. 1:16.
- D. Kindness, patience, and gentleness.
1. 2Tim. 2:24 - Brother Big Mean Mouth "I guess I told them" is not what the Lord means.
 2. Preach the truth in love - Eph. 4:15.
- E. Steadfastness - 2Tim. 4:5; 1Cor. 4:1-7
1. Preachers, in spite of tender care of the faithful, will suffer occasionally.
 - a. Paul - 2Cor. 11:23; 2Tim 2:3, 3:12.

- b. Jesus Christ - John 15:20-22.
- 3. Must be determined to go to heaven no matter what other do around him - Joshua 24:15; 1Sam. 8:7 - "Protest solemnly."

F. There is a dearth of Gospel preachers:

- 1. One full time preacher for every seven churches.
- 2. One in nine churches is fully self-supporting.
- 3. 332 million in USA; 8 billion in the world.
- 4. Some of you are going to have to become preachers.
- 5. Parents need to encourage their sons to become preachers.
- 6. Elders need to become active in developing and training them.

III. MAN MADE CONCEPTS OF THE PREACHER'S WORK

A. The church's "go-fer"

- 1. A gofer to do all of the:
 - a. Personal work.
 - b. Visit the straying sheep of the congregation.
 - c. Drop everything to run church errands.
 - d. Maintain the church property.
 - e. He is the Lord's servant, not the church's errand boy.
- 2. I'm not saying that the evangelist does not have any responsibility along these lines AS A CHRISTIAN, but they are not his job as the preacher.
If you think they are his jobs, where is the NT authority?
 - a. Some of these would qualify as the specific work of elders, or deacons, but not the preacher.
 - b. "But if we don't have elders, shouldn't the preacher do them?"
 - c. No more than he should do the other work of the elders in overseeing the local congregation - Acts 20:28.
 - d. In cases of congregations without elders, ALL members including the preacher should shoulder the load together.
 - e. Occasionally, the preacher has greater opportunity to do these; however, he does so as a member, not as the preacher.
 - f. Need to shake loose some of the denominational influence we have absorbed in wanting an official clergy.
 - g. Those who want a clergyman, often want someone to do their own work.
- 3. Consider Acts 6:2-4; Hosea 4:6.
- 4. Understand this: the preacher does not work for the church, even though the local church supports his work. The preacher does not work for the elders, even though he is subject to the oversight of the elders. The preacher works for Jesus Christ; his first and primary accountability is to the Lord. Should a conflict arise between what the local church or elders want of him, and what the Lord wants of him, he must always and objectively choose the Lord's will and direction.

B. The church's social organizer

- 1. All Christians are to be sociable - 1Cor. 5:10; Heb. 13:1-3.

2. Often a schedule of continuous social visits invited or not, takes time away from what God has commanded that the evangelist do.
 - a. A good evangelist will not hesitate to visit a home for a Bible study or discuss a spiritual solution to a problem one may have.
 - b. Yet to expect him to visit just because he is the preacher is an unscriptural expectation. Shatters illusions, but we walk by the word not by our wants.

C. The church nurse

1. Some may choke me for saying this but, the NT does not teach that visiting the sick is the responsibility of the evangelist.
 - a. Visiting the sick is the duty of every Christian - Matt. 25:34-40; Gal. 6:10
 - b. If anyone has a special responsibility to visit the sick it is the elders - James 5:14
 - c. Preachers must visit the sick as Christians, not as clergy.
 - d. Preachers should be happy to visit the sick just like any other Christian should, but his prayers have no more special power than that of any other Christian.

D. The church youth leader

1. Some feel the church needs a special program for the young, and that the preacher needs to head it up.
 - a. Tryout requirements: "Good with young people."
 - b. I've got the same program for the young that the Lord has....
 - c. 1Tim. 5:21; Rom. 1:16; Ecc. 12:1
2. This program works with the young, old, and in between. Anything more is the duty of parents.

E. The church overseer

1. Some preachers want to take charge; some congregations let them.
 - a. Such is the work of Jesus Christ, working through the word and scripturally ordained elders.
2. Leads to the pastor system.
 - a. The preacher has no more authority than any other member.
 - b. That is when he speaks his own words; when he speaks as the messenger of God, faithfully declaring truth, that's another matter
3. If preachers focused on the duties God gives them in the Bible, no time would be left for these man made tasks.
4. The only source of authority for the qualifications and work of an evangelist is the word of God.
 - a. Not your personal preferences, or local traditions, or carry-overs from denominations.
 - b. You have no more authority to add to the list of qualifications and works of a preacher than you have for a piano or fellowship hall. So stop doing it.

IV. WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT THE WORK OF A PREACHER

- A. He is a student of the word - 1Tim. 4:6, 12-16
- B. He is an evangelist.
 - 1. A messenger of good - 2Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11.
 - 2. Put these two terms together and you get a good job description.
 - a. A herald of good news - Rom. 10:15.
 - 3. He is a preacher; forth-tells - 2Tim. 1:10-11; Rom. 10:13-14; 1Tim. 2:5-7
 - 4. He is a prompter - 1Tim. 4:6; 2Tim. 2:2; Titus 3:8, 14
- C. He is the Lord's bond servant.
 - 1. The term applies to all Christians - 1Cor. 6:20; 7:22-23; Rom. 6:17.
 - 2. Sometimes specifically applied to those who preach.
 - a. Gal. 1:10; Phil 1:1; 2Tim. 2:23-25
 - 3. As Christ's slave, he does not have the option of pleasing men or obeying any other master.
 - a. He works for Jesus Christ, not magazines, editors, big name preacher fan clubs, rich, educated, poor, blue collar, conservative, or modernist factions.
- D. He is a minister.
 - 1. Servant - all Christians are God's workmen - Eph. 2:10.
 - a. All have a place of service, a ministry; therefore are ministers.
 - 2. Area of service for preachers is the Gospel - Eph. 3:6-8; 1Cor. 3:5-6
 - a. Ministers to spiritual things - 1Cor. 9:1
 - b. Point of definition that the religious world stumbles.
- E. He is a man of God - 1Tim. 6:11
 - 1. Used in Old Testament to describe spokesmen of the will of God.
 - 2. Links Timothy and other evangelists with prophets of old.
 - 3. God's man with God's plan for God's people.
- F. He is commissioned.
 - 1. Four usages of the term apostle:
 - a. Witnesses and representatives of Jesus - Acts 1:21-22.
 - b. One who received a personal commission from Christ (Paul) - 1Cor. 15:8-10.
 - c. One who was sent out to preach (also the definition of apostle).
 - 1). Acts 14:4, 14; 13:4; 1Thes. 1:1, 2:6
 - d. Anyone sent out - Phil. 2:25; 1Cor. 8:23.
 - 1). Jesus Christ was called an apostle in Heb. 3:1.
 - 2. No faithful Bible student would call anyone else an apostle in the first two senses.
 - a. Wisdom would dictate that a preacher should not use this title in order that there will be no confusion.
 - 3. But, he has been sent out on business for his King.
 - a. As His ambassador, it behooves him to keep his life above reproach to the best of his ability.
 - 4. Please note: These are not titles; they are descriptions.
 - a. To use them as titles violates Matt. 23:8-12.

- b. (Clipped from the Beaver County Times, August 1995)
 - "Q. Who was the first minister to be addressed as "Reverend"?
 - A. One Thomas Blake. So titled by his flock on June 11, 1657, according to records left by his descendants. Of whom there are many, one might add. Numerous Blakes trace back to the original Reverend."
- c. A preacher is not titled, period. Especially with a name that belongs to God - Psalm 111:9.
- 5. Scriptural patterns and examples
 - a. Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3, 15:1-4, 22, 35; 1Cor. 16:10; 1Thes. 3:1-3
- G. As the Lord's Church, we will do Bible things in Bible ways and call them by Bible names. We will provide book, chapter, and verse for every aspect of the work, worship, and organization of the church. We will not add to nor diminish ought from what is written. That includes the qualifications and work of an evangelist. To do otherwise would make this congregation unsound.

V. WHAT THE PREACHER MUST PREACH

- A. 1Tim. 4:6-16
- B. He must preach by God's rules.
 - 1. God chose preaching as the means - 1Cor. 1:21.
 - 2. God closely watches preachers - James 3:1.
 - 3. God requires that preachers give warning - Ez. 33:7-9.
 - 4. The preacher is not accountable for how the message is received - Ez. 33:30-33.
- C. He must preach that humankind needs a Savior - 1Tim. 4:10.
 - 1. Why do we need a Savior? - Rom. 3:23, 6:23.
- D He must preach the Divine plan of salvation for sinners.
 - 1. Luke 24:46-47; Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15-16
- E. He must preach the Divine plan of restoration for Christians.
 - 1. Can one who has been baptized fall out of favor with God and be lost?
 - a. 2Peter 2:20-22
 - 2. What must the Christian do to remain saved?
 - a. Matt. 28:20; 2Peter 1:5; 1John 1:9 - 2:2
- F. He must preach the Divine plan of work and worship.
 - 1. Epistles to Timothy - Titus: instruction in Christian works - 2Tim. 3:16-17
 - 2. The Book of Acts: instruction in Christian worship - Acts 2:42-47.
 - 3. Apostolic teaching, communion, prayers, giving, benevolence, daily Bible study, praising God, et al
- G. He must preach the whole word of God, and only the word of God.
 - 1. What happens when something other than the word of God is taught?
 - a. 1Tim. 4:1-3; 2Tim. 4:1-5
 - 2. God becomes very angry when a sinner or erring Christian backbites a preacher for simply declaring the whole counsel of God.
 - a. 1Kings 18:17-18, 21:20-21, 16:30-33
- H. He must preach against religious errors and false doctrines.
 - 1. Jesus preached against false teachers - Matt. 15:6-9.

2. Apostle Paul preached against false teachers - 1Tim. 6:3-5.
 3. Apostle John preached against false teachers - 2John 9-11.
 4. Can I treat errorists with greater kindness than Christ, Paul, and John, and still expect to be saved? - Rom. 16:17-18
 5. I don't have a choice if I want to be saved. I must expose liberalism, denominationalism, Pentecostalism, Premillennialism, and all of the other isms that threaten the souls of men.
- I. He must preach against tolerating sin Gal. 5:16-21
1. What effects did tolerating sin have on the church at Corinth? - 1Cor. 5:1-2, 6-7
- J. He must preach that all persons outside the body of Christ are lost - Eph. 1:22-23, 4:4-5
1. Why is it that most folks believe in the oneness of all of these items except the church?
- K. He must preach these things if he wants to be saved - 1Tim. 4:16; 2Cor. 5:20.
- L. But when he has preached the word of God, he has discharged his duty. Your obligation has begun. Just as the preacher is required to speak the word of God, the hearer is required to obey it.