



## THE PREACHER OF MY DREAMS

Text I Thessalonians 2: 1-13. As we notice this letter is from Paul and Silas and Timothy. These three men describe the ministry of the Gospel of Christ in this passage.

I think that every congregation dreams of the perfect preacher. And one has been found.

“After hundreds of fruitless searches, a model preacher has been found.

It is guaranteed that he will please any church that desires to call him.

He preaches exactly 25 minutes and then sits down.

He will hold his audience in condemnation of sin but never hurt anybody’s feelings.

He works from 8 AM until 10 PM every day in all types of work from preaching the gospel in the pulpit to running the rummage sales. And he only charges \$90 a week.

He always wears good clothes; he buys books of all descriptions regularly; he has a nice family; drives a good, modest, cheap, dependable car; gives \$50 a week to the church and stands ready to contribute to every good work with which he is confronted.

He is 26 years old and has been preaching for 30 years.

He is tall, short, and handsome; heavy set, one brown eye and one blue eye.

His hair is parted in the middle.

The left side is dark and straight; the right side is brown and curly.

He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all of his time with the older folks.

He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a good sense of humor which keeps him seriously dedicated to his work.

He has a glowing personality with deadened feelings and nerves of iron. That is the preacher that is guaranteed to suit all churches. “

Well, laying aside the humor and coming back to the serious, if you stood where I stand, what would you do? I think you would try to do just what the apostle Paul, and Silas, and Timothy outlined in this passage. You would not try to please men, you would try to please God.

- I. **And so the preacher of my dreams would be first of all a preacher who speaks with courage and boldness.** You will notice in 1st Thessalonians Chapter 2, Verse 2, "But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict." These are easy words to use but not easy characteristics to live. Boldness and courage; "shamefully" Paul says, we were treated at Philippi. They were falsely accused, cast into jail, beaten with many stripes; their feet were made fast in the stock. Oh, how they suffered. I daresay that such treatment of a modern-day preacher of the gospel would probably cause him to quit the ministry. But not the apostle Paul. He prayed; he sang praises to God. And right there from the jail converted the jailer who shamefully treated him. From that experience in the jail at Philippi, he proceeded on to Thessalonica and there engaged in a vigorous campaign and won more souls to Christ.

I believe that if you stood where I stand you would not want to be silenced by anybody on Biblical issues. No preacher should ever weaken his message to satisfy any member of the church. He should always preach the word of God with boldness and with courage.

Now the apostle Paul had people in his day who tried to weaken the message; they tried to get him not to deliver the word of God and knowing that other preachers would also be tempted to dilute the word of God, in 2nd Timothy, Chapter 4, he reminded not only Timothy but all other preachers of the gospel, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own desires because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

Once again, Paul was saying that any preacher of the gospel will speak the word of God; not necessarily the message that some people would like to hear; not something that will tickle our ears, but the word of God. And the preacher will speak the word of God with boldness and with courage. This is the preacher of my dreams.

**II. In the second place, the preacher of my dreams would be a preacher who preaches the gospel with simplicity.** I attended church for 16 years and never did understand one word that the preacher spoke. We had a preacher who was well-educated; he had many college degrees; he used such big words you had to carry a dictionary to church with you along with your Bible but you never did have time to look up all the big words and their meanings because there were too many of them in every sermon. Consequently, I didn't even know what he was talking about. And when I became a preacher, I decided that I wanted to preach so that children could understand what I was saying. Because I thought that if the children would understand then the adults would understand, too.

The word of God is not difficult to understand as far as getting to heaven is concerned. Isaiah 35th Chapter, 8th verse tells us that the word of God is so simple "the wayfaring man though he be a fool need not err therein." And God has given us a clear example of what a preacher's message should be through the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh how simply did Jesus preach. He preached so that the common, ordinary, everyday people understood him and heard him gladly.

Did you ever notice that Jesus almost always preached in parables. A parable is nothing more than a little earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Large words and deep theological messages will be appreciated by a small minority, but generally this type of message will not warm the heart of the unsaved sinners nor edify the saints. In 1965, I served our brotherhood as the vice president of the North American Christian Convention and for many years off and on, I have worked on committees of the North American Christian Convention and often used to review the suggestions that people sent in at the close of these conventions. I remember so well, though, the convention of 1965, since I was on the executive committee that year, serving as the vice president.

Now we had marvelous speeches at the convention that year - almost everyone of them spoke from a manuscript. There was evidence that they had spent hours and perhaps weeks, and possibly even months in preparing for that one message. They all used very large words and many of us did not know the meaning of the words. Their sentences were complex. And when the evaluations came in from the thousands of people who attended that convention in Louisville, Kentucky, most of them said they didn't understand the preachers' messages. "Tell them to throw away the manuscripts, quit using the big words and preach from the heart."

So, I want you to know that as a preacher of the gospel I'm not going to try to impress anybody with my education or with my degree. I don't intend to stand up here and use big words that some people would have to look up in the dictionary. I just intend to stand up and preach simple, gospel messages from the word of God. And in trying to do that, I believe that Jesus has set the best example of all in this respect.

**III. The preacher of my dreams in the third place would be a preacher who preaches sincerely.** The ministry must not be just another way of making a living. The minister must not stand up and say "Do as I say, not as I do." The minister must have genuine convictions and believe with all of his heart that the Bible is the word of God. In 2nd Timothy, 1st Chapter, 12th verse, we read: "For this reason I also suffer these things nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Paul knew the Lord Jesus Christ was his personal savior. And he preached Christ sincerely. Now Paul backed up his claim for sincerity by giving several reasons.

First of all he pointed out that the word of God had been entrusted to him and that he was a steward of God's word. Notice in 1st Thessalonians, Chapter 2, Verse 4, "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts." As a faithful steward, Paul accepted this trust of the gospel and delivered it faithfully.

The second reason he gave for backing up his claim for preaching sincerely was that he preached not to please men but to please God. In Galatians, Chapter 1, Verse 10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." And then in verse 5, Paul declared that he did not preach with flattering words, and he did not preach with a cloak of covetousness.

I suppose in one respect it would be nice to have a minister who is capable of patting you on the back and making you feel good. I really don't believe that a minister of God will accomplish much by using flattering words. A minister should not be covered with a cloak of covetousness. I am not in the ministry because of what the ministry can do for me. I am not seeking some kind of an earthly reward, nor some kind of glory. Notice in verse 6 Paul said "Nor of men shall we glory; neither of you nor yet of others when we might have been burdened as the apostles of Christ."

I realize of course that it is a great honor to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I simply want to be God's servant - a minister who will preach the gospel sincerely in an effort to bring other souls to Christ as well as build up your soul in the Christian faith.

**IV. The preacher of my dreams in the fourth place would be a preacher who is gentle.** Please notice in verse 7 that "we were gentle among you even as a nurse cherisheth her children." Oh how patient was the apostle Paul. He used great tact and kindness. He was compassionate and sympathetic. He loved the people.

Whenever I go to a Christian convention, I want to speak good words about the church. I'm sorry to say that when some people go to a convention or when they go back to visit their Bible college where they graduated, they say, "Oh, if you only knew the awful church where I preach. Oh, if you only knew about the bad elders that I have to serve under.

Oh, if you only knew the mean people who are members of my church." I've heard so many preachers say things like that and I really feel badly about it. Wherever I go, I want to speak good things about the church. I want to be friends with everybody, and I want to work with the elders, who are the shepherds of the flock. I have great respect for and love the elders. I want to work with the deacons, the Sunday School teachers and the choir.

Now in the life of the apostle Paul, as he approached his preaching, he said that to him it is just like a nurse - ..... or we might say just like a loving mother tenderly holds her brand new baby in her arms. Oh how a mother loves her baby and supports her baby, and helps her baby to grow. Paul said that this feeling was so great in his life that he

was willing to work to support himself even though it was the obligation of the church to support him. In verse 9, for you remember brethren our labor and travail while laboring night and day because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Now Paul did not work because he thought preachers ought to work in the world to make a salary like other people. He made tents by day and he preached by night because it was a necessity and he loved the church so much that he would meet that necessity. Paul believes the church ought to support the minister. He said that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." In Romans the 10th Chapter, he said that the preacher is to "be sent", and you can't send somebody unless you pay their way that they might go.

In 1st Corinthians, Paul states that the church should support the minister, and yet he was so gentle and so pleasing, that he was willing to do double duty. A Preacher should love the congregation the way Moses loved the children of Israel. You remember that there was a time in the life of Israel when God lost patience and He said, "Let me go, I'm going to kill them, everyone of them." And Moses went before God and interceded with prayer. He pleaded with God for the lives of the Israelites to the extent that he finally said, "God, kill me, but save the people."

**V. In the final place, the preacher of my dreams would be a holy man of God.** Paul said in verse 10, "You are witnesses and God also, how holy and justly and unblamedly we behaved ourselves among you that believe." The apostle Paul, like all preachers, was criticized. All preachers have always faced criticism. Isn't it easier to destroy a man of God with criticism than to destroy our own sins and correct our own lives?

When Paul said that he lived a holy life he meant that he observed all the duties of Christianity. Paul said that he lived a just life among the people. And Paul said that because of the life that he lived, even though people criticized, he was unblamable.

Nobody was able to bring any kind of a charge against him that would stand up. No Preacher should ever attend any X-rated movies or R-rated movies, or go to any questionable place of amusement or entertainment, or do any social drinking, or tell any lies, or engage in any questionable activity that would bring disrepute on the name of Christ or His Church.

Years ago, when I was preaching the gospel in Illinois, I met a man who had lots of trouble in his life. He had not been what he should have been. He had not lived the kind of life a Christian should live. He had brought disrepute upon himself and then there came a time in his life when he wanted to return to God. The members of the congregation did not want to accept him at first. This man came to me and I tried to be his minister. I tried to help him. And so, eventually, over a long period of time, he did come back to the church, and finally he was accepted back in and he became the deaf in that congregation. He still serves to this very day as minister to the deaf people. One time this man sent me a card and the card was entitled, "What Is a Minister?" I want to read it to you. I've kept this of course for more than 50 years because it means a lot to me.

"A minister is someone who is chosen by God as a shepherd of souls in despair.  
He's someone who comforts an unhappy heart with a smile or a word, or a prayer.  
A minister is someone whose strength and devotion enriches the living of others.  
He's someone who preaches the doctrine of Christ that basically all men are brothers.  
A minister is someone whose goal is to follow a worthy and lofty ideal; to guide other souls in the straight paths of truth, to sympathize, comfort and heal.  
A minister is someone of great understanding whose selfless devotion to duty imparts to all hearts the real spirit of giving and adds to life more truth and beauty."

I've always kept this because I appreciated the thought behind it, as that man looked at me as his minister. And now he, himself is a minister and has been faithful to Christ for

more than 50 years.

Babe Ruth once gave a testimony to his minister. This is what he said. " Most of the people who really counted in my life were not famous. Nobody ever heard of them, except those who knew them loved them. I once had an old minister - his hair was white and his face shone. I've written my name on thousands of baseballs in my lifetime but my old preacher just wrote his name on a few simple hearts. How I envy him. He was not trying to please his only mortal soul; consequently fame never came to him. I'm listed as the world's famous home-run king, but beside that obscure minister who was so good and so wise, I never even got to first base. "

I consider the ministry of the gospel the highest calling of all. I would rather be a Minister of the Gospel than to be President of the United States of America.

I know that in our audience tonight there must be someone who has never responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. You have never accepted Him as your own personal savior; you've not obeyed him in the waters of Christian baptism, and consequently you've never known the forgiveness of sins nor the gift of the Holy Spirit, and you're not a member of the church. Would you respond tonight. Because the invitation of Jesus is now going to be sung. As this song sounds forth, this is Jesus' call to you to come and unite with Him and His church and help us to grow and to build in this city that others might come to know the Savior, too. If you will respond, we invite you to come. Shall we stand together and sing this invitation and we ask that you step forward on the very first verse as we sing it together.