

PREACHER, SAVE THYSELF

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"Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."--1 Timothy iv.16.

I am not going to preach to preachers, but to suggest certain conditions upon which the salvation promised in this text may be secured by them.

1st. See that you are constrained by love to preach the gospel, as Christ was to provide a gospel.

2d. See that you have the special endowment of power from on high, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

3d. See that you have a heart, and not merely a head call to undertake the preaching of the gospel. By this I mean, be heartily and most intensely inclined to seek the salvation of souls as the great work of life, and do not undertake what you have no heart to.

4th. Constantly maintain a close walk with God.

5th. Make the Bible your book of books. Study it much, upon your knees, waiting for divine light.

6th. Beware of leaning on commentaries. Consult them when convenient; but judge for yourself, in the light of the Holy Ghost.

7th. Keep yourself pure--in will, in thought, in feeling, in word and action.

8th. Contemplate much the guilt and danger of sinners, that your zeal for their salvation may be intensified.

9th. Also deeply ponder and dwell much upon the boundless love and compassion of Christ for them.

10th. So love them yourself as to be willing to die for them.

11th. Give your most intense thought to the study of ways and means by which you may save them. Make this the great and intense study of your life.

12th. Refuse to be diverted from this work. Guard against every temptation that would abate your interest in it.

13th. Believe the assertion of Christ that He is with you in this work always and everywhere, to give you all the help you need.

14th. "He that winneth souls is wise;" and "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and he shall receive." "But let him ask in faith." Remember, therefore, that you are bound to have the wisdom that shall win souls to Christ.

15th. Being called of God to the work, make your calling your constant argument with God for all that you need for the accomplishment of the work.

16th. Be diligent and laborious, "in season and out of season."

17th. Converse much with all classes of your hearers on the question of their salvation, that you may understand their opinions, errors, and wants. Ascertain their prejudices, ignorance, temper, habits, and whatever you need to know to adapt your instruction to their necessities.

18th. See that your own habits are in all respects correct; that you are temperate in all things--free from the stain or smell of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or anything of which you have reason to be ashamed, and which may stumble others.

19th. Be not "light-minded," but "Set the Lord always before you."

20th. Bridle your tongue, and be not given to idle and unprofitable conversation.

21st. Always let your people see that you are in solemn earnest with them, both in the pulpit and out of it; and let not your daily intercourse with them nullify your serious teaching on the Sabbath.

22d. Resolve to "know nothing" among your people "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" and let them understand that, as an ambassador of Christ, your business with them relates wholly to the salvation of their souls.

23d. Be sure to teach them as well by example as by precept. Practise yourself what you preach.

24th. Be especially guarded in your intercourse with women, to raise no thought or suspicion of the least impurity in yourself.

25th. Guard your weak points. If naturally tending to gayety and trifling, watch against occasions of failure in this direction.

26th. If naturally sombre and unsocial, guard against moroseness and unsociability.

27th. Avoid all affectation and sham in all things. Be what you profess to be, and you will have no temptation to "make believe."

28th. Let simplicity, sincerity, and Christian propriety stamp your whole life.

29th. Spend much time every day and night in prayer and direct communion with God. This will make you a power for salvation. No amount of learning and study can compensate for the loss of this communion. If you fail to maintain communion with God, you are "weak as another man."

30th. Beware of the error that there are no means of regeneration, and, consequently, no connection of means and ends in the regeneration of souls.

31st. Understand that regeneration is a moral, and, therefore, a voluntary change.

32d. Understand that the gospel is adapted to change the hearts of men, and in a wise presentation of it you may expect the efficient co-operation of the Holy Spirit.

33d. In the selection and treatment of your texts, always secure the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit.

34th. Let all your sermons be heart and not merely head sermons.

35th. Preach from experience, and not from hearsay, or mere reading and study.

36th. Always present the subject which the Holy Spirit lays upon your heart for the occasion. Seize the points presented by the Holy Spirit to your own mind, and present them with the greatest possible directness to your congregation.

37th. Be full of prayer whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

38th. Get your mind fully imbued with your subject, so that it will press for utterance; then open your mouth, and let it forth like a torrent.

39th. See that "the fear of man that bringeth a snare" is not upon you. Let your people understand that you fear God too much to be afraid of them.

40th. Never let the question of your popularity with your people influence your preaching.

41st. Never let the question of salary deter you from "declaring the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear."

42d. Do not temporize, lest you lose the confidence of your people, and thus fail to save them. They cannot thoroughly respect you, as an ambassador of Christ, if they see that you dare not do your duty.

43d. Be sure to "commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

44th. Be "not a lover of filthy lucre."

45th. Avoid every appearance of vanity.

46th. Compel your people to respect your sincerity and your spiritual wisdom.

47th. Let them not for one moment suppose that you can be influenced in your preaching by any considerations of salary, more or less, or none at all.

48th. Do not make the impression that you are fond of good dinners, and like to be invited out to dine; for this will be a snare to you, and a stumbling-block to them.

49th. Keep your body under, lest, after having preached to others, yourself should be a castaway.

50th. "Watch for souls as one who must give an account to God."

51st. Be a diligent student, and thoroughly instruct your people in all that is essential to their salvation.

52d. Never flatter the rich.

53d. Be especially attentive to the wants and instruction of the poor.

54th. Suffer not yourself to be bribed into a compromise with sin by donation parties.

55th. Suffer not yourself to be publicly treated as a mendicant, or you will come to be despised by a large class of your hearers.

56th. Repel every attempt to close your mouth against whatever is extravagant, wrong, or injurious amongst your people.

57th. Maintain your pastoral integrity and independence, lest you sear your conscience, quench the Holy Spirit, forfeit the confidence of your people, and lose the favor of God.

58th. Be an example to the flock, and let your life illustrate your teaching. Remember that your actions and spirit will teach even more impressively than your sermons.

59th. If you preach that men should offer to God and their neighbor a love service, see that you do this yourself, and avoid all that tends to the belief that you are working for pay.

60th. Give to your people a love service, and encourage them to render to you, not a money equivalent for your labor, but a love reward that will refresh both you and them.

61st. Repel every proposal to get money for you or for Church purposes that will naturally disgust and excite the contempt of worldly but thoughtful men.

62d. Resist the introduction of tea-parties, amusing lectures, and dissipating sociables, especially at those seasons most favorable for united efforts to convert souls to Christ. Be sure the devil will try to head you off in this direction. When you are praying and planning for a revival of God's work, some of your worldly church-members will invite you to a party. Go not, or you are in for a circle of them, that will defeat your prayers.

63d. Do not be deceived. Your spiritual power with your people will never be increased by accepting such invitations at such times. If it is a good time to have parties, because the people have leisure, it is also a good time for religious meetings, and your influence should be used to draw the people to the house of God.

64th. See that you personally know and daily live upon Christ.