

A Reflection on 39 Years of Preaching

A Look Back and a Look Ahead

Hebrews 5:13-14

I've been preaching for almost thirty-nine years, difficult for a man only thirty-seven. I've learned a certain amount over the years, a fair bit from my own mistakes. I'm indebted to many people for helping me discover God's truths. Without their help, I doubt I would still be preaching.

Oddly, I don't really think of myself as a preacher (many may share that assessment). I feel somewhat like Amos (Amos 7:14). I didn't intend to wind up in this type of work, but the Lord apparently had other ideas. I'm the son of a mechanic and from a denominational family. Who would have thought? As it stands, I just want to talk about biblical things in ways I hope will open up their richness to those who listen. I want continually to learn from Jesus as the Master teacher so I might improve my craft. At this juncture, however, I will share some of the lessons I've learned.

The Dangers of Human Innovations

- Those in the church attracted me by their desire to have the Bible as their only standard.
- Unfortunately, our ideals have many times led to divisions, human priorities and partisan politics.
- We must keep our eyes on the Christ (Col. 3:1-3)

The Need for a Congregation-wide Effort

- We have no authority for a clergy system (I Pet. 2:9)
- All are to be equipped for the work of service (Eph. 4:12)
- Every member is to contribute (Eph. 4:16; I Cor. 12:12-27)

A Family Style Rather than Corporate Style

- Cultural models come and go, but the basic nature of family remains
- Not rank, but service (Matt. 20:20-28)
- Love prevailing (Jn. 13:34-35)
- Brothers and sisters (Matt. 12:46-50)

We humans are notorious for messing up good things. Unfortunately, this also happens in the Lord's church. If we can remember to center everything on Jesus, each do our fair share, and all live together as family, the cause of Christ will prosper—and so will we!