

# And There Was NO PREACHING

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How often we hear it! In testimonies. In pastors' reports. In conversation. "God really came on the service and the preacher didn't get to preach."

The idea seems to be prevalent among us that the mark of a truly spiritual service is that there is no sermon. The inescapable implication is that a service in which the preacher does get to preach is at best a second-rate service.

I do not question the sincerity nor the spirituality of those who hold this view. Nor do I question the fact that on occasion such a service might be directed by the Holy Spirit. But I do feel that there is a dangerous trend involved.

St. Paul states emphatically that it is by the "foolishness of preaching" (I Corinthians 1:21) that God proposes to save men. Hence, in my judgment, there is danger in anything which tends to down-grade the preaching of the Word. It is "preaching . . . in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Corinthians 2:4), not demonstration alone, that is most effective in bringing men to God.

It was the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, not the demonstration alone, which prompted the multitudes to cry out, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

If the Holy Spirit directs the mind of the minister in the preparation of his message—and is this not as it should be?—does it seem logical that the same Holy Spirit would repeatedly prevent the minister's delivering that message? I recently heard a minister tell of a revival meeting he conducted in which for four consecutive nights "the preacher didn't get to preach." I found myself wondering why they needed him!

This is no plea for formalism. But it is a plea for the priority of preaching. We rightly deplore the trend in liberal Protestantism toward the divided chancel because it destroys the centrality of the pulpit. Let us not fall into a similar trap by letting "demonstration" take priority over the preaching of the Word.

A service in which the preacher "gets to preach" is not a second-rate service if the minister speaks as the "oracle of God" (see I Peter 4:11).

Faith still "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And the question is still pertinent, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)

Let's have Spirit-directed preaching! Let's have Spirit-inspired demonstration! But let's keep them in proper perspective!

—Herald of Holiness

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Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing . . . . Glory, and power, he unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

—Revelation 5:12-13

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The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me . . . to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . . .

—Isaiah 61:1, 3

The King's Highway

# A Sermon Sketch

by Rev. Kenneth Gorveatte\*

In this sermon we would like to deal with Ezekiel 37: 1-10. Here we have pictured a parallel of the people we find so often among us today. We have the basic human elements needed for a live, progressive church. We have the people, the places of worship, the prophets and the preaching. What do we yet lack?

Let us then note the following suggestions from this Passage:

1. **Divine Direction** — "The hand of the Lord was upon me". How we need men today in our pulpits who have the hand of God upon them! Fallible yet fearless, humanly limited but heavenly led, finite in apprehension, but filled with an anointing.

2. **Definite Description** — "they were very dry". How easy to preach on generalities. The temptation is to be a popular preacher, when God is looking for powerful preachers. We must rid ourselves of the fear of human prejudice, sarcasm, malice and contempt. We must call sin, sin. We must "cry aloud, and spare not".

3. **Discouraging Demand** — "can these bones live?" Our task is always to bring life. Often the task seems to much. The people have no interest, the people are self-centered, the people will not respond, the people are dead. But what of the prophet's task? He is still to proclaim his life-giving message in the face of failure, factions, fads and fallacy. God is able to bring life in place of death.

4. **Diligent Declaration** — "I prophesied as I was commanded". We are not to go about the task our way. So many times we feel we could do it so much better than the old-fashioned way. Obedience is still superlative. We must wait till we have the prophecy, and then proclaim it explicitly. We are not to tamper with God's Word. Our supreme obligation is obedience.

5. **Desired Deliverance** — "so they lived". The directions when applied brought deliverance. So today, God can set men free and give them new life in Christ. A prophet is needed. The challenge is presented. Let us accept it and begin today. We should preach with the express purpose of seeing results accomplished.

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## COURT ORDERS TRANSFUSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—In a case that may have set a legal precedent, a court ordered an emergency blood transfusion administered to a twenty-two-year-old woman who had refused the treatment on grounds of religious objection.

Georgetown University Hospital, a Roman Catholic institution, secured permission from a U.S. Circuit Court judge after a lower court had ruled in favor of the woman and her husband. The two, Jehovah's Witnesses, cited their belief that the Bible forbids "eating blood."

The woman was brought to the hospital emergency room suffering from a hemorrhaging ulcer; doctors said her only chance for survival rested on an immediate transfusion.

Through its attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, the hospital sought an injunction from Federal Judge Edward Tamm to restrain the patient and her husband from interfering with normal medical procedures. By seeking admission, Mr. Williams held, the patient had given assent to normal, scientifically accepted treatment.