

A Preacher's Monday: Hard, Heavy & Heavenly

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He woke up and found that he feels a bit tired — more tired than usual. Last night he had an ‘event’ take place. Truly it was more than an event — it was a supernatural experience. God spoke through him as he opened the Word, explained the context, explained the meaning of the text, applied the text, and poured out his life and soul into that sermon. Sundays are at the same time unspeakably beautiful and undeniably draining. But a man of God must expect nothing less in the service of the great King.

For every faithful, expository preacher of God's Word, every Monday is hard, heavy and heavenly. Let me explain.

1. Monday is a Day of Recovery.

The preaching on Sundays can be compared to the birthing process. Early on in the week, the man of God began the work of building, creating, and forming a sermon akin to the conception of a baby in the womb. Just as a baby grows in the womb of the mother, so the sermon grew in the heart of the man of God all week long. It grew in his heart, it grew in his soul, it grew in his mind, it grew in his emotions, and it grew in his affections. When Saturday night rolls around, like a mother at full-term ready to just ‘give birth’ to that large creature, the biblical preacher can't wait to deliver the message that God has worked in his soul, through His Word as it has shaped him in his heart all week long. Jeremiah could relate to this when he said that “in my heart [the Word of God] becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it” (Jer 20:9). Every faithful preacher can relate to Jeremiah at this point. Thus, just as mothers must recover from the birthing process, so the man of God on Mondays must recover from the process of delivering divine truth to God's flock. Mondays can be quite heavy.

2. Monday is a Hard Day Since the Preacher Recalls Many Things He Didn't Say that He Wished He Would Have Said (and Vice-Versa).

Every preacher knows it. Every preacher has been there. After the sermon — and even at points during the preaching event — the man of God recalls what he just said and wishes he would have said it differently, better, more clearly, more persuasively. That night he recalls the perfect verse that he should have used to drive home the point, but he didn't. God shows him an application point that would have perfectly mended with the sermon and yet the preacher failed to proclaim it. Verses, application points, illustrations, and other theological doctrines all come to mind *after the event*. After all, speaking for God, through God's Word, to God's people, in the power of God's strength, with joy as a minister of God's gospel proves itself to be the greatest joy and privilege a human could ever undertake. So to reflect on what he *should* have said or *could* have said can be quite draining — and hard.

3. Monday is a Day Where the Man of God Must Totally and Triumphantly Rely on the Sovereignty of God.

He arises early on Monday mornings to meet with God. Even while it is still dark outside and many others in their trades are still sleeping, he arises to commune with God in prayer. Just as Jesus, after a very long day of ministry in Galilee, arose early in the morning to find a secluded place to meet with the Father in prayer, so the man of God joyfully arises early to seek the face of God and take hold of his Father in prayer. Yet there is a special tone of trust in his prayers. He totally realizes that Sunday's preaching event has ended. He knows that he has said what he has said and nothing can be changed from that sermon that was already heralded. He knows that God's sheep took notes as he explained the text. He remembers how people tracked with him as traveled from text to text to drive home various points during the sermon. He affirms that God's flock eagerly longs for the food of the Word and the ministry of the Spirit during the proclamation of Gospel. And yet the man of God clings to the total and triumphant sovereignty of God during this time. God takes the spoken Word, as upon the wings of a bird, and flies the spoken truth to the precise spot of every believer's heart and soul just as He sovereignly decrees. Nothing can change God's sovereign ways. The preacher clings ever so tightly to the text that God's Word shall never return to Him void — empty. He confidently believes that God takes all that he said as a man of God appointed by God Himself and that God uses His Word, His truth, His gospel, His Son, His grace to comfort, convict, convert and conform the people who heard what he spoke. The preacher cannot change anything on Monday mornings; but God can. The preacher cannot indelibly write God's truths upon the hearts of all who heard (if he could, he would); but God can. So Mondays prove to be a day of savoring, resting, and enjoying the sovereignty of God. No doctrine so gloriously comforts the preacher as does the total and triumphant sovereignty of God. So Mondays are heavenly days.

4. Monday is a Day of Great Anticipation for the Next Text That He Must Study, Internalize, Apply, Pray Over, and Love as He Prepares to Preach Next Sunday.

A minister of the gospel knows that Sunday is always comin'. How true it is. No preacher can cancel church if he feels bad. He can't call in sick, he crawls in sick. And he preaches in the power of the Spirit and finds God's strength and power come upon him to equip and enable him for the task at hand. And every preacher knows this — and he loves it! He would not change this in the slightest. But on Monday morning, when the preacher knows that he just delivered (or, birthed) a carefully-crafted divine message to God's people on Sunday, he fully recognizes one dangling thought swinging in the forefront of his mind: next Sunday is coming (the clock is already ticking). So he opens his Bible and calls upon the Lord. He worships the Lord. He warms his own heart with love for the Savior from the truth of Scripture. He fellowships with the triune-God and prays over and through and in every verse of the text from which he will preach. He knows that the sermon has been conceived already within him. Now it has to grow, and build, and strengthen, and be fortified as God's Word in God's man through God's Spirit forms and fashions this sermon in preparation for the next Lord's Day when he will stand up in front of God's flock and proclaim with all authority: "Thus says the LORD." The anticipation, the expectation, the jubilation, and the exultation in the man of God drives him to this heavenly sense of longing to commune with God all week long as he prays over, reads through, applies diligently, and knows intently the Word that he must herald next Sunday. And so the process begins again. It is a cycle. The man prays, prepares, studies & applies to his own soul that which he must preach, herald, and apply to his hearers. When all is said and done, Mondays are gloriously heavenly and unspeakably joyful and triumphantly God-centered.