

# Preach With an Eye Toward the Glories of Heaven & an Eye Toward the Shrieks of Hell

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I wonder if many preachers realize that each Sunday souls hang in the balance. Every sermon makes someone either closer to heaven or closer to hell. Could it be that some pastors lose focus of the divine power that exists when God's Word goes forth. We do well to remember the awesome weightiness and supernatural power that is present when the man of God takes the Word of God and explains the meaning of the text clearly. Let us therefore remember afresh the privilege of preaching and strive to preach in such a way that God moves in a saving and sanctifying way during every sermon. We should preach for eternity for, indeed, nothing less is at stake.

### **1. Because False Converts May Be Present.**

A true believer is known by his fruit. Some churches may have people who grew up in church, were baptized in church, have taken communion regularly, and have even served in various ministries as needs came up. But none of these, in and of themselves, secure one's reconciliation with God. It could be that someone has all of these (good) characteristics yet he has not fully surrendered his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ — and Him *alone*. Every pastor consumed with the glory of Christ and with the gospel of God prays for those in His flock who come each week who might not be saved. There are those who may "think" that they are saved when in fact they are not. There may be those who look like, smell like, talk like, hang with, and serve like born-again Christians. And it is precisely because these false converts most probably are present in every church that a preacher must preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

### **2. Because Both Heaven and Hell are Real.**

We preach because hell is real. Left to ourselves, all humans would run on a fast-paced highway to hell. By default we are headed for hell. This precisely explicates the reason why every preacher must preach boldly with eternity in mind. Just as hell is real, so heaven is also real. They both exist eternally. They both will endure forever. They both are mutually exclusive so that no one will ever be able to cross from one to the other. Therefore, because every person will eternally end up in either heaven or in hell, the herald of God must preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

### **3. Because of the Urgency of the Message.**

What happens to a man here determines what happens to that man's soul in eternity. In this life, if a man who is by nature rebellious toward God refuses to repent, believe in Christ, and follow Him, at the moment of his death, that poor soul will awake to an everlasting doom in hell. If, on the other hand, a man has humbled himself before the awesome holiness of God and repents and believes in Christ, at the moment of his death he will enter the unspeakably glorious joys of heaven. This life determines what happens in the next. What a man does here establishes where he will spend all of eternity. If, for no other reason, this must persuade a

preacher of God's Truth to preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

#### **4. Because It May be the Last Message Someone Hears Before Entering Either Heaven or Hell.**

Unless the Lord Jesus returns first, every living person will die and there will come a point — unknown to him — when he will hear his last sermon in a church. No man living knows the date of his death. And the preacher certainly does not know the date that people in His flock will die. Therefore, herein lies the reason why every single pastor must preach every sermon considering the ever-true reality that it may in fact be the last sermon someone in His flock hears before entering either heaven or hell. How distressing the thought that some in our flocks may hear a gospel sermon, die that same week, and remember that sermon for endless eternities to come as their consciences torment them. Let us preach preparing our saints for glory and warning the unregenerate of damnation. Let us preach as a dying man to dying men as if we were never to preach again. Let us, at some point in our sermon preparation, consider the possibility that a father, a mother, a teenager, a young child, or a senior saint may not return to corporate worship next week because they have passed from this world to the next. O, dear preachers, let us preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

#### **5. Because It Binds the Preacher to Preach Christ & His Gospel in Every Sermon.**

If we consciously reminded ourselves that people in our flocks may transition from this life to the next *this very week to come*, it would unequivocally compel us preachers to proclaim Christ and Him crucified. We would beg sinners to repent and be reconciled to God. We would plead with our saints to cherish Christ and show them the benefit of Christlikeness. Whatever book we exposit, whatever chapter we preach, whatever verse we highlight, whatever sermon we deliver, we must bind ourselves under oath to preach Christ and His gospel in every sermon so that the saved are satisfied in their union with Christ and so that the sinners are trembling in their plight before Christ. All this leads to the same supposition that I've purported thus far, namely, we must preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

#### **6. Because Everyone Needs to Have Eternity Pressed Upon the Mind Daily.**

To be of any spiritual profit, one should have his mind fixed upon His union with Christ who is seated in the heavenly places which thus guarantees His future glory that will follow because He is "in Christ." Every Christian must be reminded of eternity regularly. Sinners must hear of the eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth that awaits them unless they find salvation in Christ's atoning blood. Every preacher should determine to regularly bring eternity to bear upon his people's minds each week. The unregenerate could care less about eternity. The regenerate must concern themselves daily with the imminent certainty of eternal glory that awaits them. Believers need these reminders and unbelievers also need to hear that they will be destroyed under the mighty hand of God unless they confess their sins, believe in Christ and turn from their idols. Thus, because all people — both believers and unbelievers alike — need to have eternity pressed upon their minds daily, this must motivate the proclaimer of God's Word to preach with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.

## **7. Because the Unbeliever Present Needs to Hear of the Doom Awaiting Him & the Availability of Being Reconciled to God While the Opportunity Exists.**

Though every sermon may not be an evangelistic sermon, every sermon should include the saving gospel of Jesus Christ and warn the unrepentant of eternal doom that awaits them. A pastor cannot know the innermost hearts of all the people sitting before him, so he should assume, then, that an unbeliever who might be present must hear of the everlasting destruction that will engulf him if he refuses to bow the knee to Christ Jesus as Lord. And yet, he should learn about the one way to escape the eternal fires of hell by being reconciled to God through Christ Jesus who died in the place of sinners. God, in His gracious patience, provides opportunities for sinners to hear the word about Christ and to put their faith in Jesus Christ who died for His elect so as to propitiate the Father's righteous wrath. Unbelievers need to know of coming doom. They also need to hear of the availability of being declared as righteous before God as this only comes by faith in Christ. Thus, while the opportunities exist, pastors should preach for eternity seeking both to win the wayward and to encourage the elect. This further supports the proposal that every pastor should preach every sermon with an eye toward the glory of heaven and with an eye toward the shrieks of hell.