

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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What Does Preaching Accomplish?

The Old Testament prophet was the preacher of his day. He was inspired, but other than that, he served in the same role as preachers must serve today. There were all kinds: blunt Amos, noble Isaiah, austere Elijah. There were also different purposes served by the various prophets. Some of them made virtually no converts (Jeremiah). Some were very successful, even when they did not want to be (Jonah).

The prophets have messages which refresh us and encourage us. Sometimes they give us sober warning. Consider one of the lessons. Isaiah prophesied 740-700 B.C. He preached in Jerusalem but he saw the downfall of Israel to the north. He saw the terrible

signs of decay in his own Judah. Although he had the sympathy and support of Hezekiah, the people of Judah gave little heed to his preaching. Also, some of the time, he dealt with a king such as Ahaz who had no sympathy for Isaiah's cause whatsoever. A situation like that makes us wonder, "If people will not listen, why preach? What good does it do?"

In Isaiah's commission (ch. 6), the Lord says, "I need someone to do a job." Isaiah volunteered. The job was: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (Isa. 6:10). How was Isaiah to do this? By telling them what God said. Isaiah wanted to know how long he should do this. God answered, "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste" (6:11).

God knew the heart of His people. He knew that they would reject His word. God wanted Isaiah to know that He knew they would respond this way. Yet He told Isaiah to preach to them anyway. Why? Isaiah was to preach with all his heart because he might convert his people. If he could not accomplish this, then he was to leave them no defense when judgment came. Let them drive the nails in their own coffin as it were.

The preacher today is to preach with all his heart to win sinners from the clutches of this sinful generation. Preach with love and concern. But even when it seems that the effort is a failure, realize that this is not the case. We get preoccupied with numbers

sometimes and forget that our objective is to do the bidding of God and leave the results in His almighty hand. God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). If, however, a generation turns away from God, then God wants them to have a witness against them that they were taught. He wants them taught again and again, so that their rejection of His will is complete. Whether they obey or whether they are lost, "yet they shall know that there hath been a prophet among them" (Ezek. 2:5).

This lesson is not to say that we should deaden our hearts to the fate of doomed men and women but to help us realize that when we have done our best to preach the word, and the world will not respond, we have not failed if we have faithfully taught the word.

-- **Bob Waldron** via *Stand*, May 1996

> **The seven ages of man: spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills, wills.**

- Richard J. Needham, [The Wit and Wisdom of Richard Needham](#).

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"Implanting Friendship In Our Children!"* (text: 1 Sam. 18:1-4); Sunday evening: *"No One Cares For My Soul!"* (Psalm 142).