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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN
CHRISTIAN KERYGMA

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ABSTRACT

Preaching is a divine assignment, thus its success cannot be independent of divine influence. However, the nature of the Holy Spirit in preaching has been raising questions in the minds of keen observers for years. The purpose of this study therefore, is to examine theologically and doctrinally the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit in each aspect of the preaching ministry. This is done with the hope that we shall be able to prescribe a balanced working mix for preachers, so that one can be aware of how best the Holy Spirit can aid one's preaching ministry.

In chapter two, some general principles concerning the Christian Kerygma and the Holy Spirit were examined. It was stated that while there are several scholarly proposals as to what the term "Kerygma" means in this paper, kerygma is synonymous with Christian preaching. It was added that Christian preaching has endured for years and is likely to continue to endure because it has strong theological bases.

Also, in examining the general principles concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, it was established that the Holy Spirit is a Deity. He is a person with divine identity and distinguishable personality. His several works testify to the fact that He is a person and he is able to help preachers and as many other Christians as are willing to "rightly" depend on Him.

Having examined general principles concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, chapter three was aimed at trying to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching in the

light of some Christian doctrine in soteriology. It was discovered that all these doctrines agree that preaching is important and the Holy Spirit is relevant. For example, no matter what one believes concerning election, for any unbeliever to become a believer, preaching, or witnessing must be done and the Holy Spirit must work. Thus for conviction, conversion, sanctification and regeneration, spirit-filled preaching is a necessity. Likewise, whether one accepts the doctrine of perseverance of the saints or not, the need for spirit-filled preaching cannot be disputed.

Having established in chapter three that doctrinally preaching under the power of the Holy Spirit is an essential factor for christian conversion and living, in chapter four the influence of the Holy Spirit in each aspect of preaching exercise is examined. It was concluded therein that the Holy Spirit could be and should be involved in every aspect of Christian Kerygma namely: seeking opportunities for preaching, sermon preparation, sermon delivery and confirmation of preached messages. Also since the personality of the preacher contributes to the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, a preacher should live a holy life and be prayerful.

In chapter five, it was established that there are several challenges militating against preaching effectiveness in our world today but that despite all these challenges the world still need preaching. However, it is not the dry, aimless, spirit-less preaching that is needed but spirit-filled preaching.

In conclusion, it was affirmed that there are several keys which encourage participation of the Holy Spirit in Christian Kerygma. Among such keys are: Holy living, knowledge of the

word of God, passion for the lost souls, zeal for the work of God. The major key however, is prayer. A preacher that takes time to deeply fervently commune with God through prayer and meditation need not expect the Holy Spirit to participate in his or her preaching ministry. The Holy Spirit is not a busy body.

It was against this background that some recommendations were offered to preachers.

CONCLUSION

A. PRAYER IS THE MAJOR KEY

In Chapter Three we examined the work of the Holy Spirit in the light of some of the doctrines on soteriology. We concluded that no matter what one believes concerning these doctrines, preaching is important and prayer is effective. Whether conversion is due to election or not, a preacher has to pray for direction and effectiveness. Since regeneration and sanctification are the work of the Holy Spirit, preachers have to pray and depend on the Holy Spirit. Whether a preacher believes in the doctrine of Perseverance of the saints or not, he/she still has to pray for himself/herself and his/her flock because it is by the help of the Holy Spirit that one can successfully run this race. Thus we can see that prayers definitely influence the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching.

In Chapter Four we examined several aspects of sermon preparation and sermon delivery. We discovered that while the preacher as a person has a lot to contribute to successful preaching, the Holy Spirit is not to ^{be} left out. Meanwhile to get the best contributions from the Holy Spirit, a preacher, through prayers and holy living, should commune regularly with the Holy Spirit throughout all the aspects of the sermon preparation and delivering. We also discovered that prayer can influence and even change outrightly for better the personality of a preacher or recipient.

In the previous chapters we discovered that despite several challenges militating against preaching in our contemporary world, the world still needs preaching. The preaching that is needed is not the ego-centred, academic,

rethorical preaching but preaching that is directed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. We concluded that this kind of preaching can only be delivered by preachers who are ready to pay the price for revival by walking close to the Holy Spirit through prayers and Holy living.

So far then in this paper we have discovered that there are many factors which encourages Holy Spirit participation in preaching. These factors include holy living, spirit-filled and controlled life, adequate dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit. We however want to propose that all these are minor keys. The major key is prayer.

Before we examine why prayer is the major key we should clearly define what prayer is. Jesus promised that if we ask anything in His name it shall be granted unto us. However, praying in the name of Jesus is praying according to His will and purpose. A prayer offered for the sake of self-aggradizement and ego-boosting shall not be acceptable to God no matter how many times and vehemently one says amen.¹ Such prayer is never easy. It makes us face the cross. It means deep searching of soul and real sacrifice.² Having clarified this, we shall now examine five reasons why prayer is the major key to maximizing the participation of the Holy Spirit in preaching.

1. Praying for Effective Preaching is the Will of God:

Preaching is a divine assignment (Matthew 28:14-20) thus there is no doubt that when we pray for help the Holy Spirit will be willing to aid us. Praying for effective preaching "implies our complete identification with the purpose of God."³ and such

¹Burney, Lecture, 1993.

²Sperry Chaffer, True Evangelism, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scatt 1919), p. 37.

³Chaffer, p. 37.

It is by his sovereign power that the Holy Spirit convict sinners and bring them to repentance. All believers who hold the view that "it is sovereign agency of God's aid alone that brings sinners to Christ should bear witness to their faith by showing themselves most constantly and faithful and earnest and persistent in prayer that God's blessing may rest on the preaching of His word and that under it some may be born again."⁶ If we sincerely have passion for mission and we believe that it is God who can save then we need to talk more to God about the souls to be won.

4. Prayers demonstrate our helplessness:

Since any attempt to do something good on the power and strength of human beings only exclusively produces the work of flesh, human being should learn to yield their lives continually over and over to the Spirit. By praying continually and yielding to the Spirit leadership we demonstrate our weaknesses and impotence and our dependence on the power of God through which we can do exploit in our spiritual endeavours.

5. Prayers help the preachers to obtain the other needed minor keys:

Through prayer a preacher develops his/her relationship with the Holy Spirit. This relationship eventually lead to ability to live a holy life. Even when a believer sins, as long as he/she continues in genuine supplication the Holy Spirit will restore him/her. Also communion with God through prayers leads to death to self by the power of the Spirit. A preacher dead to self will not find it so difficult to live a Spirit-controlled life.

⁶Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, p.123

prayer is surely likely to be answered by God though in His own way and time. (James 4:2; Matthew 7:7).

2. Praying is the Only Means By Which We Can Defeat the Devil:

On our own, humanity is weak and vulnerable. No human being can of his/her own power and will forever resist the devil. Also, it is clear in the Scripture that the devil is human's accuser and enemy. He has blinded the eyes of many to refuse salvation which God provides in Jesus Christ. He is powerful and full of tricks and lies.

Any preacher who wants to fulfil his own part of the Great Commission must know how to wage spiritual warfare against the kingdom of devil. Wagner says one of the advantages that our "charismatic" brothers and sisters have is that:

they have a more advanced understanding that the real battle for evangelization is spiritual. Sign and wonders, deliverance from demonic powers, miraculous healings, sustained and enthosiaastic worship, prophesies and warfare prayers are seen by many of them as the normal outworking of christianity.⁴

Evangelicals especially Baptist who believe in the authority of the Bible should even take the necessity for warfare prayers seriously. Although Satan is ~~is~~ defeated for, he is still quite dangerous and his ability to obstruct the spread of the Good News must not be under-emphasized. (Ephesians 2:2, 2 Cor. 4:4). Thus, even though the evangelicals are preforming their evangelistic preaching "it will not lead to evangelistic fruitfulness unless God also reforms our praying and pours out on us a new spirit of supplication for evangelistic work."⁵

3. It is only through prayer that we can hope to touch God to exercise his sovereignty. Our God is sovereign and able.

⁴Peter C. Wagner, Warfare Prayer, (California: Regal Books, 1992), p. 48.

⁵J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, p. 125.