

Listen to These Three Odd Old Preachers

by Ian Paisley

Ian Paisley's sermon explores the profound messages conveyed by the pulpit, pew, and offering in the life of the church and the importance of faithful preaching.

Duration: 33:42

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16, John 3:30, Acts 7:54-60, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 4:7, Revelation 2:13

Topics: "Giving Generously", "Personal Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of giving and the attitude with which we should approach it. He highlights the story of Jesus observing the gifts being given at the collection plate, particularly focusing on a poor widow who gave all she had. The preacher urges the congregation to give themselves fully to God and to recognize that Christ demands everything from us. He also discusses the role of the preacher and the responsibility to preach the Word of God faithfully, emphasizing the need for personal salvation and the power of the Bible. The sermon concludes with a warning about the consequences of not responding to the gospel and the urgency of accepting Christ before it is too late.

Transcript

I take the promised Holy Ghost, the blessed power of Pentecost, to fill me to the uttermost. I take. Thank God He undertakes for me.

And the people of God said, Amen. You may be seated. I want to preach tonight upon the subject, Listen to These Three Odd Old Preachers.

I'm not suggesting that the two brethren that have just left the pulpit are odd old preachers. I'm sure many people would suggest to you that I'm the oddest of them all. Every church has three odd old preachers who are in perpetual employment.

They speak not a word, but their message is loud and clear. In fact, they are the longest preachers ever heard, for they never come to those words that many people hope come soon. Finally, brethren, Amen.

Their message cannot be timed, because they are preaching for eternity. The first great silent old preacher in the church is the pulpit himself. This pulpit brings a message.

Not a sound does this preacher make, but he is really never silent. As a lighthouse is not in itself the light, but it shelters and displays the light. So the light of the gospel and the pulpit displays that gospel light.

The pulpit has a wonderful pedigree. Its history is most amazing. After man fell, God himself erected the first pulpit in Paradise of Eden.

And he addressed an entirely ecumenical congregation. The hosts of hell were represented by the old serpent himself. Adam and Eve represented the whole of mankind, because they were the whole of mankind.

There was none else. And the all-looking angels were there, both seraphim and cherubim. That pulpit heard the first announcement from the lips of God himself.

And it was the curse of God on Satan. A preacher who does not pronounce from the pulpit damnation on the devil and all his works. A preacher who does not pronounce from the sacred sounding board death upon death, damnation upon damnation, and curse upon curse is not a faithful preacher.

Better have no pulpit at all if it is not employed in the work to which it was originally erected. The pulpit which God used had secondly pronounced from it the message of hope for the sinner. It was a good news pulpit that the mighty Jehovah used that day in Eden.

The curse did not fall on Adam. Please note that. But it fell on the ground which Adam cultivated.

The third message from God's pulpit was to Eve. And it was a message of supreme grace. She had been an agent of the devil, but she was to become the agent of God.

And through womanhood, God the Son would be incarnate in the flesh and become the savior of the whole world. If every pulpit conveyed those three points faithfully, what a different world we would have today. And what a different church every church would be.

If you take up your Bible and look with me at the pulpits from which the words of gospel light have sounded forth, you will be clearly instructed. What about Abel's pulpit? Abel's pulpit was the first pulpit occupied by man to be stained by the blood, the martyr's blood of the preacher himself. The great argument that Abel declared to his twin brother from that pulpit in the field was the argument of the blood atonement.

Cain was a rejecter of God's way. He was an enemy of God's gospel. He was the first of the evil crew of unbloody Unitarians, as Mr. Nicholson used to describe them, who denied the blood of the everlasting covenant.

But the voice of him who died after he preached the sermon was still heard. The crimson pulpit may have been silent, but the voice of Abel's blood from the ground cried loud enough to be heard by God in heaven. From Abel's blood-stained pulpits, there is a great array in the history of the church of blood-stained pulpits and blood-stained pulpiteers.

What about Zechariah's pulpit? Our Lord paid testimony to Zechariah in the following words, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barakas, whom he slew between the temple and the altar, Matthew 23, 35. Notice this is not the son of Jehoiakah in 2 Chronicles 24, 20, and 21, but Zechariah, we learn, was killed in the same way as Abel, see Zechariah 1 and 7. It could well be prophetic of yet a later Zechariah, the son of Barak, who would not be the last of that name mentioned. Here we have one of the most interesting coincidences in all the Bible.

Here was a preacher faithful unto death. He erected his pulpit, he contended earnestly for the faith and fearlessly. But his pulpit was drenched with blood, and thus the line of the martyrs of the faith on their blood-stained pulpits.

What was true of New Testament times was also true of Old Testament times, was also true of New Testament times. Think of Stephen, Paul, Peter, and Antipas. What about Stephen's pulpit? When Stephen made the dock his pulpit and preached the truth to his accusers, what happened? They that heard these things were cut to the heart and gashed their teeth on him.

And they stoned Stephen as he called upon God and cried out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. When he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell.

What about Paul's pulpit? Paul fought a good fight. He finished the course. He kept the faith.

And after long and cruel imprisonment, he laid his head on the block and had it severed from his body. The block became his blood-stained pulpit. What about Antipas' pulpit? And what of Antipas, an almost unknown man? But Christ in heaven said, Antipas, my faithful martyr, was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.

Antipas was a faithful witness in the very teeth of the devil himself and in the very seat of Satan's mighty authority, held fast to the faith of the blood atonement and refused to deny the name of Jesus. I know thy work, said the Lord Jesus, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is. And thou holdest fast my name and hast not denied my faith.

Even in those days, for in Antipas was it my faithful martyr who was slain among you where Satan... And what about Peter's pulpit? What shall I say of Peter? He never forgot the final words to him as a young man, uttered by Christ before Christ descended up into heaven. When he was writing the last of his epistles, old man Peter said, knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me. The occupier of the pulpit on the day of Pentecost, tradition records, sealed his ministry with his own blood.

He refused to be crucified like his master, saying he was not worthy. We are told that his murderers crucified him upside down. Let it not be forgotten that the only time this word pulpit is mentioned in the Bible is in the book of Ezra.

We read Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose. The gospel preacher requires a pulpit, both for his ministry and it may be afterwards for his martyrdom. The preacher and his pulpit are inseparable.

When the famous and sometimes infamous Dr. Joseph Parker died, the historic white pulpit of the City Temple London was very difficult to fill after the amazing preaching ability of Dr. Joseph Parker. At length the congregation called a young minister from Northern Ireland, Campbell by name, to succeed the great Parker. Campbell had sold out and preached a gospel which was bloodless and a Bible which was powerless and he did not cover over his infidelity.

An uproar shook London. A man who remembered that Dr. Parker when he opened his great City Temple said that if any apostate ever became its pastor and preached another gospel, let him be accursed and expressed the hope that in such circumstances someone would have the courage enough to write that

scripture over the very front of this church that he had just opened. One morning it was discovered as Campbell preached his infidelity from the pulpit of the City Temple that a man had obeyed what the old preacher had said and the condemnatory scripture had been erected over the front of the church.

He that preaches another gospel, let him be accursed. The uproar particularly in congregationalism to which the City Temple belonged denominationally and also in the English non-conformist religious world generally was an uproar indeed. It became fiercer and fiercer each week.

Campbell was forced to resign and disappeared into the ranks of the Church of England never really to be heard of again. Meanwhile the City Temple continued its descent into apostasy and eventually had as one of its pastors a Methodist, Leslie D. Weatherhead, a graduate of Cliff College. He sought to explain away Christ's virgin birth.

In his last book that he printed, *The Christian Agnostic*, he suggested that Mary was a strumpet and her child was illegitimate. Meanwhile the gospel of Christ continues to prevail and it shall prevail until every enemy licks the dust at the Savior's feet. Faithful preachers of the old time religion are the true defenders of the faith once for all delivered to the sea.

They may have to die for their faith but their faith can never die. It is in itself the seed of everlasting life. It is only powerful when it is tied to the Bible which lies in its nest.

And its occupier at all times is diligent to preach the Word of God. Anybody can preach but only a born again man walking in the light can preach the Holy Word which has made him wise unto personal salvation. And he alone will make his hearers experience the same salvation too.

The pulpit's long continuing charge to the preacher is simple. The pulpit would say to me, I elevate you to be physically above your congregation. I implore you to use that elevated position to elevate your Savior above all earthly things and demand of them loyalty to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Remember you must preacher decrease but Christ must increase. I would like to say that when I started my ministry on this road 60 years ago I quoted these lines. I do not ask that crowds may throng this building, that standing room be at a price.

I only ask that as I preach the gospel men may find Christ. The great C.H. Spurgeon when he preached at the installation of a son as a minister of Greenwich Baptist Church cried out in his sermon as he leaned over the pulpit, he cried out, my son preach Jesus up. Oh come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

But I must come to the second old odd preacher. It is the pew upon which you sit. There was a time when Protestant churches had no pews and had no seating.

The people who came who did not want to stand brought their own chairs and seats with them. You will remember when the Scots Protestant Jenny Geddes wanted to protest against the Romanising of the church service in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. She threw the stool that she had brought to sit on at the preacher's head.

And she cried out, will you dare to say the mass at my lunch? I wonder how many seats would fly in the air tonight if the same spirit of uncompromising Protestantism was suddenly resurrected. Soon after the reformation Protestant meeting houses installed seating. We have heard what the pulpit preaches to the preacher.

Let me tell you what that pew you sit on is saying to you. Sometimes I am fully occupied. In fact I am uncomfortable at times because more and more people want to take my seats.

At other times I am half empty and alas many times not occupied at all. I have never missed any service in this building since the day it was opened. I have heard more sermons and listened to more service than all of you.

I am never absent on Lord's Day mornings or evenings. I have never been given an absent mark. On weeknights I am always in my place.

But the pew has something more to say than that. It says I am always very, very happy when a whole family occupies me. Father, mother, brothers and sisters.

I am really proud then. I know I am in full use. But when no one sits with me I am distracted.

I mourn and say I am not being used. Some people say it is too cold to come. Others say it is too hot.

Some say the preaching is not good enough. Others say it is very good. I say perhaps if these people were preached some really bad sermons they might appreciate the good ones even the most.

Another thing that annoys me is those who do not come in time. I know it is better late than never. But it is better never to be late.

But I have a more serious thing to say. I have given my seats to those who are now in eternity. Who never responded to the gospel appeal which Christ really offered to them.

They sat in the comfort of God's house on earth. But alas, they are now in God's present house for all eternity. They left me one Lord's day morning never to return.

And now they are lost, lost, lost forever. But I have another sight to mention. Some occupied me and my pew came to know the Savior.

They were completely transformed. Their attendance became regular. They never missed a service.

And they sang as they had never sung before. Then one day they did not come again. But I know from what the preacher said.

They now occupy one of the best seats in the Father's house. Could I as a preacher tonight comment on the remarks of the pew? I often ask myself this question. How many have sat and listened to me and went away into the darkness and shadow of death? How many were gloriously seen and today are singing in the glorious choirs of Emmanuel's land? I would pray Lord fill up the seats in glory with converts from this church.

Let me come to the third odd old preacher. I have spoken of the pulpit. I have spoken of the pew.

Now let me speak. I know you will smile when I say this. Let me speak of the offering plea.

You say to me what the offering plea? But let me tell you it was Christ himself who introduced me to this third preacher. If you turn with me to Luke 21 verse 1. Where he looked up and saw the rich man casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting into their two mites.

And he said of a truth I say unto you. That this poor widow have casted more than they owe. For all these have by their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God.

But she of her penury had cast in all the living that she had. The treasury of the temple at Jerusalem was situated in the woman's courtyard. That woman's courtyard was 200 feet square.

And was enclosed by a colony. Inside and against the wall of the woman's court were 13 receptacles. Offering pleas called trumpets.

Because they were shaped like trumpets. Nine of these were for the legal Jews. Which the Jewish people must pay.

But four were for voluntary contributions. Our blessed Lord sat down at these collection containers. And we read that he beheld every gift that was placed within them.

That word beheld is a most suggestive word. It means observed diligently and thoughtfully. Just think about that.

Christ with all things under his observation. His observation in heaven, earth and sky. Sea and under the sea.

All things past, present and future. Still found time to sit at a collection plate. And watch the gifts that were being given.

There came a woman. She is described as a poor widow. In the Greek text, one who works for her daily bread.

She was her own bread earner. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The great Dean Burgin said, So then amid all the weariness of his human body, the Lord Jesus in the anguish of his human soul, amid grief unrevealed and bitterness of the spirit inscrutable, the Lord of heaven and earth sat down to watch the ways of one of the humblest of his creatures.

He saw before him the destruction of that temple. The fall of Jerusalem. The wrack of nature.

The crash of worlds. The setting up of the great white throne. The gathering together of all the tribes of all the earth.

He saw all this. But he had time to see a poor widow. And it was his divine pleasure to scrutinize her act and weigh it in a balance and to pronounce upon it, camely and at length, as if life and death hung upon the issue.

He called unto his disciples. He didn't whisper to them. He called them.

And he said, Oh, but truth, I say that this poor widow hath cast in more than they owe. For all these have of their abundance cast in to the offerings of God. But she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Truly the Lord sees not as man sees. The offering plate is an odd old preacher. But a preacher it really is.

It cries out to us all as it presents itself for our offerings. Oh, don't mistrust the reasoning of those. Do not trust the reasoning of those who like Judas discourage and criticize real liberal giving to God's work.

For remember that Christ personally studies all responses. He weighs them all in his eternal balance for commendation or condemnation as he did to the rich givers here in this incident. Mark your, this was the final opportunity.

Christ never returned again to the temple. He never stood within it again. Tonight, the gospel invitation, sinner friend, is for you.

Oh, I trust you will come and you will say, Hear Lord, I give myself away. Tis all that I can do. Christ demands everything.

We're the whole realm of nature, mind. That we're an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, shall have my life, my soul, my all.

May that be your prayer this night for Jesus' sake. Let's bow our heads. Father, we thank Thee for Thy Word.

Thy Word is true. Bless our God this message right in all our hearts. Forbid us to leave this church still on the road to hell and darkness and a lost eternity.

Turn our feet into the way of life. Bring us to the cross. Wash us in Your blood.

And save our souls for Jesus' sake. And everybody say, Amen.

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