

The Ministry of the Day

by J.C. Philpot

The ministry of the day is often characterized by a lack of spiritual depth and a failure to provide meaningful instruction and guidance to the people.

Scripture: Psalm 119:130, Proverbs 27:5, Jeremiah 3:15, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 5:12, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Faithful Ministry", "Biblical Preaching"

Description

J.C. Philpot addresses the light and superficial nature of the ministry of the day, pointing out the lack of depth, weight, and solidity in preaching the Gospel. He emphasizes the role of a minister as a faithful steward, shepherd, guide, instructor, and counselor to the church, highlighting the importance of providing solid spiritual food that edifies and instructs the soul. Philpot expresses concern over the careless and irreverent manner in which some ministers handle the Word of God, delivering sermons that lack clarity, depth, and the power to truly feed and bless the congregation.

Transcript

The ministry of the day

By J. C. Philpot

It cannot be denied that the ministry of the day is generally very light and superficial, not merely in opening up and unfolding the teachings of the Blessed Spirit in vital experience, but in setting forth with clearness, weight, and power the glorious truths revealed by the same Holy Spirit in the pages of the Gospel. Without wishing unnecessarily to condemn or depreciate any laborers in the vineyard, and it is a matter for much thankfulness that there are still men of grace and gifts who are made a blessing to the churches, we cannot be altogether blind to the real character of much that in our day passes for preaching of the Gospel; and in nothing does it seem more deficient, than in fullness, weight, and solidity.

Taking a broad view of the ministry of the day, without fixing our eyes on any particular minister or ministers, so as to relieve our thoughts and words from all personalities, may we not, in all Christian faithfulness and affection, ask, "Are there many such faithful and wise stewards whom the Lord has made rulers over his household to give them their portion of food in due season?" But besides being a steward of the house, the minister is, or ought to be, the shepherd to feed, the guide to lead, the instructor to teach, the monitor to warn, the counselor to advise, the reprove, where needful, to rebuke. May we not look around and say, Where shall we find all, or anything like all, this?

Take one office of a minister--to teach the people committed to his charge. What little solid instruction is usually gained from the pulpit, so as to build up the soul on its most holy faith. We are not speaking of the doctrinal preaching of the day, which is no doubt all very correct, so far as it goes; but of that weighty, solid opening up of the truth of God, which instructs as well as edifies the soul; which gives it matter for subsequent prayer and meditation; which sends it home full of solemn thoughts and feelings, and spreads abroad a holy savor upon the heart.

How often does the gracious hearer come on the Lord's Day to his earthly courts with a real longing desire for spiritual food. He may not, perhaps, be under a very heavy trial that needs a special blessing, or under a temptation that makes him so to reel and stagger that he is crying out for a very clear and marked deliverance, but he has that general sense of his poverty and need which makes him long for some spiritual food. He comes with a tender, prayerful spirit, for he has been on his knees in his bedroom, and has been favored with some earnest breathings for a blessing on the word to be preached, and has read his Bible that morning with a feeling which has softened and melted his heart. Glad to be released from the toils and anxieties of the week, he sallies forth to the place of worship, and feels a sweet and solemn pleasure as he meets his dear brethren once more in the house of prayer.

The first hymn rather suits his feelings, and he hopes it is the beginning of a good day with his soul. He lifts up his heart for the minister as he stands up and opens the word of God. But O, how carelessly and hurriedly, blundering over the simplest words, and getting through that beautiful psalm, or that sweet and solemn chapter, just as a schoolboy recites his lesson, does he read that divine book. And then the prayer--the same, word for word, over and over again, as dry and as unfeeling, as careless and as irreverent, as if there were no dread Majesty of heaven to be feared or adored, no sins to be confessed, no mercy to be sought, no Jesus to be loved, no grace to be supplied. Surely, surely he who supplicates for so many fellow saints, yet fellow sinners, should have something more to bring before the throne of grace than a few threadbare, worn-out petitions which all the hearers know by heart.

And then the sermon, all confused and indistinct; no straight lines in doctrine or experience, but the old thing over and over again; from which neither instruction nor encouragement, neither reproof nor comfort, can be gathered, and in which there is nothing clear but the preacher's intense self-satisfaction, who sits down as if he had preached with all the gifts of a Gadsby, and all the unction of a Warburton. What must be the feelings of a hearer who really needs, and feels he needs food for his soul, under this sad, sad exhibition? We may seem severe, but, not against any good and gracious man, however small his gifts, who, with a single eye to the glory of God, speaks in his great name. There will be in that man, if he has not much variety of subject or of expression, a life and a power, a feeling and a savor which will refresh the soul, if it does not much instruct the mind, or enter very deeply into the heart.

It is against the imitators who, without grace or gifts, think themselves qualified for any pulpit or any people, that we speak. Whether truly, let others judge. It is a very solemn thing to stand up in the name of the Lord, to be his mouth to the people; and when we consider what a work it is to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood, well may any man, whatever be his grace or gifts, say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" When a man gets into a pulpit, he says thereby, "I stand here to instruct you, to feed your souls with the truth of God, to lead you step by step to the heavenly Canaan, and to be made a blessing to you, as you individually need it." But if he can do none of these things; if really gracious, spiritual hearers return home again and again uninstructed, unblessed, he may call himself a servant of God, but the King of kings does not seem very clearly to stamp his broad seal on the assertion.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-philpot/the-ministry-of-the-day/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net