

The Proper Attitude for Preaching

by John Newton

A humble, dependent frame of heart is essential for effective preaching, relying on God in the use of appointed means.

Scripture: Psalm 25:9, Proverbs 22:4, Philippians 2:3, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Humility In Ministry", "Dependence On God"

Description

John Newton expresses gratitude for the opportunity to preach the Gospel and the privilege of serving a people who value it. He emphasizes the importance of humility, dependence on God, and speaking the Word with simplicity and sincerity. Newton acknowledges the need for a humble heart and a focus on the worth of souls when delivering a message, highlighting that true effectiveness comes from a broken discourse delivered in the presence of God. He encourages the preacher to trust in the Lord, remain humble, and rely on His grace and wisdom for true exaltation.

Transcript

Dear Sir,

The account which I received by Mr. C--, and by the letter which he brought from you, of your welfare, and the welfare of your people, was very pleasing, though, indeed, no more than I expected. I believed, from the first of your going to S--, that you would like the people, and I believed the Lord had given you that frame of spirit which He has promised to bless. What reason have we to praise Him for the knowledge of His Gospel, and for the honour of being called to preach it to others; and, likewise, that He has been pleased to cast your lot and mine amongst a people who value it, and to crown our poor labours with some measure of acceptance and usefulness! How little did we think, in the unawakened part of our life, to what it was His good pleasure to reserve us!

The Lord is pleased, in a measure, to show me the suitableness and necessity of a humble, dependent frame of heart, a ceasing from self, and a reliance upon Him in the due use of appointed means; I am far from having attained, but I hope I am pressing, at least seeking, after it. I wish to speak the word simply and experimentally, and to be so engaged with the importance of the subject, the worth of souls, and the thought that I am speaking in the name and presence of the Most High God, as that I might, if possible, forget everything else. This would be an attainment, indeed! More good might be expected from a broken discourse, delivered in such a frame, than from the most advantageous display of knowledge and gifts without it.

Not that I would undervalue propriety and pertinence of expression: it is our duty to study to find out acceptable words, and to endeavour to appear as workmen that need not be ashamed; but those who have most ability in this way, have need of a double guard of grace and wisdom, lest they be tempted to trust in it, or to value themselves upon it. They that trust in the Lord shall never be moved; and they that abase themselves before Him, He will exalt. I am well persuaded that your conduct and view have been agreeable to these sentiments; and, therefore, the Lord has supported, encouraged, and owned you; and, I trust, He will still bless you, and make you a blessing to many. He that walketh humbly, walketh surely.

Believe me to be, &c.

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