

## *Lord, Make Me a Better Preacher!*

**“Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word”**

(Acts 4:29).

The preacher has been announced, and called to the pulpit to deliver another soul-searching, life-changing message. He stands, picks up his Bible, and makes a step toward the sacred desk. Things are not like they appear. That is not his first step. He has taken several steps in private before he makes one in public. There are many things that happen before a man of God ever steps to the pulpit to preach.

Like the preachers in our opening verse he spends time in prayer, asking God to allow him to speak with boldness. He confesses his total dependence and trust in God (2 Corinthians 3:4-6). He knows that without the Spirit's help he is nothing (John 15:5), and can accomplish nothing of eternal value. He asks God to confirm His Word with signs following (Mark 16:20). He has climbed many steps before He stands in the presence of the Lord and His saints (Psalms 24:3).

These steps may include:

- He has made sure that his heart is right with God and others.
- He has listened.
- He has been sensitive to the Spirit.
- He has prayed.
- He has fasted.
- He has studied.
- He has lived an example.
- He has managed his family well.

## **“Go, I Will Be With Your Mouth!”**

Moses (like many others) had several reasons why he could not speak God's message.

1. I am not eloquent.
2. I am slow of speech.

But God said, “Go, and I will be with your mouth!” (See Exodus 4:12.)

Our prayer should be, “Lord, what do you want me to say? Speak to me so I can speak to your people.”

As preachers we should understand how to hear from God. We need to continuously endeavor to know the mind of the Spirit concerning the congregation, and what should be preached.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16)

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet” (Revelation 1:10).

John understood the prerequisite for hearing from God—being in the Spirit. It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit, and quite another for the Holy Spirit to have us.

It is important to:

- Listen to the Spirit (Revelation 2:7).
- Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).
- Live in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)
- Obey the Spirit (Acts 5:32).

Mary told the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5). When God speaks we must obey, act quickly, and do and say specifically what He has said.

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Roger Barrier in *Listening to the Voice of God* claims, “Unspiritual people could never lead a church spiritually. Simply put, spiritual people hear God best.”

He concluded, “Spiritual people became spiritual because they invested heavily in cultivating their inner human spirits. It is easier to be smart and well-refined than it is to be spiritual.”

Our inner spirit or inner man must be cultivated through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, submission, holiness, and studying the Word of God.

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

### How to Hear from the Spirit

- Read the Bible.
- Listen to the Word preached.
- Study the Word.
- Prayer.
- Fasting.
- Gifts of the Spirit.

Spend time reading the Bible. Meditate on it. Pray the Word, and concerning what you have read. Bible study should not be substituted by knowledge gained from reading Christian books or listening to preaching tapes. Never lose the ability to go to a private place—you and God, with your Bible, and listen to the Holy Spirit. Truth-tellers must be truth-seekers. The secret is not only having the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit having us.

If we humble ourselves, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways God promised we would hear from heaven.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

John Piper in *Supremacy of God in Preaching* said, “Good preaching is born of good praying.”

The preacher’s life should be one of constant communication with God in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17). John Piper has correctly said that the aroma of God will not linger on a person who does not linger in the presence of God.

### Saints, pray for my preaching.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19-20).

“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:3-4).

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

Encourage your people to pray for you and your preaching. Have a pastor’s prayer team that meets prior to each service. Some preachers have prayer warriors who pray throughout the service. They wrestle in prayer for the preaching, the preacher, and the souls of men.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against

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spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Warren Wiersbe says, “The most important part of a preacher’s life is the part that only God sees—the time alone with God, when you’re not sermonizing, when you’re not preparing for public ministry...So I would say to every preacher. Cultivate your spiritual roots and start each day with the Lord.”

Alex Montoya in *Preaching with Passion* explains that the early church preached with spiritual power. This power came from the following sources.

1. The promise and infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).
2. The personal relationship with the risen Lord (Acts 4:13-20). The disciples had a living faith, and served a risen, living God.
3. The prayer for boldness to preach (Acts 4:29-31).
4. The control of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8; 13:9, 52; 6:3, 51).

**Preacher, pray for your own preaching.**

Joe McKeever in his *Leadership Journal* article entitled *I Prayed for My Preaching* tells of how he became serious about prayer. He started to pray, “Lord, make me a preacher!”

That is the deep longing of all preachers in touch with God, “Lord, make me a better preacher!”

McKeever knew that preaching is the pastor’s most important contribution to the spiritual lives of his members.

He came up with four specific prayer requests.

1. I never want to stand in the pulpit again without a firm grasp of the Scripture. I want to understand the text that I am preaching from.

2. I want the message from God to have a firm hold on me, and to grip my heart. I want to have a real passion.

3. I want to communicate effectively with the congregation. I want my preaching to be relevant—applicable to life today. I want to be effective at what God has called me to do.

4. I want to see lives changed—transformed through my preaching. I want my preaching to make a difference in people.

Why not close this study with praying the same four prayer requests? It will make a difference. God hears, and He answers prayer. “Lord, make me a better preacher!”

*Study Questions*

1. What steps has a preacher normally gone through before going to the pulpit to preach?

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2. Why did Mose’s feel he could not speak God’s message?

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3. What did God tell Moses in Exodus 4:12?

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4. What should be our prayer before going to the pulpit?

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5. What is the prerequisite to hearing from God?

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6. According to Roger Barrier what type of people hear God best?

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7. How do people become spiritual?

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8. How do we cultivate (grow) the inner man?

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9. Truth-tellers must first be \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What did John Piper say, in this lesson, about good preaching?

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11. What did Paul pray in Ephesians 6:19-20?

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12. What is the prayer contained in 2 Thessalonians 3:1?

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13. According to Warren Wiersbe what is the most important part of the preacher's life?

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14. The early church preached with spiritual power. Where did this power come from?

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15. What were the four prayer requests prayed by Joe McKeever?

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