

Preaching the gospel is a God-given task to be undertaken by those men who have the knowledge and ability to communicate to the hearts of men the mind and will of God.

Preaching certainly needs to be biblically sound in its content and ably delivered. But nothing is more critical to success in declaring this life-transforming message than the godly character of the one proclaiming it. Preaching is not a profession but a function of being a disciple of Jesus. The most important thing about those who preach is not that they are preachers but that they are devoted Christians. That certainly is the ideal but there is no myth so widely held as the idea that those who spend their lives preaching the gospel are somehow insulated from the temptations that assault other disciples. To the contrary it may be true to say that they are confronted by it even more. **Behind the Preacher's Door** is a book that faces this reality squarely and candidly and offers both warning and wise counsel in meeting and overcoming the challenges with which preachers struggle. This is a book that has been long needed and we commend Warren Berkley and his writers for their diligent work in producing it. Preachers young and old will read it with great profit.

– *Paul Earnhart*

**BEHIND THE PREACHER'S
DOOR**

Edited by Warren Berkley

© 2009 Spiritbuilding Publishing. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by
Spiritbuilding Publishing
15591 N. State Rd. 9, Summitville, IN 46070

Spiritual “equipment” for the contest of life.
Printed in the United States of America

Behind The Preacher’s Door, edited by Warren Berkley
ISBN: 9780982137680



www.Spiritbuilding.com

Cover Design by Erin Sullivan

Acknowledgements

I am mindful of so many people who have united to get this book into your hands. My initial ideas about the project were refined and supplemented by Mark Roberts and Carl McMurray. Our writers worked under brutal deadlines, yet have turned out first-rate material. Erin Sullivan did the proofreading for me in less than two weeks, bringing a professional quality of excellence to the final product. My wife, Paula, has supplied encouragement to all my work for 40 years. Thanks to those who read the pre-publication manuscript when I needed a fresh set of eyes. Also the people at **Spiritbuilding** surround Carl with skills and efficiency visible in their products. Faithful Christians have formed a vibrant little unit to get this book into circulation. They are worthy of my praise.

– *Warren E. Berkley*

Contents

Why This Book?

Warren Berkley 1

Foreword

Frank Jamerson 3

The Preacher's Personal Devotion

Gary Henry 7

The Preacher's Daily Discipline

Mark Roberts 16

The Preacher's Ethics

Matthew Allen 24

The Preacher's Battle with Pornography

Jason Hardin 31

The Preacher's Temptation to Commit Adultery

Edwin Crozier 40

The Preacher's Money

David A. Banning 54

The Preacher's Relationship with Difficult Brethren

W. Frank Walton 63

The Preacher's Role in the Unity of the Local Church

Russ Bowman 76

The Preacher's Friends

Ken Weliever 85

The Preacher's Toys - Technology's Impact on His Work

Edwin Crozier 95

The Preacher as a Husband

Curtis Pope 104

Final Thoughts

Warren E. Berkley 117

Why This Book?

Warren E. Berkley

Speaking to a group of young preachers a few years ago, I gave them a sad review from my own personal knowledge of preachers who had fallen. At the time I had been preaching for 38 years (5 churches, over 100 gospel meetings, work outside the country in two locations, over 30 years experience in “brotherhood journalism,” and contact with many preachers through **Expository Files** and **Preceptor**). I had to report to these young men that I personally knew of 52 preachers who committed sexual immorality. That’s just one of the problems addressed in this book.

Adding Some Perspective: *I’ve known 4 men to leave the truth for Calvinism; 3 to embrace what I believe is error on divorce and remarriage; 2 to change directions into the institutional movement; 4 whose wives left them; 3 who suffered financial crash (with legal trouble); 1 who was too discouraged and depressed to continue in local work; 1 who committed suicide; 2 who just quit serving the Lord, and other sad stories. But beyond these, 52 who fell into sexual sin (I spoke to those young preachers about this in 2008, I must now add two more). That’s 54!*

But that figure is not **just** 54 preachers. *This figure translates into at least 54 local churches, 108 families, and I don’t want to calculate how many children, parents, extended family, friends, and other churches have been hit hard by the sin of these preachers. And sadly, in some communities these episodes have been covered by local news media. In one case, the national news media exposed the transgression. The rate of such events is alarming, even when we factor in the most optimistic realities that this is a guilty minority. [As Frank Jamerson reminds us, “. . .the vast majority are diligently trying to teach the truth and exemplify it in their lives.”]*

Outside of our brethren, you’ll hear reports of 1,500 “pastors” leaving “the ministry” due to moral failure. One source says that 50% of

“pastor’s marriages will end in divorce,” and “almost 40 percent report that they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry.” Shall we try and convince ourselves that we are so different from the world? We should be.

(Sources:http://blog.worldvillage.com/society/reframing_pastor_burnout_and_pastors_leaving_ministry.html; http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_dira.htm.)

There is a problem. Preachers need to face it; those who train preachers need to attend to it; in fact all Christians need to see the matter clearly and uphold and model the discipline that is so greatly needed. Preachers need to talk about it – not as gossip but as reality, an issue to be addressed through a faithful use of the Word. All of us striving for purity need a book like this, but most importantly, men just beginning to preach need to have this kind of book and give healthy thought to the varied content of these chapters.

So this is NOT a book about how to prepare sermons, pulpit dynamics, study methods or the use of PowerPoint. While all of these things play a role in the preacher’s public work, there are books and venues directed to these purposes. ***This book is about what happens behind the preacher’s door.*** These chapters put the spotlight on heart, life, private thoughts and relationships, using the Bible to teach and warn all preachers and all Christians. It is the purpose of this book to not only sound some alarms, but to supply forceful preventive teaching. You will read not only about adultery, but financial crisis, wasted time, neglect of family, and abuse of brethren. Everything Paul warned Timothy to shun!

Why this book? To apply Bible teaching to help preachers, and others, train their conscience, heighten their awareness of temptation, enrich their daily discipline, and become men of God in and out of the pulpit. Even the mass of good faithful men will be better equipped and enabled to meet future temptation by reviewing the teaching on these pages.

Foreword

Frank Jamerson

One of the brothers of our Lord wrote, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). We know that God is no respecter of persons and He does not classify sins as being worse if they are committed by preachers, but we should realize that those of us who publicly proclaim God’s word have a special responsibility to exemplify what we teach. Teachers, by the very nature of their work, have greater opportunities to say one thing and practice another. The apostle Paul wrote concerning his Jewish brethren, “You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery’, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?” (Romans 2:20-22). Then he concluded that God’s name was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the action of those who claimed to be God’s people (verse 24). I have heard it said, if you can’t preach better than you can practice, you are not worth listening to, but brethren, if we don’t try to practice what we preach, we are not fit to listen to. A hypocrite is not simply one who makes mistakes, but one who is a play-actor. He is pretending to be what he is not, and Jesus described such action as “whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27). Not a very pretty picture!

It has been my privilege to read the manuscripts of this book and make some comments about the various problems faced by preachers that are discussed in it. Some of these problems were unknown to those of us in the older generation, but we live in a new age, and need to be warned about new dangers as well as the old ones that have always assaulted God’s servants. Instant communication can be good or evil, and it is often used for the latter. These men, who have been asked to write various chapters have not written from a spirit of self-righteousness but from genuine concern over the loss of so many comrades. You will find everything from planning

time for personal spiritual growth to preparing lessons; teaching on moral purity and friendship with the local church and special friends; dangers and benefits of technology available to us, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of being married and the responsibilities to our wives and families if we are married. All the men have presented Scriptural teaching as well as beneficial lessons from their personal experiences and wisdom.

No doubt, none of our brethren who have fallen ever thought it would happen to them. When we are deceived into thinking Paul's admonition, "let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12), does not apply to us, we let down our guard and the devil seizes the opportunity to take advantage of our over-confidence.

Young men, especially, need to be warned about putting themselves in a position to be tempted, or to even be accused of impropriety. Several young men have worked with me through the years and one thing that I tried to impress on them is not to take chances with their reputation. Keep the door closed for temptation, by never going behind a closed door alone with a woman, even if you do not foresee any problem. If you avoid the possibility of temptation, you will avoid being overcome by it. Society today is not the same as it was when many of us were young preachers and we must train our young men to "abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and as much as possible, even from the opportunities to do evil, or to be falsely accused.

As you read these chapters, you will probably think, as I did, that this kind of teaching should have been published long ago. Not only preachers, but all Christians can benefit from the excellent articles these men have written. They have warned not only about being overtaken in a trespass, but the attitude we should have when overtaken, and the attitude we should have toward those who have been overtaken. Too many times, when preachers, who have faithfully served God for years, are overcome in some sinful action, they become embittered, because they feel brethren have not treated them the way they should have been treated when they repented, and bitterness breeds all kinds of rationalizations which enable them to teach and practice things they would have never considered otherwise. In reading this book, we should remember that mistakes can make us bitter or better, depending

on our reaction. Being mistreated does not justify destruction of previous good, or failure to do great things for God in the future. Remember that at one point Peter said, “even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble” (Matthew 26:33). Satan took advantage of his overconfidence and Peter denied his Lord three times. When the rooster crowed, “Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Then he went out and wept bitterly” (Matthew 26:75). The lesson we need to learn is that he did not become bitter because of his failure. Bitterness destroys its victim. Peter got up and started over by earning the respect of his fellow apostles, and we remember him as the great evangelist, who stood with the other apostles on the day of Pentecost and addressed thousands with the glorious message of the resurrected Christ. Judas, who also allowed Satan to enter him (Luke 22:3) and take advantage of his weakness, was unable to face his guilt, and went out and committed another wrong. He is not the last servant of God to react in the wrong way toward being overtaken in some sin.

Many, or maybe I should say all of us, have made mistakes and been mistreated by brethren. When I was a young preacher, some of the members where I was working were not doing what I believed they should be doing, and it was very discouraging to me. I was considering moving, but when a beloved brother, James Cope, came to town I dumped my problem on him. Although nearly half a century has passed since that day, his comments to me are still clearly embedded in my mind. He said, in nearly these words: you don’t build anything by majoring on the weaknesses. If you major on the weaknesses of your wife, your marriage will soon be on the rocks. If you major on the weaknesses of your business, your business will fail. If you major on the weaknesses in the congregation, you will fail. He said we must major on the good points and minor on the weak points. We should try to build up the weak points, but they should not consume us. When he said that, I realized that two or three people were the ones who were getting all my attention, and over one hundred other people were being completely overlooked! We should realize that some will not be faithful, in the time frame we would prefer, but many are conscientiously trying to grow in Christ. The same is true of our preaching brethren. A few have not taught or lived as they should, but **the vast majority are diligently trying to teach the truth and exemplify it in their lives.** They are not behind

closed doors, but their lives are open for the scrutiny of any who wish to observe, and they serve with the realization that “all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). We have heard that “one rotten apple will spoil the whole barrel,” but if we deal properly with the one that is rotten, we will not dispose of the whole barrel! Yes, we are saddened when even one of our preaching brethren is overcome by some evil, but more so, when he allows that failure, like Judas, to destroy his future prospects for serving God. He not only endangers his own soul, but may influence his family and others to follow his destructive ways.

It is my conviction that two classes of preachers should read these good articles. First, those who have made some of the mistakes addressed, and second those who want to avoid making those mistakes. I hope this brief overview will whet your appetite to carefully consider these important lessons and share them with others.

The Preacher's Personal Devotion

Gary Henry

If behind the preacher's door there exists a man who is less devoted to the Lord than the man who presents himself in the pulpit every Sunday, there is a deadly problem. It would be hard to calculate the damage done by such a discrepancy, not only in the preacher's personal life but also in the lives of those whom he influences in his work. The damage may not show up right now, but eventually, a man cannot sow one thing privately and reap something else publicly.

But how can a preacher's personal devotion be lacking? Isn't the fact that he is a preacher evidence that his devotion to the Lord is above average? The honest answer is no. As anyone who has preached very long understands, it is easy for a man's work to become disconnected from the person that he really is, such that he spends his time urging others to devote themselves to the Lord without having any real devotion himself.

Paul wrote about the possibility that a communicator of the gospel might end up being saved even if those whom he taught fell away from the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:15). But he also mentioned the possibility that a man who has saved others by his preaching might end up being lost himself (Philippians 1:15-18).

Too many of us who preach are living double lives. The shocking frequency with which we yield to temptation indicates that the private quality of our faith is less than the public image that we present. And we know that the word for such a double life is *hypocrisy*. To "appear beautiful outwardly" but on the inside to be "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27) is an abominable sin.

Isn't it time that we admit the extent of this problem and took steps to resolve it?

The Meaning of “Devotion”

The preacher’s personal “devotion” might mean two different things. First, there is what most people would call “devotional time.” The preacher has probably urged others to set aside a “quiet time” each day for prayer and Bible study. Does he do this himself? And if he does, is it anything more than a habit or routine?

The preacher has probably urged others to set aside a “quiet time” each day for prayer and Bible study. Does he do this himself?

But in the larger sense, “devotion” has to do with whether one is devoted to the Lord. It is a bigger question than whether one has a daily devotional time. The word “devotion” is akin to the word “devout,” and so the question is one of the preacher’s personal devoutness. Having urged others to lead lives that are devout, what about his own devoutness? All of his sermons, Bible classes, home studies, and foreign evangelism aside, how devoted is he to the Lord in the most private part of his own life?

Devotion is much the same as dedication, consecration, sanctification, etc. To be devoted to the Lord is to be reserved for His use alone. And the test of whether we’ve devoted ourselves to the Lord is not the soundness of our sermon outlines; it’s the extent to which we, even in our most private moments, yield ourselves to Him in the obedience of faith. To appear publicly to have yielded ourselves to God is easy; almost anyone can do that. But the test of the preacher’s “personal devotion” is what goes on “when no one is looking.” If his heart has truly been set apart as the Lord’s dwelling place, there will be no conflict between the public and the private man that he is.

Contributing Factors

I suggest that there are at least four factors that have contributed to the “disconnect” between the public profession of preachers and their personal devotion to the Lord.

(1) We allow preaching to degenerate into a “job.” Most of us understand that preaching the gospel is more than a “career.” We know

that we aren't hirelings or time-servers. Even so, the tendency is for us to settle into a routine that, for all practical purposes, makes our work simply a "means of making a living."

With some kinds of secular work, there is little connection between the job and the rest of a man's life. He can leave his "work" at the office or the factory. Since its main purpose is to pay the bills, a "job" need not be connected very closely to the other areas of a man's life.

But gospel preaching is different. It is much more than a means of making a living; it is a way of life. And when it degenerates into a job, the problem is not merely that it demeans the work, but that it disconnects the work from the man. It creates a situation in which a man may go through the motions of doing his "job" without there being any connection between that job and the way he actually lives his life. He can get to the point where he is doing his "work" (and maybe doing it well, as far as others can see) and living a very different life when he is out of the pulpit. When this happens, a man's own spiritual life will rarely be what it ought to be.

(2) We get caught up in the "busyness" of preaching. The work of preaching the gospel is a complex, time-consuming work. And the more a man enjoys the work, the easier it is to over-commit and stay so busy that he has no time for his own spiritual refreshment.

Some preachers pride themselves on the busyness of their schedules, as if the pace of their lives is a badge of honor or an indication of how important they are among the Lord's people. But unrelenting busyness is as good a way to kill one's self spiritually as could be imagined—and it doesn't make any difference that the busyness is *religious* busyness.

Gary Collins once wrote: "Busyness, including busyness with religion and church activities, has been called the 'archenemy of spiritual maturity.' Busy lives have little time for reflection. Never-ending waves of activity keep us from thinking carefully about the important issues in our lives—God, relationships, life purpose, goals, service. Busyness can destroy our relationships. It can stifle spiritual growth and keep us from becoming effective difference makers" (*You Can Make a Difference*, page 49). I agree, and

I believe that busyness, without taking time for personal spiritual growth, is one of the main reasons why those of us who preach often have so little personal devotion to the Lord.

(3) We allow preaching to become a purely intellectual exercise. While the obedience of faith can never be divorced from the doctrinal truths of Christ's Word, there is a danger that we may content

Many preachers never take the next step: preaching lessons that call for changes that they themselves need to make.

ourselves with *nothing more* than those doctrinal truths. Christianity and gospel preaching can come to be just an intellectual exercise in which we weigh arguments for and against certain doctrinal or textual positions. To some extent, all of us are tempted to settle for an academic approach to our work, as if the whole thing were merely a matter of ideas.

Ideas, of course, are the wellspring of our actions, and so they are critically important. But life in Christ involves far more than the intellectual activity of analyzing arguments on disputed points. Based on the truthful doctrines of Christ, there is a *life* to be lived. There is a sense in which the intellectual part of Christianity is the easy part, so it takes real commitment to push beyond the analysis of ideas to the harder challenge of *implementing* those ideas. Unfortunately, however, we often content ourselves with a merely doctrinal approach to Christ and never develop a real devotion to Christ Himself.

Related to this is a tendency for us to spend most of our time analyzing where *other people* are wrong. There was a time when almost every sermon dealt with the errors of those who were "out there" (outside the church building). Eventually, we started preaching sermons that called for changes in the lives of those actually sitting in the pews, and that was a step in the right direction. But many preachers never take the next step: preaching lessons that call for changes that *they themselves* need to make. If our total concentration is on other people's deficiencies, is it any wonder that our own devotion to the Lord becomes deficient?

(4) We are guilty of laziness and a lack of discipline. Here perhaps is the main reason for our lack of personal devotion. For all of our busyness, we've been lazy when it comes to the activities that would have made us strong spiritually. Unwilling to discipline ourselves, we've taken the course of least resistance. And in doing so, we've drifted into personal weakness and vulnerability to sin.

Some Recommendations

If honesty compels us to admit that our devotion to God is lacking, what can we do? Below are some suggestions. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but simply to illustrate the kinds of things we need to pay attention to.

(1) Unceasing self-evaluation. When was the last time you personally took Paul's advice to "examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5)? Most of us go for long periods without any serious evaluation of our own faith, and when we do examine ourselves it is rarely with much objectivity or honesty.

Yet we can't grow in our faith without the willingness to be honest about our present position. It takes a person of above-average honesty to admit that his own faith is deficient, especially if he has been preaching for a while, but there is little way to grow spiritually without that kind of frankness.

It would be nice if we could find the key to spiritual strength, lock in the right attitude, and never have to worry about it ever again. But that is not the way life works. Spiritual progress requires *constant adjustments in ourselves*, and these adjustments will not be made unless we see that they *need* to be made. So I recommend that you set up regular times for self-evaluation. Don't let many days go by without checking up on your own spiritual condition.

(2) Accountability to others. Since objectivity and self-honesty are so hard, most of us need *help* in seeing ourselves. Like David who needed Nathan (2 Samuel 12:7-9) and Peter who needed Paul (Galatians 2:11), we

need some other trusted person to help us see what we need to see, so that we can make the necessary adjustments.

I recommend that you find some brother who can be a mentor to you or some friend who can meet with you regularly to keep you accountable. As men, we often fail to build relationships with other men that can keep us spiritually honest. As loners and mavericks, we drift away from the Lord (all the while preaching faithful sermons in the pulpit), when a good confidant might have been able to warn us. More openness in our closest relationships—call it “transparency” if you will—is desperately needed.

Specifically, I believe we need to find someone to pray with privately: one or two very close friends in Christ with whom we can pray regularly and honestly. There is nothing quite like praying with a dear brother to motivate us to walk more closely with the Lord.

(3) Keeping God at the center. It should go without saying, but we need to work on keeping God in our minds. It is an amazing thing, but it is possible to expend ourselves completely in the work of God and never really think about Him personally. We become so focused on the “trees” that we lose sight of the “forest,” and so busy with the details of the kingdom that we lose touch with the King.

That is one reason a study of the Psalms is so important for us. In the Psalms, we learn a devotion for God Himself, the God who is at the center of all the other truths in the Bible. But whether it is the Psalms or some other part of the Scriptures, we need to be more God-focused in our study—and in our lives.

(4) Daily devotional discipline. No man’s faith is going to survive, even if he is a gospel preacher, unless he takes time out from each day to engage in the devotional disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship. Whether we do it at the beginning of the day, at the end, or at intervals throughout the day, we simply have to take time for personal growth. Being busy is no excuse for neglecting this discipline. In fact, the busier we are, the *more* we need to take time out.

But mere *Bible study* is not enough. What produces a genuine, vital faith is Bible study *for our own needs*. There is a big difference between studying for a sermon on some subject that someone else needs and studying to fill our own spiritual needs. Many of us have a deficient faith simply because we've never really studied the Bible with any personal purpose.

And when it comes to *prayer*, we need to get beyond the “chit-chat” that characterizes so many of our formal prayers and learn a more honest way of praying. Our faith will begin to grow when we start pouring out our real hearts to God in prayer. If on a given day I don't really want to do what I should, then I need to admit that to the Lord: “Lord, I don't want to. Help me to want to.”

Along with Bible study and prayer, our daily lives also need to be characterized by *worship*. The worship that we engage in at the church building ought to be the overflow of worship—true praise and adoration of God—that takes places in our most private lives every day of the year.

(5) Practice doing the difficult. As busy as most of us are, it's going to be difficult to do the things that will keep us growing. It wouldn't have been easy for the Lord to stay up all night and pray (Luke 6:12) or to get up before everyone else and pray (Mark 1:35), and it won't be easy for us. Like athletic training, spiritual growth requires doing some difficult things. If we aren't used to doing difficult things, then we're going to have to get “in shape.”

“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection,” Paul said, “lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27). And to Timothy, he wrote, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:15, 16).

There is a big difference between studying for a sermon on some subject that someone else needs and studying to fill our own spiritual needs.

It is helpful to “practice” the doing of difficult things, just for the “exercise.” If it would be difficult for you to get up an hour earlier to pray, I suggest that the very difficulty of the thing might be one good reason to do it. As the weightlifters say, “No pain, no gain.” Going to heaven can’t be done from a recliner, and spiritual growth is not going to happen in the life of a preacher who avoids difficulty.

So we must become more disciplined in our manner of life. If we don’t, there is every reason to believe that we will become, as Paul said, “disqualified.”

Conclusion

In short, we must become men of *integrity*. That is, we must be men whose real-world practice is congruent with our Sunday-morning principles, men who consistently walk their talk. Paul urged Timothy to be “an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Our lives, even in their most private aspects, must *exemplify* the principles that we preach. And truly, there is no greater credibility than that of the man who honestly lives the life that he urges upon others. When others can sense that a man is the “real deal”—when it’s obvious that his preaching is simply the overflow of his own private practice—then they will listen with a seriousness that would not otherwise be the case.

So what about you? Are you growing in the faith? When your brethren hear Paul saying, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your *progress* may be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15), do they think of you as a man who is making progress in your own spiritual life?

And what about me? Is my faith genuine? Am I really the person I present myself as being when I’m in the pulpit? And when I preach, am I merely presenting *facts* that I’ve gleaned from books or am I recommending a *life* that I myself am living? If it is not the latter, then I should be gravely concerned and prepare myself either to repent or quit preaching.

As preachers, the impact that we have on others is greatly affected by the genuineness of our own godly fear. If we find that our preaching

has little impact, we need to ponder the words of God to those of shallow faith in Ezekiel's day: "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes" (Ezekiel 36:23).

There is no greater dishonor to God than for His own people to disrespect Him, and there is no greater disrespect than that of the preacher whose personal devotion is merely pretended. May we who preach—*every single one of us*—do whatever it takes, before it's too late, to deepen our reverence and enrich our walk with the Lord.