

Church of Christ

...Heart to Heart ...

Preaching is one of the most difficult things I've ever done! Most only see a small part of the preachers work. You struggle with God's word, studying, praying for insight to see what needs to be taught. You see some, who claim to be in Christ, have little interest, as they seem to sit "boringly" while God speaks, and there is nothing you can do for them. You become the target of some, listening for anything misspoken or stated wrongly so they can correct you. Some constantly complain about others. Some have bad attitudes. You deal with the sick, families in crisis, and those outside Christ with their ungodly actions. You study with people. While some respond to the gospel, most have unbelieving hearts. You get threatened, deal with fleshly brethren who don't even know they are fleshly and watch in heartache as some walk completely away from the Lord. You deal with your own family, trying to help them focus on the will of the Lord and meeting the needs of your mate. Why go through all this just to preach?

My mind goes back to Isaiah, a prophet of God, where he offers to go to the people to get them God's message. He is told that the people's hearts are insensitive, their ears are dull and they can't see where they are headed (Isa. 6:10). Isaiah asks how long he is going to have to teach these people. God informs him, until he devastates most of them (Isa 6:11-12)! What a message to hear as a preacher. Why even bother?

You listen to Jesus' words to the apostles, telling them how they would be mistreated, some of them scourged and killed in the preaching of God's word. Paul is called as an apostle and Jesus tells him that he would suffer much in his preaching. (Acts 9:15-16). Why go through all this?

Paul tells Timothy, the young preacher, you will be persecuted (II Tim. 3:10-12). Brethren will turn on you, some will leave the faith and others will be ungodly in their thoughts. Others don't want the truth but ear tickling. Why would Timothy want to take on the God given role of preaching?

As a preacher, you reflect on all these things. It becomes clear that God needs preaching and teaching of His truth, His word, no matter what people think. Why? Because Jesus died for me when I didn't care and someone reached out with a saving message! You labor and strive because your hope is fixed on the living God (I Tim. 4:10). You persevere because the Lord wants to save. God calls the preaching and teaching, a good fight and taking hold of eternal life (I Tim. 6:12). That's what I want! It's not about personal gain or loss. It's about salvation, eternal life, and a great love for the Lord. It's about fellowship with Jesus and the Father, knowing the blessedness of heaven. Preaching is one of the most difficult things, but the end result will be worth it all. Think about it!!!