

“A PREACHER’S EVALUATION”

II TIMOTHY 4:7-8

INTRODUCTION

AS I BEGAN TO PREPARE THIS EULOGY FOR REV. JUANITA JONES BANKS, I WAS FORCED TO ASK MYSELF A QUESTION: “HOW DO YOU EVALUATE A PREACHER?”

AND I CONCLUDED THAT THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION DEPENDS LARGELY ON WHO IS CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION.

THERE IS ONE STANDARD BY WHICH MAN JUDGES A PREACHER, BUT THERE IS ANOTHER STANDARD THAT THE ETERNAL FATHER USES.

MAN’S EVALUATION WILL, AT BEST, BE SUPERFICIAL, BECAUSE MAN CAN ONLY JUDGE WHAT HE SEES;

BUT GOD, WHO CAN SEE THE HEART, WILL EVALUATE THAT WHICH CANNOT BE SEEN WITH THE NAKED EYE.

IF PREACHERS WERE EVALUATED BY MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION TO DETERMINE THEIR HEAVENLY REWARD, THERE WOULD BE CONFUSION BECAUSE THE DEFINITION OF A “GOOD PREACHER” CHANGES, DEPENDING UPON WHO IS ASKED.

A RECENT SURVEY ASKED SOME CHURCH MEMBERS TO WRITE ONE PHRASE TO DESCRIBE WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD PREACHER.

LISTEN TO SOME OF THE PHRASES THEY USED:

- 1. A GOOD PREACHER MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH OF AN OX;**
- 2. THE STUBBORNNESS OF A MULE;**

3. **THE DARING OF A LION;**
4. **THE WISDOM OF AN OWL;**
5. **THE HARMLESSNESS OF A DOVE;**
6. **THE INDUSTRY OF A BEAVER;**
7. **THE GENTLENESS OF A SHEEP;**
8. **THE VISION OF AN EAGLE;**
9. **THE HIDE OF A RHINOCEROS;**
10. **THE PERSPECTIVE OF A GIRAFFE;**
11. **THE STOMACH OF A HORSE;**
12. **THE DISPOSTION OF AN ANGEL;**
13. **AND ENOUGH SENSE TO KNOW THAT THEY CAN'T PLEASE EVERYBODY.**

WHENEVER MEN EVALUATE A PREACHER, THERE IS ALWAYS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND THE REAL;

THERE IS ALWAYS A CONFLICT BETWEEN WHAT WE WANT AND WHAT WE WILL SETTLE FOR;

IF MAN WERE TO EVALUATE THE PREACHER, HE WOULD ALWAYS COME UP SHORT BECAUSE:

1. **IF THE PREACHER IS YOUNGE, HE/SHE LACKS EXPERIENCE;**
2. **IF THE PREACHER HAS GREY HAIR, HE/SHE'S TOO OLD FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE;**

3. **IF HE/SHE HAS FIVE OR SIX CHILDREN, HE/SHE HAS TOO MANY;**
4. **IF HE/SHE HAS NONE, HE/SHE'S SETTING A BAD EXAMPLE;**
5. **IF THE PREACHER PREACHES FROM A MANUSCRIPT, HE/SHE HAS A CANNED SERMONS AND IS DRY;**
6. **IF HIS/HER MESSAGES ARE EXTEMPORANEOUS, HE/SHE ISN'T DEEP ENOUGH;**
7. **IF THE PREACHER USES TOO MANY ILLUSTRATIONS, HE/SHE'S NEGELECTING THE BIBLE;**
8. **IF HE/SHE DOESN'T INCLUDE ILLUSTRATIONS, HE/SHE'S NOT CLEAR;**
9. **IF THE PREACHER PREACHES THE TRUTH, HE/SHE'S TO OFFENSIVE;**
10. **IF HE/SHE DOESN'T PREACH THE TRUTH, THEN HE/SHE'S A HYPOCRITE;**
11. **IF THE PREACHER FAILS TO MAKE EVERYBODY HAPPY, HE/SHE'S HURTING THE CHURCH;**
12. **BUT IF HE/SHE DOES MAKE EVERYBODY HAPPY, HE/SHE HAS NO CONVICTIONS;**
13. **IF THE PREACHER DRIVES AN OLD CAR, HE/SHE SHAMES THE CONGREGATION;**
14. **BUT IF HE/SHE DRIVES A NEW CAR, HE/SHE IS STEALING CHURCH MONEY;**
15. **IF THE PREACHER RECEIVES A LARGE SALARY, HE/SHE'S IN IT FOR THE MONEY;**
16. **BUT IF HE/SHE GETS A SMALL SALARY, IT'S BECAUSE HE/SHE CAN'T PREACH ANYWAY, AND THAT'S ALL THEY ARE WORTH.**

IF MAN EVALUATES THE PREACHER, IT WILL NO DOUBT BE BY MAN'S STANDARDS.

AS CHRISTIANS, WE SHOULD BE GLAD THAT WE WILL NOT BE JUDGED BY THE STANDARDS OF MEN, BUT BY THE STANDARDS OF GOD.

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD REJOICE IN KNOWING THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL EVALUATE OUR SERVICE IN THIS LIFE; AND WHEN THIS LIFE IS OVER, HE WILL GIVE A REWARD TO THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH.

EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT

LET ME DO AN EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT, LEST YOU GO AWAY AND SAY, "DOC PREACHED A GOOD SERMON, BUT HE DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH THE TEXT."

THE WORDS OF OUR TEXT FOCUSES ON THE APOTLE PAUL AS HE GIVES ADVICE TO YOUNG TIMOTHY ON THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE MINISTRY.

PAUL WROTE THIS LETTER TO TIMOTHY FROM A ROMAN JAIL, AND WHILE WAITING EXCUTION, HE GAVE HIMSELF AN EVALUATION.

PAUL MEASURED OR EVALUATED HIMSELF BY ASKING AND ANSWERING THREE QUESTION.

(I). THE FIRST QUESTION THAT PAUL ASKED AND ANSWERED HIMSELF, WAS, "DID I FIGHT A GOOD FIGHT?"

(A). WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN BY INJECTING THE ADJECTIVE "GOOD" TO DESCRIBE HIS LIFE LONG FIGHT?

(1). IN THE GREEK, THE WORD TRANSLATED "GOOD" IS "KALOS" WHICH MEANS "BEAUTIFUL OR VIRTUOUS."

(2). SO WHAT PAUL WAS SAYING IS, “I HAVE FOUGHT A BEAUTIFUL AND MORALLY PURE BATTLE FOR THAT WHICH IS RIGHT.”

(B). UNIQUE TO HIS STYLE, PAUL ALWAYS REFERRED TO THE BATTLE FOR THE HIGH GROUND AS THE “GOOD FIGHT.”

(1). IN [I TIMOTHY 6:12] HE CALLED UPON YOUNG TIMOTHY TO “FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.”

(2). IN [EPHESIANS 6:12] HE DESCRIBED THIS QUEST AS A BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

(a). HE SAID, “FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES.”

(3). WHEN PAUL SPOKE OF A “GOOD FIGHT”, HE WAS NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT A FIGHT, BUT A “GOOD” FIGHT, WHERE THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IS FORCED TO CHALLENGE THAT WHICH IS WRONG.

(C). TODAY, MORE THAN EVER, THE PEOPLE OF GOD NEED PREACHERS WHO ARE WILLING TO FIGHT THE “GOOD FIGHT” AGAINST:

(1). CORRUPTION;

(2). RACISM;

- (3). **POVERTY;**
- (4). **HOMELESSNESS;**
- (5). **VIOLENCE; AND CRIME.**
- (6). **WE NEED PREACHERS TO LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THIS COUNTRY;**
- (7). **WE NEED PREACHERS TO LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN OUR COMMUNITIES.**
- (8). **WE NEED PREACHERS WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO STAND FOR THAT WHICH IS RIGHT AND FIGHT THE “GOOD FIGHT.”**
- (9). **AND I’M HERE TO TELL YOU TONIGHT THAT MINISTER JUANITA JONES-BANKS “FOUGHT THE “GOOD” FIGHT.”**

(II). THE SECOND QUESTION THAT PAUL ASKED AND ANSWERED HIMSELF IS “DID I FINISH MY COURSE?”

(A). PAUL SAID, “I FINISHED MY COURSE.”

- (1). **BY EMPHASIZING “MY” COURSE, PAUL MADE IT CLEAR THAT EACH PERSON HAD TO RUN HIS COURSE;**
- (2). **HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT EACH ONE OF US HAVE TO COMPLETE OUR TASK IN LIFE.**

(B). PAUL COMPLETED HIS COURSE BEFORE HE RAN OUT OF TIME.

- (1). **HIS MISSION WAS TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH IN THE GENTILE WORLD.**

(2). IN THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS, HE TRAVELED AROUND THE THEN KNOWN WORLD SETTING UP CHURCHES IN THE HOMES OF BELIEVERS.

(3). IN SPITE OF ILL HEALTH, AND LITTLE OR NO FUNDS, HE ACCOMPLISHED HIS MISSION WITH MONTHS TO SPARE TO WRITE YOUNG TIMOTHY.

(C). EVERY PREACHER THAT GOD CALLED IS GIVEN A MISSION, OR A COURSE TO RUN.

(1). SOME ARE JUST LAY-RUNNERS, WHO ARE EXPECTED TO CARRY A CONGREGATION TO A CERTAIN POINT, AND PASS THE BATON TO ANOTHER.

(2). SOME ARE MARATHON RUNNERS WHO ARE GIVEN LARGE ASSIGNMENTS;

(3). BUT PAUL SAID, "I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE."

(4). HE COMPLETED HIS ASSIGNMENT BEFORE HE RAN OUT OF TIME.

(5). IF WE RUN OUT OF TIME BEFORE WE FINISH OUR ASSIGNMENT, IT'S NOT BECAUSE GOD MISCALCULATED, BUT IT'S BECAUSE WE HAVE MISUSED OUR TIME TRYING TO RUN A COURSE OTHER THAN "MY" COURSE.

(6). I'M HERE TO TELL YOU TONIGHT THAT MINISTER JUANITA JONES-BANKS FINISHED HER COURSE."

(III). THE THIRD AND FINAL QUESTION PAUL ASKED AND ANSWERED WAS, "DID I KEEP THE FAITH?"

(A). FOR PAUL, “I KEPT THE FAITH” WAS NOT A ‘TONGUE-AND-CHEEK PHRASE’, USED LOOSELY.

(1). KEEPING THE FAITH MEANT PERSEVERANCE.

(2). IT MEANT KEEPING HIS EYE ON THE PRIZE, EVEN, WHEN OTHERS COULDN’T SEE IT.

(3). IT MEANT KEEPING THE VISION IN SIGHT AND PURSING IT WITHOUT LOSING HOPE.

(B). TODAY, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF PREACHERS WHO HAVE LOST FAITH IN THEIR MISSION.

(2). FRUSTRATED BY STUBBORN CONGREGATIONS, BUREAUCRATIC DEACONS AND TRUSTEES THAT SOMETIMES SOUND MORE LIKE POLITICIANS AND LAWYERS THAN HELPERS OF GOD’S PREACHERS, MANY PREACHERS HAVE THROWN IN THE TOWEL AND GIVEN UP.

(3). SOME PREACHERS CAME INTO THE MISINTRY WITH FRESH IDEALS, BELIEVING THEY COULD DO ANYTHING, BUT ALONG THE WAY, THEY LOST THAT FAITH.

(4). BUT PAUL SAID, “I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.”

(C). KEEPING THE FAITH IS WHAT IS REWARDED.

(1). STAYING CLOSE TO GOD IS THE ULTIMATE END.

(2). THERE WILL NOT BE A REWARD FOR STARTING OUT WITH FAITH, BUT TO THOSE WHO KEEP THE FAITH.

(3). PREACHERS MUST REALIZE THAT IT IS NOT UNTIL THE LAST BATTLE HAS BEEN FOUGHT;

- (4). THE LAST ENEMY HAS BEEN CONQUERED;
- (5). THE LAST FEAR HAS BEEN FACED;
- (6). THE LAST HILL HAS BEEN CLIMBED;
- (7). THE LAST CROSS HAS BEEN CARRIED, THAT WE CAN CLAIM THE VICTORY.
- (8). “THE RACE IS NOT GIVEN TO SWIFT NOR THE STRONG, BUT TO THOSE WHO ENDURE TO THE END.”
- (9). AND I’M HERE TO TELL YOU TONIGHT THAT MINISTER JUANITA JONES-BANKS KEPT THE FAITH.

CONCLUSION

I AM REMINDED OF A CHURCH THAT WAS SEARCHING FOR AN ASSOCIATE MINISTER TO ASSIST THEIR PASTOR WHO WAS GROWING OLD.

THEY RECEIVED A LIST OF IMPRESSIVE RESUMES. BUT AMONG THOSE WHO SHOWED UP FOR AN INTERVIEW WAS A WOMAN WHO WAS BORN IN VALDOSTA GEORGIA BUT RAISED IN JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY.

AND WHEN SHE STOOD BEFORE THE COMMITTEE, THEY ASKED HER, “WHAT ARE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS? WHERE IS YOUR RESUME?”

THIS WOMAN PREACHER OPENED A LARGE BAG AND SAID, “THIS IS MY RESUME.”

SHE PULLED OUT AN OLD “RUB BOARD.” AND PAIR OF “KNEE PADS”, AND A “COMPASS WITH A STONE GLUED TO THE BACK OF IT.”

WHEN THEY ASK THIS WOMAN PREACHER TO EXPLAIN, WITH FIRE OF ELOQUENCE, SHE SAID, THIS “RUB BOARD” IS THE FIRST PAGE OF MY RESUME.

1. IT TELLS YOU WHO I AM.
2. IT TELLS YOU THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD WHO HAS BEEN WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

THEN SHE HELD UP THE “KNEE PADS” AND SAID, THESE “KNESS PADS” ARE THE SECOND PAGE OF MY RESUME.

1. THEY TELL YOU WHAT I BELIEVE;
2. THEY TELL YOU THAT I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER;
3. THEY TELL YOU THAT I BELIEVE THAT PRAYER CHANGES THINGS.

THEN SHE HELD UP THE “COMPASS” AND SAID, THIS “COMPASS” IS THE THIRD PAGE OF MY RESUME.

1. IT TELLS YOU WHERE I’M GOING TO TAKE YOU.
2. THIS “COMPASS” SAYS, WHEN THINGS GET DARK AND YOU CAN’T FIND YOUR WAY, THAT I KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW THE DIRECTION OF GOD’S WORD.
3. IT TELLS YOU THAT I KNOW HOW TO FIND THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I;
4. IT WILL TELL YOU THAT I KNOW HOW TO FIND JESUS.

WHEN THAT WOMAN PREACHER FINISHED, AN OLD MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE STOOD UP AND SAID, “ONE OF OUR APPLICANTS IS FROM HARVARD, AND ANOTHER IS FROM YALE, BUT THIS WOMAN PREACHER, WHO WAS BORN IN VALDOSTA, GEORGIA AND RAISED IN JERSEY

CITY, NEW JERSEY, KNOWS HOW TO FIND JESUS, AND THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.

OH MY BROTHERS AND MY SISTERS, THE WORLD WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS.

SO IF YOU DON'T MIND, LET ME FINALIZE THIS EVALUATION OF THIS PREACHER.

MINISTER JUANITA JONES-BANKS AND EVERY PREACHER WILL BE ASKED:

- 1. DID YOU FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT? (YES) I FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT.**
- 2. DID YOU FINISH YOUR COURSE? (YES) I FINISHED MY COURSE.**
- 3. DID YOU KEEP THE FAITH? (YES) I KEPT THE FAITH.**

BUT MINISTER JUANITA JONES-BANKS AND YOU WILL ALSO BE ASKED:

- 1. DID YOU TELL THE STORY? (YES)**
- 2. DID YOU TELL THEM ABOUT JESUS? (YES)**
- 3. DID YOU TELL THEM THAT HE DIED ONE FIRDAY? (YES).**
- 4. DID YOU TELL THE STORY THAT EARLY SUNDAY MORNING; HE ROSE WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS? (YES).**
- 5. DID YOU TELL THEM THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS, HE'S COMING BACK AGAIN? (YES).**

WELL, SINCE YOUR ANSWER TO ALL OF THOSE QUESTIONS IS YES, YOU HAVE A GOOD EVALUATION. COME ON HOME.

**‘SERVANT OF GOD WELL DONE,
REST FROM THY LOVE EMPLOY,
THE BATTLE IS FOUGHT, THE VICTORY IS WON,
ENTER THY MASTER’S JOY.’**

COME ON HOME AND GET YOUR REWARD:

- 1. COME ON HOME, WHERE THE WICKED WILL CEASE
FROM TROUBLING YOU, AND THE WEARY WILL BE
AT REST.**
- 2. COME ON HOME, WHERE THE MOUNTAINS WILL BE
MADE LOW AND THE VALLEYS WILL BE EXALTED;**
- 3. COME ON HOME, WHERE EVERY DAY WILL BE
SUNDAY, AND SABBATH WILL HAVE NO END;**
- 4. COME ON HOME, WHERE IT WILL ALWAYS BE
HOWDY, HOWDY, AND NO GOOD-BYS.**
- 5. COME ON HOME, WHERE YOU WILL SEE JESUS FACE
TO FACE...**