

Back to Basics: Being Blessed at the Cove

As many of you know I had the privilege of recently attending a pastor's seminar at The Cove in Asheville, NC. This was the fifth or sixth time I have been and I was blessed yet again by through the teaching that was given. Our speaker this time as Dr. Alistar Begg who is Senior Pastor of Cleveland's Parkside Church. He also has a radio and internet ministry at truthforlife.com and is an incredible speaker that I would highly recommend to anyone wanting to hear good solid preaching.

As we were their Dr. Begg began his teaching by saying a few words and giving us the direction we were going in for the day. He told us that he does not do any elaborate training or contemporary themes that engage the culture. Rather what he was going to focus on was getting back to basics. We had three sessions, each of which looked at a the pastor pastor in light of the Scriptures and through them we studied the ministry and focus of a pastor and I must say I was truly blessed to hear again about the work a pastor is called to.

Interestingly 95% of what I heard that day were things I had heard before but it had been so long it since I had been engaged with these teachings it was like receiving a cold cup of water on a hot day. It refreshed and renewed my strength and restored a passion for preaching and the pastoral ministry.

Below I'll give an outline of the lessons of that day but before I do I wanted to bring to light a truth that I was struck with while at the Cove. ***The truth is this, the basics are vitally important.*** As I said before almost none of the things I heard at the Cove were new to me. I knew I needed to preach clearly, preach in a Christ centered manner, and to love people as a pastor and not love the position of pastor. I knew and had heard all this before but I needed to have those truths renewed in my mind and heart because I am a person that forgets. ***You know if we're honest we are all people that forget. That is why we need even the basics of the Christian faith refreshed in our minds, because our human mind forgets, this world in which we live in wants us to forget, and the devil surely wants us to forget the basic things of God.***

Things like the everlasting nature of God's love that does not rely upon what we do, have done, or even our attitude. Things like God loves us regardless of who we are, the ever present opportunity we have to be forgiven from our sins by God and desire God has that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Things like the fact that anytime, anywhere, for any reason we can communicate to our heavenly Father who is all powerful and there is NOTHING that is too difficult for Him. Truths like if we have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior there is nothing in this life to fear because we will spend forever and forever and forever in heaven with God. All these are simple truths that we know but what a refreshing experience to revisiting them and renew them in our minds.

Let me encourage you, as I was encouraged, if you are feeling down and out or weak in spirit, go back to the basics of your faith. The simple rock solid truths that you know are true regardless of who you feel or the situation that you are in. Write them down so you can see them and read them aloud, think about them and what they mean for your life and I know that you will have your faith renewed and be blessed greatly by God.

Outline

Session 1 - The Pastor as Shepherd

Text - 1 Peter 5:1-3

Illegitimate Goals as a Pastor (things we should not want)

- ⌚ to be well known or respected
- ⌚ to have a large church
- ⌚ to attach people to ourselves
- ⌚ to make ourselves indispensable

A business model can never be the church's model for a pastor it must solely be grounded in the Bible

OUR MOTIVE

- ⌚ a desire to feed the flock
- ⌚ what good is a shepherd who does not feed the sheep
- ⌚ John 21
- ⌚ the shepherd is to lead the flock into green pastures - am I doing it?
- ⌚ Is what I am feed - balanced, beneficial, and basic
- ⌚ it is not about did you have fun today but did you learn anything today
- ⌚ the goal is unreserved obedience
- ⌚ as a shepherd we are to be concerned about every sheep

OUR MANNER -

- ⌚ not under compulsion but willingly
- ⌚ eagerly not for selfish gain
- ⌚ tenderly, not domineering but being an example to the flock
- ⌚ Peter - who wrote this - knew what it was to lead and to dominate
- ⌚ beware the big head syndrome

OUR MEANS

- ⌚ Not using human resources but the Spirit of God that rested on Christ that also rest upon us

Session 2 - The Nature and Necessity of Expository Preaching

Text - Nehemiah 8

Richard Baxter quote - "It is no small matter to stand up in the face of the congregation, and to deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plainly, that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest hearts may feel us; and so convincingly, that the contradicting cavillers may be silenced."

3 Things about Expository Preaching

- ⌚ It is framed by and grounded in the text of Scripture
- ⌚ It pays careful attention to the type of text it is
- ⌚ expository preaching seeks to fuse the two horizons of the biblical text and the contemporary world

Session 3 - The Primary Performance of our Pastoral Duty

- ⌚ We need Spiritual wisdom and understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel
- ⌚ We need to experience the power of truth in our own souls
- ⌚ We need to have skill in dividing the Word of God correctly
- ⌚ We need spiritual discernment of the congregation
- ⌚ We need zeal for the Glory of God and compassion for the souls of men

*“We need to preach the Gospel to ourselves everyday–
if we don't we will become a liar or a lunatic” -- Alistair Begg*