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A WORD FROM TRUETT

Many of our churches today are engaged in full-scale “worship wars,” and there are casualties on all sides. We should do well to remember to teach our people that worship patterns have always changed. God left plenty of room for flexible application of biblical principles across time and across cultures.

How is your church doing? What might God say about your worship? Would his word be something like this, as songwriter Jaime Owens suggests:

“My people, when you gather to worship Me, do it in the nature of how I have revealed Myself to you in Scripture. It doesn’t matter if the place where you meet is not aesthetically beautiful. Your pianist doesn’t even have to play all the notes, and the choir doesn’t have to sing all the harmonies perfectly. It doesn’t matter if your group is small. You don’t need spotlights, and you don’t have to have a state-of-the-art sound system. You don’t have to worry about appealing to the world with what you do, because when you worship Me in light of who I am, I will be with you and I will bless you.”

That is a wonderful promise indeed. We need to lay down the sword in church and rejoice in His presence no matter what form worship takes.

From *Making Your Small Church Great*, p. 112

A SERMON

Title What To Do With Life’s Burdens

Text Gal. 6:1-5; Psalms 55:22

Introduction A seminary professor used to say to his students, “Young men, be kind to everyone because everyone is having a bad time.”

Hard times are a part of life. We all have burdens and heartaches. We need to learn what to do with them. The scriptures tell us:

I Some burdens are to be shouldered. “Every man must bear his own burden.” Some loads we must carry alone.

II Some burdens are to be shared. “Bear yours and other’s burdens.”

III Some burdens are to be shifted. “Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you.”

Conclusion Some say Christianity is nothing but a crutch—yes, but who’s not limping?

LEADERSHIP AND WISDOM

From “Wisdom for Ministry,” *Christianity Today*, November 2003, p. 75

- The Church must be prophetic or it will be pathetic.
Rev Cecil Murray, quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*
- The Church’s lack of clarity about its mission results in lack of clarity related to the role of its clergy. Lack of clarity about expectations means that no matter what they do, pastors come under attack or not do something quite different.
Howard Rice, *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*
- What must die in every pastor is the subconscious desire to please people. What must not die is the will to love. There’s the risk.
David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring*
- Perhaps the most central characteristic of authentic leadership is the relinquishing of the impulse to dominate.
David Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*

ILLUSTRATION

Where do you go when you have a question that needs an answer these days? The Internet, of course. Here are some questions found on the Internet and published in the *Write File Quarterly*, Woodville, Ontario, Canada:

- Why do you need a driver's license to buy liquor when you can't drive and drink?
- Why isn't phonetic spelling spelled the way it sounds?
- Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?
- If you're in a vehicle going the speed of light, what happens when you turn on the headlights?
- Why is it when you transport something by car it's called a shipment, but when you transport something by ship it's called cargo?
- Why is it that when you're driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on the radio?

QUOTES

- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them. Anonymous
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you don't have a leg to stand on. Anonymous
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane. Anonymous
- Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live. Herschel Hobbs

PASTORING

Bruce Larson wrote a book about missions in his church, and the first person that he mentioned was a woman who sacked items in the grocery store. She said that she prayed for everybody who walked through that line and whose groceries she sacked. She took this as a ministry for God and an extension of the kingdom of God. Too many times when we think about ministry, we think about somebody passing our bulletins or taking the collection; in a sense, that is ministry, but it is in-house. What we need is to get people to say and be, in reality, God's people out in the marketplace. Every Christian needs to feel that he is a missionary and has a calling to the place where they work or live or spend their leisure time.

Lloyd Ogilvie tells of going to the First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, Calif., and finding that inwardly the church was strong with lots of people coming, but no real vitality. He took his leaders on a retreat to answer his four questions:

- 1) What kind of people does it take to change the world?
- 2) What kind of church does it take to produce those kinds of people?
- 3) What kind of leaders does it take to produce that kind of church?
- 4) What kind of staff does it take to produce those kinds of leaders?

It changed his church. These are the questions every pastor needs to be asking himself and his people.

One of the problems with American Christianity is that we have come to think too much of the church as an institution. That is, it is something I go to with a leader to listen to. But the church needs to be seen as a mission. It is a body of Christ working out in the world.

The question is, "Where is the church on Monday?" It is down on the car lot or at the supermarket wherever your people are working. The issue is how to keep that mission before your people.

REMEMBER

George W. Truett Seminary is a Christ-centered, Bible-based seminary committed to our historic Baptist principles. Our vision is to be the premiere Baptist theological seminary of the world. Our mission is to serve the churches by training the next generation of ministers and missionaries.



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