

## The Preacher, the Deacon, and the God Above All – I Peter 4:10-11

### I. Introduction:

- A. I will begin with a horrible illustration, which I pray will never take place in any of our lives.
1. Your family doctor thinks you have a rare, fatal medical condition, and he gives you several options.
  2. You decide to attack this disease head-on with the latest and best treatment, which may not go down the standard medical pathway.
    - a. **But**, are you going to heed your auto mechanic who believes that a new engine oil might cure you?
    - b. Or are you going to stop with your grand-daughter's faith in magic fairy dust?
    - c. Your neighbor heard, while scrolling through the internet, that a liquified form of octopus liver might do the trick. Should that be your plan of action?
  3. I am talking about **your life**, and about **your death** if something isn't done soon.
  4. Under those circumstances, shouldn't you talk to someone who has the confidence which comes with years of successful experience in treating this disease?
- B. There are a **lot of problems** and **situations** in life which **require experts**.
1. And when it comes to **spiritual things**, these experts are as important as they are in medical problems.
  2. How does someone become an expert in the things of God?
    - a. By becoming immersed in the Word of God – the inerrant, inspired, preserved Word of God.
    - b. I'm not talking, necessarily, about Bible school and seminary.
    - c. I'm talking about being filled with the Holy Spirit and with the scriptures which He has given to us.
  3. I don't think it would be wise to trust your eternal soul to an illiterate farmer who talks about eternity, or even history, after looking through a transparent stone while wearing special glasses.
  4. No one should listen to a message of salvation from sin, spoken by a man who appears to be an expert in sin for all the wrong reasons, and who is purportedly continuing his education therein.
  5. We must not trust our souls to someone who isn't sure that what God has revealed to us about our souls can be fully trusted.
- C. I often put articles in our church bulletin which were written by people who I don't quote from the pulpit.
1. I use their material because in that article or statement, they have said something to which I agree.
  2. But I don't want to leave the impression that every thing, or even most of what they teach, are correct.
  3. A case in point was a statement I included in last week's bulletin.
  4. A well-known, & often quoted preacher, stated that people sometimes criticize his **boldness** in preaching.
    - a. He said that he hears objections to the **authoritative** way he speaks.
    - b. His reply was, *"I don't know any other way to speak (about the Bible).*
    - c. *If you ask me if I like a brown shirt or a blue shirt, I don't care.*
    - d. *Or if you ask me if I prefer this particular meal or that particular meal, I might not care.*
    - e. *(But ) if you ask me what is true about the Word God, I will speak boldly."*
- D. In **verse 11**, Peter points to two varieties of Christian service, describing how that service is to be performed.
1. It goes back to what that preacher was saying in our bulletin article.
  2. And it goes forward to the glorious end of all things – all that any of us do as Christians.
  3. *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*
  4. This morning, let's think about the preacher, the deacon, and the God who is above all.

### II. **"If any man speak, let him speak as the ORACLES of God."**

- A. In the Bible, the word **"oracles"** is always used in a positive way.
1. But the false religions of the Greeks and Romans had their oracles as well.
  2. And without using the word, we see Biblical references to some of those heathen oracles.

3. An **“oracle,”** by definition, was some thing or someone acting as a medium through whom advice or prophecy was sought from the gods.
  4. One Biblical example would be the demon-possessed woman in Philippi, Macedonia in **Acts 16.**
    - a. Indwelt by an evil spirit, she was used by her handlers to squeeze money from the foolish people who sought her advice.
    - b. Her masters advertized that she was an oracle, or a medium, through which the gods would speak.
    - c. It was only a half lie: she really did channel the messages of a demon.
    - d. But when the demon was driven from her by the power of Jehovah, she had no power to make her owners any more profit.
- B. In contrast to false or make-believe oracles, when the Bible speaks of oracles it is always in a positive way.
1. In **Romans 3**, for example, Paul said that Jews had been blessed for centuries, because **“unto them were committed the oracles of God”** – a reference to the Hebrew scriptures, through which Jehovah speaks.
  2. In **Hebrews 5**, Paul taught that all of God’s people ought to be familiar with the **“first principles of the oracles of God.”**
  3. Besides other scriptures, here, Peter says, **“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.”**
- C. How many times have you spoken to someone today?
1. To how many people have you said a few words this morning before our church service started?
  2. Speech is one of the things which sets man apart from the animal world, and most of us use it constantly.
    - a. We can speak; we can communicate, sharing ideas back and forth; we possess words.
    - b. The average 8-year-old has a vocabulary of 10,000 words, and most adults have three times that many.
  3. If I didn’t speak to my wife, within the first ten minutes of our day together, she would think that I have had a stroke. Speech is a very common thing among us.
  4. But obviously, the apostle is not talking about ordinary speech, when he says, **“IF any man speak...”**
  5. We all speak. It’s not a matter of **“if;”** it’s all about **when** and in **what way.**
- D. Peter is talking about the **public ministry** of the Word of God – the teaching and preaching of God’s Word.
1. The Greek word he uses is usually translated **“to speak,”** but on some occasions it is translated **“to preach.”**
    - a. However, I will say that it is not the only word rendered **“to preach.”**
    - b. And one of the best would be **“euaggelizo (yoo-ang-ghel-id’-zo)** – to evangelize or to preach the gospel.
  2. We might say that this verse is talking about preaching or publically sharing **any aspect** of the counsel of God, not limiting it to the good news of salvation.
- E. When the Lord Jesus was beginning His ministry, after a few miracles He came to Capernaum.
1. When the people heard that Jesus was in their village, they flocked to the house where He was staying.
  2. **“And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that here was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them.”** That is the same word as **“speak.”**
  3. **Acts 8:25** uses both Greek words, and they are both translated **“preached.”**
    - a. The people of Samaria begged Peter and his friends to stay and to give them the oracles of God.
    - b. But **“they, when they had testified and preached (shared) the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel (evangelized) in many village of the Samaritans.”**
- F. Again, what is it that Peter tells us in this first epistle?
1. **“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.”**
  2. Every once in a while, I ask one of the men in our church to teach or preach.
  3. On that occasion your speech becomes something more than casual conversation and chit-chat.
  4. The Holy Spirit through Peter is telling you, to preach as one of the oracles of God.
  5. Take your subject and text straight out of the divine Word of God, not some theological text book or philosophical dissertation.

6. And make sure your subject is something about which you are absolutely confident is true.
    - a. Don't preach your doubts and speculations about the Word.
    - b. If you must talk of speculations, save them for private discussions, or don't even bring them up until you have more confidence about them.
  7. We need to be like so many of the Old Testament prophets when they said over and over again, *"Thus saith the Lord, thus saith the Lord."*
  8. When people stand behind this lectern, the average Christian becomes an extra-special servant of God.
  9. And at that point, *"let him speak as the oracles of God."*
- G. And this morning, I am speaking as God's oracle when I tell you that if you refuse to repent and to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.
1. That is not speculation. That is not my opinion. That is straight from the heart of God through His Word.
  2. *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,"* and the *"wages of sin is death."*
  3. *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."*
  4. **But** if you *"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt be saved"* – forgiven, regenerated and sanctified.
  5. I can speak boldly in saying these things, because they come from the Bible, the revelation of God.
  6. Do not... Do not cast aside the words of God's oracle.
  7. You will be examined and judged by the omniscient God for how you hear and receive His Word.
- H. The second thing in this verse about which Peter exhorts us is:

### III. *"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth."*

- A. The word *"minister"* is a translation of the word which is often transliterated – *"deacon."*
1. A deacon is a minister or a servant.
  2. In the early days of the church in Jerusalem, there was a need for deacons to serve among the church members in secular things, like distributing food to the Christian widows and orphans.
  3. In that case the deacons were a specific group of seven men.
  4. They held one of the few special offices within the church.
- B. But Peter is not talking about a special church office with a select group of men.
1. We find the same word in **verse 10** that we find in **verse 11**.
  2. *"As every man that received the gift, even so minister that same one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
  3. Every man – every Christian – as been given abilities from the Lord – gifts and talents.
    - a. It might be the ability to preach or teach – two separate and important gifts.
    - b. It might be singing or playing the harp or harpsichord. It could be signing to the deaf.
    - c. Then again it might be something like the heart and the time to spend in fervent prayer.
    - d. Some people have the wonderful ability to comfort someone who is grieving – perhaps because they have grieved themselves.
    - e. I haven't learned the skills necessary to prepare a casserole to feed the hungry children of that grieving mother, but perhaps you have.
  4. To one servant the Lord has given ten talents, while to another five, but to some only one.
  5. *"As every man that received the gift, even so minister that same one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
- C. I will try not to re-teach the lesson we gleaned from **verse 10**, but I will say once again with Peter – *"do it."*
1. Whatever several abilities the Lord has given to you, use them for God's glory.
  2. We have looked at both Jesus' *"Parable of the Pounds"* and His *"Parable of the Talents."*
  3. The servants who chose not to invest their Lord's gifts were punished.
  4. It didn't matter what their excuse was. As Peter says, *"even so minister the same one to another."*
  5. Don't talk about doing it – do it. Don't exhort one another about doing it – do it.

6. Do it as if it is something which the Lord has given you as His special ambassador and steward.

7. *"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which GOD giveth."*

D. Most of us know what it is to have been given something from a close loved one.

1. It might be a little trinket, a useless ornament or a piece of cheap jewelry.

2. It may have no intrinsic value whatsoever, but it is valuable to you because of the one who gave it to you.

3. It's the giver who makes it valuable and important.

E. Peter is talking about gifts given to you by God out of His treasury of manifold grace.

1. Someone may look at that gift and suggest that it has no real value.

2. He may even convince you to agree with him.

3. But I ask you: from whom did it come? Who gave it to you?

4. *"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which GOD giveth."*

#### IV. *"That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

A. I know that this is something to which I have pointed frequently.

1. But I'll also point out that there is good reason: here it is once again in God's authoritative Word.

2. If you have been saved – if you have been delivered from the punishment which your sins deserve – it was not so you might feel good about yourself. Which, of course, you may do.

3. But primarily, the Lord has saved you for His own glory and honor.

4. *"Ye are bought with a price" in order to "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

B. Again, God redeems sinners like us, first and foremost, for His honor and glory.

1. And He gives gifts to people like us for the same reason.

2. Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

a. *"Lord, what little light, and what meager works?"*

b. He replies, *"The talents and pounds which I have invested in you."*

3. Later Jesus said, *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."*

a. *"Lord, how can we bear fruit in your name?"*

b. Again, He says, *"By properly investing the seeds which I have given you."*

C. Some Christians think that unless they do something large and outstanding, they can't bring the Lord proper glory. That is not correct.

1. Large or small, whatever is done for the Lord is important to Him, and that is the primary thing – Him.

2. *"As every man that received the gift, even so minister that same one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

3. The Lord asked **Moses**, *"What is that in thine hand?"* He replied, *"It's a rod."*

a. God then said, *"Use that rod to glorify my name before Israel and the Egyptians."*

b. **David**, what is that in thine hand? It's just a slingshot, Lord. *"Well, get to work and bring down my enemy."*

c. **Mary**, what do you have there? It's a vessel full of ointment. *"Use it to highlight my death and burial."*

d. **Elijah**, what is that draped over your shoulders? It's my old worn out mantle, Lord. *"Use it to divide the river and to call your successor."*

e. **Noah**, what is that in thine hand? It's just an old hammer. *"Well, let's put it to use & built something."*

4. O Lord, I don't have ten talents or even five. God replies, you have what I have given to you. Use it.

5. *"As every man that received the gift, even so minister that same one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

6. And why are we to put these talents to use?

7. *"That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

- D. Why do I authoritatively declare the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
1. So that God the Father might be glorified.
  2. He will be glorified in the salvation of souls, like yours.
  3. He will even be glorified in your rejection of His message of grace. But He will be glorified.
- E. And speaking about Jesus Christ: to **Him** *“be praise and dominion for ever and ever amen.”*
1. I can tell you with all the authority of the oracle of God, that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
  2. I know that for a fact, because God has told us, that you shall one day bow down before the Son of God, whom you may reject today.
  3. You may despise the thought that He could be your Lord and Saviour, but you will one day admit that He is the Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father.
  4. He shall be given **praise** and **honor** throughout eternity, by those who worship Him today.
- F. In addition to that praise, He will be given **dominion** for ever and ever as well.
1. These last words of **verse 11** sound very much like something poets and theologians call a *“doxology.”*
  2. There are several of these throughout God’s word.
  3. One of them, Paul shares with us toward the close of his **first epistle to Timothy**.
  4. Listen carefully, Timothy, *“keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:*
    - a. *Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*
    - b. *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and **POWER** everlasting. Amen.”*
  5. The word *“power”* in **I Timothy 6:16** is Peter’s word *“dominion.”*
- G. The God/man who gave His life on the cross, will soon display all power and authority over His creation.
1. He who shed His blood to redeem a bunch of unworthy sinners, will one day have complete dominion over all things.
  2. And He will say to them on His left hand, *“Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”*
  3. But to those on his right hand He will say, *“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*
- H. On which side of Christ Jesus, do you stand at the moment? Right or Left?
1. Are you in love with Jesus, or do hate the thought that He can send you to Hell?
  2. Are you trusting Him for your eternity, or are you trusting yourself, which you already know to be a mess.
  3. I exhort you, based upon the authority of God, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*
  4. In addition to that, God’s oracle declares that if you reject him, you shall spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.
  5. Won’t you humbly come to Christ today?