

“We are not, as so many, adulterate the Word of God, but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God” (2 Cor 2:17)

“The Word of the Lord was rare in those days!” (1 Sam 3:1). This was one of the darkest periods in the history of the people of Israel. I am afraid those days are upon us again. We have more preachers and hear more sermons now than any time in the history of the Church. But where is the “message” of the Lord?

The rarity of the message of the Lord in our modern pulpits can be first attributed to *money*. The message of God in general is clearer and more definite from the mouths of preachers who are materially poorer than those who are affluent. Three snares which have fatally trapped many servants of God are gold, girls and glory. Riches top the list of these three. Manipulating people to milk money from them has become commonplace. A young boy swallowed a coin. A little girl standing nearby shouted, “Send him to that preacher. He can get money out of anybody!” Matthew Henry (1662-1714) that great Bible Commentator warned, “Preachers must not be afraid of the rich!”

Excessive desire for *miracles* is another reason which hinders the message of God. For many centuries the traditional Christian ministry literally excluded miracles of healing. The renewed interest in the gifts of healing has taken us to the other extreme. This overemphasis of the healing ministry has corrupted the content of the pure gospel. The loss is dual. We neither have miracles (as expected) nor the message. Both in His own ministry and while commissioning His disciples the Lord Jesus stressed healing the sick. But we shall do well to notice that it was **FIRST** preaching the gospel and only then healing the sick. A leper saved but not healed can go to heaven; but a sinner healed but not saved cannot!

Billy Graham (1918-) does not pray for the sick in his Crusades. But there’s little doubt that more people have made decisions for Christ in his meetings than collectively from scores of healing crusades. The secret? He has a message. Of the greatest prophet who had the spirit and power of Elijah it was said that, “John performed no SIGN—and many believed him there” (Jn 10:41,42). He had a message! Thomas Walker who laboured in Tirunelveli, Amy Carmichael in Dohnavur, Thomas Ragland in Sivakasi and Mother Teresa in Calcutta were not outstandingly miracle workers. But their message stays resounding to generations.

Father God,

We worship You as the Eternal Word. We worship Your Son as the Incarnate Word. We thank You for the Holy Spirit who has given in our hands the Inspired Word. Thank You for calling us and commissioning us to proclaim Your Word and spread its message everywhere.

We thank You, O Lord, for Your Word which converts the soul. We thank You for Your Word which makes wise the simple. We thank You for Your Word which makes our hearts rejoice. We thank You for Your Word which enlightens our eyes. Help us, O Lord, not to dilute or adulterate Your Word which is right, pure, clean, true and righteous altogether.

Almighty God, we pray for those of us who are *Evangelists*. Help us never to forget that it is the Gospel, and not stories and our experiences, which is Your power for salvation to those who believe. Fill us, O God, afresh with Your Holy Spirit so we may proclaim the message without fear or favour. Help us not to be intimidated by persecutors and opposers, but keep proclaiming the Gospel faithfully even if it would mean death.

O Lord, Shepherd of our souls, we pray for those of us who are *Pastors*. Help us to always keep in mind that those under our shepherding care are Your own sheep. Help us to feed them regularly in green pastures and lead them to clean waters. Let our love for You and Your sheep keep growing. Enable us, O Lord, to overcome all temptations in our own lives, so we may teach our congregations how to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Let's be role models for holy living.

Father God, we pray for those of us who are *Preachers*. Help us to stay faithful to Your Word whenever we climb on pulpits. Let us not add or alter or avoid anything from Your Word. Keep our minds away from money-consciousness. Help us not to exhibit any pomp and show on the pulpits, but always remember that we are representatives of the humble Carpenter of Nazareth! Keep us always dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, and not on our physical stamina or intellectual power or oratory skill. Let not our aim be to impress the audience but inspire the hearers to live all out for You.

We ask these things in the Name of Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen!

*(Rev 19:13; 1 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:21; Mt 28:19,20; Psa 19:7-11; Rom 1:16,17;
Acts 5:40-42; 1 Pet 2:25; Psa 23:2; Jer 23:28,29; Rev 22:18,19; Dt 4:2; 12:32)*