

PREACHING YOUR OWN FUNERAL (Luke 17:10)

Brethren, whether we like it or not, the reality is that we do preach our own funeral. The following text makes it clear that there are things which God commands of us; "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

This lesson is not intended to crush our spirit, but to provoke serious thought. There is a burden I want to place on you; namely, if you died yesterday, you have preached your funeral. You are only candidly reading your sermon, and by your actions in life, this is what you have told the preacher of that occasion to say!

The audience? Your family, your brethren, your friends, those closest to you in life are there in your death.

Preacher, Tell How I Responded
to the Love of God When I
Learned I Was a Sinner

The Bible teaches us that the time comes in life when we all sin (Rom. 3:23). Thankfully the grace of God has provided His Son to pay the penalty of sin for those who obey Him (John 3:16; Hebrews 5:8-9). This obedience - a response of love (John 14:15) - includes hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17), repenting of our sins (Luke 13:3), confessing His Son before others (Romans 10:10) and being baptized for

the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It is then we are saved and added to His church (Acts 2:47).

Tell them that...

- I loved God, kept His commandments and became His child
- I loved the praise of men more than God so I refused to obey Him (John 12:42)
- I mocked God and His Word

If you obeyed God and became His child, then the preacher can tell about your life in Christ. If you did not, you have left the preacher with very little to say or comfort others with beside their hope, for you had rejected any for yourself (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Preacher, Tell Them About
My Worship

God has given us the acts of true worship:

- Prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:15-16)
- Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
- Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29)
- Giving (2 Cor. 9:6-9)
- Preaching (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 4:17)

Tell them that I engaged in worship:

- Completely
- Selectively, participating only in those things I wished to
- As a social hour

Tell them I was a:

- Full-time worshipper
- Part-time worshipper
- Occasional worshipper

Remember, you have already demonstrated your attitude toward worship, we are just reading what you have said by your actions.

Preacher, Tell Them About My
Manner of Life

The Bible teaches us to put spiritual things first (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-3; Matt. 6:33; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Among those things that enter our lives are family, friends, church, home, money, play, sports. Where were your priorities?

Tell them that to me, spiritual things were:

- First
- Second
- Third
- Somewhere

Now, those who are attending your funeral know you best. Where have you shown them your priorities are?

Preacher, Tell Them About My
Work in the Church

When we enter the church we come to a place of labour (Matt. 20:1-16). We are laborers together with God (1 Cor. 3:9), and we are required to bear fruit (John 15:1-6).

Tell them that:

- I Looked for areas to labour
- I was ready when asked
- I played "catch me if you can"
- I never decided where my talents lay

Preacher, Tell Them about My Love for the Brethren

There is a love that is absolutely required among members of the church (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:14-18; Heb. 13:1).

Tell them that my love was seen when:

- I called and visited other members
- I called only when I was asked to
- I was always ready for an invitation
- I invited others into my home
- I only saw brethren at the building
- I had a "hi" - "bye" type of love

Keep in mind that genuine love for the brethren is not in word and tongue, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).

Preacher, Tell Them About My Knowledge of the Scriptures

The commands to study and grow are not in doubt (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 5:14).

Tell them about my study habits, that:

- I was a serious student
- I was a semi-serious student
- I studied only when I needed to prove a point
- Well, no one ever asked me to teach, so I didn't need to study
- I helped support a preacher so I did not need to study

Preacher, Tell Them About My Spiritual Influence

Good or bad, all of us have an influence whether we like it or not. God wants us to have a positive influence (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15).

Tell them that for my family:

- I showed them the way to heaven
- I was not the best influence for the people that I love the most
- I hindered them from heaven

Tell them that my family and friends:

- Saw Christ living in me
- Heard me tell them about the church of Christ
- Had my influence to hurt the church

Preacher, Tell My Loved Ones

- That I went into paradise and I am waiting for them
- That I love them, but please do not follow my example
- Plead with them to know and serve God, but leave me out of the discussion

What kind of assurance could the preacher give to those who are left behind? You realize that it will make no difference in regard to what might be said, or left unsaid on that occasion; you will have preached your own funeral sermon for all to see!

The good news is that you did not die yesterday! If you are not living as you should, turn it around and make the funeral you preach a different one!

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International Bible Studies
Tract Series