

How to Fire the Preacher



By Pastor Jack Hyles



"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me." —Isaiah 6:6-8

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." — Acts 2:1-3.

I love preachers. In the front of my Bible I keep a list of the number of preachers who hear me in every service across the country. Every time I preach, I write down the number of preachers in the audience. In the United States and Canada, I thank God that I have been able to speak to 4,095 different preachers as far as I know this year.

I always want to preach to preachers. I love preachers. No one in America needs loving like the preacher does. Let me say this: The greatest thing in this world is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm not asking for your sympathy, but for your fellowship and your loyalty.

There are some preachers in this service whose hearts are broken. In this conference one preacher said to me, "Pray for me."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I won't be there long unless a miracle takes place."

I said, "How does it stack up?"

He said, "Two to one against me."

I asked, "Why?"

He said, "I have been preaching against sin and trying to clean up the church and get folks to walk right."

I know preacher after preacher in this area who has decided to stand for God, but whose heart has been broken and who is tottering tonight on his job. One of these days Jack Hyles and some others who have preached here will step aside for some of you fellows who have had smaller crowds but who have dared to stand true; who have lost your job, and lost your church because you have dared stand for God. I love the men of God.

A few years ago I was in Winston-Salem in one of these conferences. Dr. Rice was preaching and I was sitting on the front row. Bud Lyles was leading the singing. Bud asked the preachers to sit in the choir. About 45 preachers came. Now I haven't a bit of use for a pussy-footing, back-scratching, ear-tickling, rose-water, pink tea-and-lemon-aid preacher. But I love the men of God who stand for the Bible. There's nothing I would rather do than be a blessing to preachers. I wish the Lord tonight would let me skin some of you old preacher-killers so you would ask God to forgive your sins and keep that Hell-fire-and-brimstone preacher behind your pulpit. I wish God would same some preacher tonight from a wicked and untoward congregation, and if need be, save a church tonight.

When I looked at those preachers in the choir, I said, "God bless them." Out of about 45 preachers there, there wasn't enough hair on all the heads to cover one good-sized head! Isn't it amazing what God can do with a little lump of clay. Seven out of 45 had on green ties with navy blue suits! Praise the Lord for them. God bless the preachers!

You don't know how much the preacher needs the help of the lay people. Let me say this too: The problems in this country could be solved with preaching. There is not a problem we have--from the juvenile delinquency problem all the way up and down--that couldn't be solved with a generation of preachers. The only vocation in the world that has a large segment of our people listening to them every week is the ministry. There is nothing in the world this country needs more than a generation of Elijahs and Isaiahs to preach the truth to our people.

"But," you say, "they won't like it."

Who in the world ever said they were supposed to like it?

In this same Winston-Salem conference we were having testimonies one afternoon. One lady jumped up and said, crying, "I want to thank God. I guess I am the only lady here who was saved under her own preaching." Dr. Rice looked up rather startled, and all of us were waiting to see what would happen. She said, "I used to play church when I was a little girl. One would lead singing, one would preach, and one would give the invitation. The next day we would change and do something different. One morning it was my time to preach. The only kind of preaching I had ever heard was Hell-fire-and-brimstone

preaching. I was a little six-year-old girl and I preached, 'All of you younguns had better get born again or you're going to burn in Hell.' "

She said, "All of a sudden it dawned on me I had not been born again. I stopped the preaching, went back to the back of the room, came down the aisle, and got converted under my own preaching!"

God deliver me from these teacher-type preachers. Now I believe you ought to teach. But brother, preaching is teaching with a tear in its eye. If we don't have some preaching again in the Chicago area, we are gone. Listen, if the deeper life conferences would save America, we would be in the millennium right now! All some of you folks do is get the Bible and study it like a math book while the world goes to Hell. If we don't get some old Hell-fire-and-brimstone, Hell-raising, sin-fighting, Christ-honoring, soul-winning, evangelistic, Bible preaching in Chicago, WE'RE GONE! I like what the old Pentecostal preacher said down South. Instead of saying, "God called me to heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cast out devils," he got his tange all toungeled up and it came out, "God has called me to heal the dead, cast out the sick, and raise the Devil." That's what we need in Chicago.

If some of you preaches would raise more devil on Sunday morning, your deacons would raise less devil on Saturday night. We need some Elijahs who have been with God, and who will pray down fire from Heaven, who are on fire. We need some John Wesleys who will say, "I just set myself on fire and folks come to watch me while I burn."

We need some Isaiahs whose lips have been touched with the coals from off the altar, and they are on fire for God. We need some Emmaus apostles who said, "Our hearts did burn within us while we walked with Him." We need some preachers and we need some pulpits on fire with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But," you say, "I'm not a preacher. What can I do?" You have no idea how much you could do. How many times have you preaches gone to your study, gotten on your face (nobody knows how much a preacher who loves the Bible pours his soul out alone) and said, "O God, do something for me. Do something for me. Do something for the people." Then you come on Sunday morning and the crowd is dead, or folks stayed home, or they are on the lake fishing or some went home after Sunday school. Some are hoping you will get through right quick, and some are sound asleep. I'm just saying, you don't know what you can do for a preacher dear friends. YOU CAN FIRE YOUR PREACHER. If you would fire him, you wouldn't have to fire him. If you would set him on fire, if you would spend as much time praying for him as you do criticizing him and use the same amount of words, you would be surprised what it might do for him.

People help make a preacher. Dr. Hershel Ford said that preaching is simply pouring back in a flood what you get from the people in a vapor. many a preacher started out in his twenties to preach the truth, but broke on the anvil of some old hard-headed, bull-headed deacons who wanted to see how many preachers he could ruin. As I look back at my ministry, a great deal of what little success I have enjoyed I owe to those godly people who down through these almost seventeen years have stuck by this little preacher.

I recall dear Sister Waldrop who used to sit over on the right, who sang so beautifully. She was almost four times my age. She used to call me and say, "Pastor, I need some advice." I used to think she really needed it, but now realize she just wanted to make me feel I was her pastor. I thank God for those people.

I. ONE ACCORD

You ask, "Preacher, what can I do?" First, you can be in one accord in one place doing one thing. One accord--that will fire your preacher. In one place--that will fire your preacher. All doing the same thing--that will fire your preacher. We ought to be in one accord behind the preacher.

Now if you have one of these little preachers who doesn't believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, if he says this Bible is not inspired literally, every jot, every tittle, every word in the original inspired of God; if he says it is only thought inspired, FIRE HIM! If you can't fire him, get out. Some folks say, "But Granddaddy is buried in the cemetery behind the church." Well, dig him up and take him over to another cemetery. I am sick in my soul of people dying in a cold, liberal, dead church because a tombstone is in the back yard. If you can't fire the liberal, then get out of his church and go where somebody can preach the Word of God to your family.

I have some statistics about preachers, put out by Mr. Gallup. how accurate they are, I cannot say. he said, "In America, in our country only five per cent of our ministerial students believe the creation story of Genesis. Only 24 per cent believe the miracles of the Bible. Only 26 per cent believe the Bible is the Word of God. Only 25 per cent believe in the virgin birth." This is Gallup talking.

"Only 11 per cent of our young preachers believe in Hell. Only 11 per cent of our young preachers believe in Heaven. Only 18 per cent of our young preachers believe in the literal resurrection of Christ. Only 13 per cent of our young preachers believe in the depravity of man. Only 21 per cent of our young preachers believe that God hears and answers prayer."

With an area and a country and a world infested with men who do not believe this Book, let me say this: If you have a man behind your pulpit who believes in the Bible, who preaches the truth, who fights the Devil, who is not scared of a member he has in his church, who will preach what God says preach, in God's dear name, forget how he combs his hair and back him up! (Many preachers' hearts are broken because they don't have a wave in their hair.) Why could Peter stand up on Pentecost and preach in power? Because the people were in one accord. Stay behind your pastor in his preaching.

Moses' hands were heavy in the battle with the Amalekites, and Aaron and Hur were on his side. They lifted up his hands and the battle was won. When they let down his hands, the battle was lost (Exod. 17:10-13). If you have a preacher who preaches the truth of God every time he gets in the pulpit, when he walks out in the pulpit, you say, "Dear Lord, thank you that in my pulpit, preaching to my children, is a man who believes the Bible is the Word of God and fights sin and exalts Christ and wins souls to Christ." Stand behind him.

When I first started preaching down in East Texas, the chairman of my deacons was L. G. Eaves, Sr. When I stood up that night to preach my trial sermon in that little country church, I looked out and saw a man who had one leg and a sawed-off crutch (I didn't know then he was chairman of the deacons). He would put that leg out ready to put it down when the preacher said something good. The first time I said something good, which was about 30 minutes after I started back in those days, he put that old foot down and shouted "AMEN." That shook me up. I almost did not get back on my subject. Revival broke out in that little country church. We only had seven prospects, but 27 consecutive Sundays folds were saved. One Sunday we had people saved and joined the church who lived 80 miles from each other. One lived 40 miles down this way on a little country road; the others lived 40 miles up this way. The people used to say, "Let's go hear that little preacher out there, that little loud-mouth fellow."

But one of the main reasons under God there was success and revival was because God gave some faithful country people who would walk with God and stand behind the preacher. I was in Texas preaching, J. B. Combest preached mere than I did. he almost preached me to death. If he was hot, he would say more words in a sermon than I did! I would preach; he would say, "That's right. Amen! Oh, that's what it says in the Book. Oh, preacher, let 'em have it! Hey, pull over and park there for a little while." J. Harold Smith was preaching one night in our church, and he said, "I'm like Jeremiah. Sometimes I get so full, I just can't contain myself. I just get so full sometimes, I can't hold it in."

Old J. B. said, "Then, preacher, LET IT OUT!"

Ah, those people were behind the preacher. Some of you fellows holler like Comanche Indians at a football game but sit like wooden Indians on Sunday morning. We need once again some people on Sunday morning who, when the preacher walks in the pulpit, will realize that God's man is coming into God's place, and who will sit expectantly and prayerfully while he preaches and give him a good old loud AMEN once in a while. I hope I'll wake up some of you deadhead deacons in these churches around here and teach you how to say amen. You say, "It just ruffles my nerves." It's not that that ruffles your nerves, but that old Hell-fire-and-brimstone preaching that ruffles your nerves.

One little fellow said to me when I when I first came to Hammond, "My wife cannot come to hear you preach. Your hollering disturbs her."

I said, "It's not my hollering; it's what I holler that disturbs her."

Listen, if all you want is a sedate, high church service on Sunday morning, get the obituary column and become a traveling funeral director. You won't find a thing in the book of Acts about your so-called high church service on Sunday morning.

Back up your pastor in his preaching. Say "Amen" every once in a while. If you want a preacher who really cuts loose and preaches, then help him along occasionally.

A fellow told me about a church in Arkansas that had a sermon committee. I said, "What kind of a committee is that?"

"Well, they have a committee of three people that checks on the preacher's sermon. The preacher gets the sermon up all week, gives it to the sermon committee on Saturday. The sermon committee reads it and approves or rejects it, then gives it back to him." He said, "Boy, that's terrible, isn't it?"

I said, "I have the same thing."

"Oh, not you! Not you!"

I said, "Yes, me."

He said, "A sermon committee?"

I said, "A sermon committee."

He said, "That tells you what to preach?"

I said, "One that checks on my sermons."

He said, "How many are on it?"

I said, "Three--GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY GHOST."

One of my deacons said to me once, "Brother Hyles, about your sermon Sunday morning...."

I said, "Hold on there! When we paint the ceiling, you get one vote. When we put new pews in, you get one vote. When we build a building, you get one vote. But when I preach, you don't get no votes."

I have told my deacons many a time, "From here to here and all the way over to here (the pulpit), IS MINE. Leave it alone." Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if God once again would raise up some prophets and some people who would follow them.

Can you feature those old settlers, Charles G. Finney, Jonathan Edwards, Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday, kow-towing to a bunch of worldly folks? Sam Jones said, "When I first started preaching, I used to be afraid I would make somebody mad. Now I'm afraid I won't."

Back him up in his preaching. Somebody is always saying to me, "Brother Hyles, I like to have an evangelist come to my church so he can say some things that the pastor can't say." I would resign and quit preaching if I were you. Brother, there's not an evangelist in America who can say anything in the First Baptist Church of Hammond that I can't say. And if I couldn't say it, I'd quit. I think prophets ought to be prophets, and preachers ought to be preachers. And listen, your folks would love you for it. One good thing about old Hell-fire-and-brimstone preaching is that the folks who are right with God love it. and the folks who are not right with God need it, so let them have it! PREACH! You people stand behind the preacher. And you deacons leave him alone.

I promised God on my knees when I started preaching, "I'm not a great preacher, but one thing I won't do, dear Lord, and that is to let anybody tell me what to preach."

If God would give us people who would go to the preacher before he preaches and say, "We really need it this morning; let us have it; preach the Word," it would set some preachers loose.

Let me say this. Pray for him. You will fire him by praying for him. The loneliest person in your church is your pastor. The only person in the church who cannot pick up the phone and call some friend and ask them over for dinner is the pastor. The only person in your church who has no one to call when he goes to the hospital or is seriously ill is the pastor. The only person in your church who has no pastor is your pastor.

One of the saddest things in my life, and yet one of the sweetest things, was the day when it dawned upon me on my knees in a pine thicket in East Texas that I had no pastor and would never have a pastor. My little wife and I got on our knees beside a ditch under a pine tree in East Texas and opened our Bible and we said, "Dear Lord, we don't have a pastor. We're going to have to depend upon You."

I am not asking for sympathy, but for loyalty and fellowship on the part of you who follow up preachers. Pray for us. You don't know where we are. You wake up at night some night and toss and turn at 2 o'clock in the morning. Your pastor might be at the hospital leaning over trying to tell some poor dying lose man how to be saved. Your pastor might be at the funeral home trying to console some family. He might be traveling through the air somewhere at night trying to get to the next preaching appointment the next morning so he can help somebody else to get on fire for God. Pray for your pastor.

At 2 o'clock in the morning in Garland, Texas, I was burdened. We were having all-night prayer in those days, and I decided to go down and pray at the church for awhile. We had a prayer room. When I got to the prayer room I heard someone pray, Dear Lord, bless my preacher. I love him. Lord, I would be on my way to Hell if it were not for him. He taught me about Jesus and prayed for me and preached to me and...Lord bless the pastor." I stood outside the door about 15 minutes and listened to that dear deacon call my name in prayer. You think that didn't put some fire in my bones?

Never a little boy or girl comes up to me and sits on my knee and says, "Brother Hyles, I pray for you every night," that there isn't a thrill goes through my heart. Oh, pray for the preacher. Fire him. Pray for him. Every time the family kneels to pray, pray for God to bless the preacher. Pray for God to turn him loose, and pray for God to set him on fire. Pray for the preacher. A lot of preachers here need it desperately tonight.

I was in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, preaching at one of the largest churches in Ontario. When I finished, I went upstairs to the pastor's study. The pastor, a godly man, and I were talking about the service. Somebody knocked on the door. We waited just a second, then we continued talking. In the middle of a sentence the knock came again. All of a sudden, the door burst open and in came a big fellow about 6 foot 2. He draped himself across that preacher and said, "Preacher, I'm sorry."

And the preacher said, "Sorry about what? What's wrong?"

"I have been criticizing you. I haven't loved you. And I would be going to Hell if it weren't for you. I ought to be shot for criticizing you."

Ah, some of you can criticize everything about your preacher--the way he walks, the way he stands up. If he hollers, he hollers too loud. If he doesn't holler, he doesn't holler enough. Brother, if you have a bellowing foghorn like my folks have, bless God, he bellows the truth. And if you have some little quiet fellow who talks in a real quiet voice and preaches the truth and fights the Devil and hates sin and exalts the Savior, stick with him. Set him on fire. Encourage him.

II. ONE PLACE

Not only that, but they were all in one accord, in one place. If you want to set your preacher on fire, be faithful. We have a lot of "use-to-was-ers" in our churches, "has-been-ers" and "gonna-do-ers" and "used-tobe-ers." I want some "doin'-now-ers." Be faithful.

Someone asks, "Brother Hyles, what kind of folks would you like to build your church on? Rich people?"

"No."

"Talented?"

"No."

"Well-to-do?"

"No."

"Socially acceptable?"

"No."

"Nice looking?"

"No."

"Young?"

"No."

"Old?"

"No."

"What is the one attribute that you would rather have in your members than any other single attribute?"

The answer is one word: "Faithful." If you want to set your preacher on fire, you be there.

Do you know what I'm going to do for some of you ladies some time? I'm going to ask you to invite me over to eat, and I'm going to tell you what I want. I want fried chicken, and T-bone steaks, and boiled ham, and any other meat besides those you want to fix will be okay. I want pecan pie, and banana

pudding and mashed potatoes and gravy. I want you to spend seven days getting the house ready. On Monday fix the meat; on Tuesday, the dessert. I want you to work hard. Then I'm going to call you about 12:15 on Sunday and say, "I hate to tell you this but company just came in, and I haven't seen them in a long time. I know you'll understand." I want to listen to you fume on the telephone!

Well, I prepare my sermons just like you prepare a meal. I already have the diet cooked up that I am going to feed my people in the fall. When a preacher on his face seven days a week prays for God to give him power and prays for God to give him a sermon, and he very carefully and in detail prepares his sermon, and because Aunt Susie comes in, you don't show up, no wonder your preacher is not on fire for God. You be faithful.

Mamma used to say, "Son, we can't give as much as anybody, but we can be there as much as anybody." Every Sunday morning and every Sunday night since I was a little boy, I have been in church. Wife and I were married in North Carolina in the service. I was in the paratroopers. We lived a mile from the church. One night it came a gullywasher--lightning, thundering electrical storm. We didn't have a car, we didn't have an umbrella, we didn't have a raincoat, we didn't have rubber shoes or anything. I said, "Sweetheart, the dear Lord understands. We can't go to prayer meeting tonight. Look at that raid outside."

She said, "Of course we can't get out in that kind of weather to go to prayer meeting."

I had never missed before or since, since I was a boy. It's amazing when folks say, "I'll try to come," how many times they will be there if they try. I have been trying to be there for years and never missed but one time, and I didn't try then.

"Let's just stay here," my wife said, "and have a prayer meeting ourselves." So we prayed about 30 seconds and listened to the radio the rest of the evening (as you do).

You say, "I can worship God on the creek bank just as well as I can in church." Yes, but you don't. That's why you didn't send your tithe in when you went fishing that Sunday.

Back to my story. We went to bed about 9 o'clock and slept till 10, 11, 12, 1, 2--and about 3 o'clock in the morning I thought a tornado had hit or an explosion. I went one way and the wife went the other, and the cover went still another way. My wife was over in this corner and I was over in the other corner. I looked and there she was, with a pillow on one shoulder and a quilt draped over the other. She was a sight. She had meringue on her face and hardware in her hair--a sight to behold! She looked over at me and I was in a terrible fix. The bed had broken down in the middle of the night. There I was over here and there she was over there. She looked up and said, "Let's go next Wednesday night."

I said, "I'll be there."

Brother, I haven't missed since! I believe in faithfulness to God's house and God's program. That preacher of yours deserves your faithfulness. Set him on fire.

You people don't realize the burdens a pastor has. You don't realize the times your pastor goes in a side room at the funeral home and cries his eyes out in order to get it over with so that he can go in and conduct a funeral service of some precious baby or someone he loves like his own life, with his heart broken. He wants to cry, but he can't cry. he goes and cries his eyes out and gets it over with, then walks in the pulpit with dry eyes. you don't understand that.

Some of you folks have pastors who are having a rough time. You can't know the times he cries himself to sleep at night. You don't understand it. You wait sometime until you have hundreds and hundreds of people on your shoulders. Here's one going away from God; here's one going back into the world; here's a home broken up; and all day long you do nothing, nothing, nothing, but counsel with homes that are breaking and counsel with boys and girls whose lives are ruined. You wait someday, and then some little old fellow criticizes you because of the way you drive your car down the street. You'll want to kill him. I'm saying, in God's name, if you have a man of God, support him. Pray for him. Be faithful, in one place.

III. ONE PURPOSE

I hasten to say: in one purpose. They were all in one accord, in one place, and they prayed, and the power of God filled the room where they were sitting, and cloven tongues like unto fire came upon them. Peter was sitting over here, and he said, "Man, I'd like to preach. Boy, I've been praying these ten days, and look at that crowd gathering. O boy, something is burning inside my soul."

That's the kind of preaching we need. Fellows who can't shut up! The rulers said, "Fellows, you can't speak anymore in the name of Jesus."

They said, "Well, hurry up and tell us whether we can preach or not, because we're going to preach anyhow. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard."

Peter said, "I've got to preach." All of a sudden he got up and said, "Men and brethren, harken unto my words." Boy, he was on fire! Why? Because people were there for one purpose, and that was to pray down the fire of God and get people born again. Listen, do you want to set your preacher on fire? Then get out tomorrow and win about three souls to Christ, and right before he preaches Sunday morning, you walk up and say, "Brother Pastor, may I speak a word to you before you go in the pulpit, please?"

The pastor says, "Yes, may I help you? Who's mad at me now?"

And you say, "Nobody I know, Pastor, but I've got some people sitting out there I won to Christ yesterday, and they're going to walk the aisle this morning."

After he revives, he will be a great preacher that morning. Do you want to set him on fire? You just say, "We'll live and we'll eat and we'll sleep this matter of soul winning." You go up to the pastor and say, "Pastor, pray for my folks! They're out there in the service this morning. Oh, I want you to pray that God will save them this morning. Pray that the Lord will reach them for Christ." Oh listen, one purpose, just one purpose.

I must close. I think back to that little song leader at the Morris Chapel Baptist Church. We only had one deacon and 19 members in a little old country half-time church. God bless old Deacon Wood Armstrong. On vacation a few years ago I drove back to the little church, and they were without a pastor.

I saw Wood outside beside the road, and I said, "Hey, Mr. Armstrong!" He didn't know me; I was double the size I was when I was his pastor.

He said, "Yes Sir?"

I said, "I understand you are a deacon up here at the Morris Chapel Baptist Church?"

"Yes Sir."

"I'd like to apply."

"Well, we have a man in mind."

I said, "Forget about him. You've never heard anybody until you've heard me."

He looked at me and his eyes bugged out. "Sir, we don't believe--"

I said, "Believe, nothing. When you hear me, you'll forget every other preacher you have ever heard in your life." I said, "HIRE ME!"

He said, "Well, we haven't heard you yet."

I said, "I'll guarantee me."

He looked at me, and said, "Are you Jack Hyles?"

I said, "Yes, I'm Jack Hyles." He hugged me. But I recall those days. The wife and I would go out 100 miles from home, with no place to eat. We would walk out and shake hands with the little old crowd of 19 members as they walked out the door. A fellow would walk out and say, "Would you like to---"

I would say, "Yes, yes, yes?"

He would say, "Would you like to pray for my family? We're having trouble."

Old Wood would be the last one out. He'd say, "Well, Brother pastor, if ye ain't got nowhere else to go, you can always eat black-eyed peas at our house."

And I'd say, "Well, a--well, now are you sure? Now--I'LL GO, I'LL GO." God used that little man to fire his preacher. how I thank God for him!

I would just like to say without elaborating that the people in our church who are hearing me preach tonight are among the most faithful, loyal people I have seen. They stood by me when they didn't know me well. By faith, they stood by this preacher. I'll be eternally grateful, for whatever success ever happens on the corner of Oakley Street and Sibley Street in Hammond, Indiana, will be because of some

loyal, faithful people who stood by a man of God. I'm saying, my precious friend, if you have to die for your preacher, do it.

While in a revival campaign in Mesquite, Texas, I cut loose one night on fishing on Sunday. I didn't know the chairman of the board of deacons had taken some deacons fishing the Sunday before, and this was Monday night. I preached nearly a whole sermon about it. One of the deacons was going to whip me the next night. He said, "I'll get that little preacher if it's the last thing I do." And he could have gotten me well, too.

The next night I walked out and was scared stiff. When I walked out I didn't even look at the people. Finally I peeked --and saw the sweetest thing. Across the front were some of the deacons of the Miller Road Baptist Church in Garland, Texas. One of them came up and said, "Preacher, we heard you were in trouble. Just motion when you need us."

Man, I was mean that night! Boy, I tore them up! Why? Because the people had fired the preacher. You folks who want to call a committee to fire the preacher, you might fire the preacher right.

This is not a part of this sermon, but I want to use it. When I was in Texas, God gave us one of the sweetest members I have ever seen. His name was James W. Moore. He had been preaching for fifty years up around Iowa and Illinois. He was 72 years of age when he came to our church in Texas. His health was broken. His hair was as white as the snow. Brother Jim and Dorothy will recall how we used to put a platform rocker over here on the side so Brother Moore could sit comfortably every Sunday. He had preached his voice out. All he had was a little squeaky voice. We always said down where I came from if you weren't hoarse on Monday, you pussy-footed on Sunday. Brother Moore preached and preached, and finally he came to our town and retired. His health was gone. Every Sunday night he would sit over on the left. Never will I forget the night Georgie Havens came to our church, Brother Moore almost shouted. He would clap his little hands while I would preach. Oh, he would stir me. He would come out after the service and say (he knew all the great preachers by name in the last generation), "That's a good sermon there, Paul."

I'd say, "Paul? I'm Jack."

"Oh," he would say, "I thought you were Paul Rader there for awhile the way you preached this morning."

The next Sunday he would come out and say, "Amen, amen, amen. That's a good sermon there, Billy."

I would say, "Billy?"

"Aw, that's right. You're not Billy Sunday, but you just preach like him."

And I would love him and pat him on the back. Often on Monday he would walk in the office and our secretary, Mrs. Holland, would say, "Brother Hyles, Brother Moore is here to see you." About 9 o'clock every Monday morning he would walk in.

Sometimes I would say, "Tell him I'm busy."

She would say, "Brother Hyles, are you sure that's what you want me to tell him?"

I'd say, "Send him in." And that dear little old preacher, stoop-backed, long flowing hair, would walk into my study. Here's what he would say, "Brother Jack" (never looking at me), "I just came by to tell you about a mistake I made when I was a kid preacher. Foolish mistake. Thought I'd tell you about it."

He'd tell me, and oddly enough, it was always the same mistake I had made the day before in my preaching. But he would never criticize me. he would never tell me that I had made a mistake. I would hug him and say, "I get you. I know what you mean."

He would leave. I loved him and he loved me. never once did he criticize me. One night about midnight on Sunday, the telephone rang. I had gone to bed. A lady said, "This is the nurse at the local hospital. An old white-haired man is here. He's dying with a heart attack. All we know is that his name is Moore and he keeps crying, "Brother Jack, Brother Jack, Brother Jack."

I got up, put my suit on over my pajamas, and went down to the hospital, and down to his room. I asked the other fellows there, and the nurse, to leave. he had an oxygen mask on his face, and I could tell he was dying. I felt his arm. There was no pulse to be felt. he looked up at me, and said, "Brother Jack, I just want to tell you about a Bible Conference I want you to have. I want you to have Dr. Roberson, Brother Roloff, and so and so and so and so. I'm going to go Home now. I'm going to see Paul and Peter, and Elijah and Isaiah. Is there anything you want me to tell them?"

I said, "Well, tell them I am on my way. I'll be there."

After we had talked awhile, as if he had planned it that way, he reached up and took the oxygen mask off his face and placed it over on one side of the bed. He reached out and took my hand in his old cold hand in death, and looked up at me just like he had made a plan to do it. In one last breath he said, "Brother Jack, Brother Jack, keep--preaching--it---." He put his right hand over his heart, and his left hand formed a cross over his breast. He put his chin next to his breast. I heard angels' wings and the angels said, "Would you please step out." We have a job to perform." I slipped out in the hall, and heard the rustling of angels' wings as they took that great old spirit over to the other side of Jordan and put it in Jesus' hands. After they had taken the spirit across, the angels took their flight.

I went back into the room and said, "Dear Lord, help me to die lie that. And help me to keep preaching. Help me to keep preaching it."

The only hope we have is that some preachers, some prophets, some men of God, will preach the truth.

An old man, traveling a lone highway, Came at the evening cold and gray, To a chasm deep and wide. Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim, For the sullen stream held no fears for him. But he turned when he reached the other side, And builded a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," cried a fellow pilgrim near, "You are wasting your strength with building here; Your journey will end with the ending day, Any you never again will pass this way.

"You have crossed the chasm deep and wide. Why build you a bridge at eventide?" And the builder raised his old gray head: "Good friend, on the path I have come," he said, "There followeth after me today A youth whose feet will pass this way.

"This stream, which has been as naught to me, To that fair-haired boy may a pitfall be; He, too, must cross in the twilight dim-- Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

God give us some preachers, fearless preachers, prophets of God, John the Baptists, Nathans, Elijahs, Isaiahs, Jeremiahs, Haggais! God give us some prophets who will preach. And God give us some people who will fire them while they preach.