

Today's Anointing

I bear on my body the marks [stigma] of Jesus. **—Galatians 6:17**

Most of us do not want the feeling of being irrelevant. We want to feel that what we have to say relates to the present scene, that we are equipped for what is needed today—in short, that we have today's anointing. The most horrible feeling in the world must be that one is yesterday's man or woman, once used but not relevant now.

The task of every generation is to discover in which direction our sovereign Redeemer is moving, then to move in that direction. I can think of nothing worse than for God to be at work and for me not to see it, for His anointing to be on someone's ministry and for me not to recognize it.

The trouble is that we all have an inclination to believe “the old [wine] is better” (Luke 5:39). For example, we like what is familiar, the old hymns or songs we became accustomed to, the old style of preaching we grew up with. In a word: where there is no stigma (offense)—no mark of the Lord.

The first church I pastored was in Palmer, Tennessee. Although I came from the hills of Kentucky, where the preaching style was often loud and emotional, I did not develop a preaching style that was popular then. It didn't matter whether there was any content in your sermon; a certain style largely determined whether you were acceptable. They called it the “holy tone.”

When I took the pastorate, that is the style the people were used to—and wanted. They honestly equated the style with the anointing. It was the “old wine” to which they were accustomed. For all I knew, perhaps in a previous era, truly anointed men developed that manner of preaching. But by the time I was around it was only a form of godliness with no power. And no stigma.

Many of us are very happy if God is so kind as to “do it again” as He has done it before. In this we are happy. For this we are quite ready. Why? Because there is little stigma here.

We want to avoid any stigma when it is outside our comfort zone. “What will they think? What will they say?” But today’s anointing is totally missed by looking over our shoulders, probably more than by any other factor.

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