

Voices: D.L. Lowrie: Simply a God-called, Bible-rooted, Spirit-filled preacher

November 25, 2019

The inaugural National Preaching Conference presented by the Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary hosted a number of nationally known preachers.

The [*Baptist Standard*](#) story captures the content and spirit of this wonderful convocation, and we all are grateful to Baylor, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, and Dean Todd Still, faculty and staff for giving us this rich blessing.

The historic First Baptist Church of Waco was filled with powerful biblical preaching—and preachers seeking faithfully to deliver God's message to their people week by week. All the guest proclaimers connected and communicated effectively in their presentations.

But, as the Holy Spirit speaks uniquely to each listener's spirit, I was touched particularly by Dr. D.L. Lowrie's message.

Dr. Lowrie was recognized by Truett at the conference as the inaugural recipient of the Paul Powell Award in Preaching for his lifetime of service to Christ. His three Baptist preacher sons and their families were in the congregation to help us celebrate this faithful servant's witness.

A master preacher at work

As pastor emeritus of the First Baptist Church of Lubbock, Dr. Lowrie now is in his seventh decade of preaching the Scriptures. He deftly wove

personal testimony, exhortation and pastoral encouragement into a moving sermon on the mystery of God's call to preach, rooted in God's word proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He took a simple text and conveyed its exposition with humility, simplicity and power.

There were no homiletical tricks to dazzle the congregation; no ruses of ego to manipulate the hearers; no cheap, gratuitous and obligatory denunciations of someone else's sins—a common temptation for preachers today trolling for an easy 'Amen.'

Only an old preacher's faithful witness, his fidelity to Holy Scripture and his trust that nothing else is needed for the announcement of a gospel that is "the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes."

The simplicity of masterful preaching

It occurred to me that Dr. Lowrie's model of pure, uncontrived preaching used to be a staple of Baptist ministry. Preacher, pulpit, Bible. Now, such simplicity and integrity of proclamation is all too rare in today's church.

Now, plexiglass lecterns, PowerPoint projections and self-help bromides have replaced the incarnation of the message of God for the people of God through the authorized calling of the Spirit-filled man and woman of God.

There is so much glittering paraphernalia cluttering up the preaching event today that we are distracted from the center of gravity of the text.

How do we know the preacher is telling the truth? How do we know this speech has authority? How can we tell if the preacher believes it? Really believes it?

The writer Walker Percy once said the only thing separating the novelist

from the void is a Scripto pencil. That is partially true for the preacher, too. Except the message already has been written. All we have to do is trust it, submit ourselves to it, deliver it.

What the Holy Spirit does with preaching

I had the privilege of serving Second Baptist Church of Lubbock while Dr. Lowrie served First Baptist Church, our mother church, of that Texas town. As a young preacher, I routinely was blessed by my elder's remarkable preaching ministry, and I was touched by his respect for his greenhorn young colleague. It is most fitting that Baylor's Truett Seminary honor him with their first Paul Powell Award in Preaching.

A group of young preachers had an informal audience with Karl Barth at the dusk of the great theologian's long and storied career. They asked him to leave them with a simple word of counsel for their ministries. He pondered a brief moment and said, "Step forward and announce that God has met all humanity in Jesus Christ. Then step back, and see what the Holy Spirit can do with that."

We saw Tuesday night in that gorgeous old sanctuary what happens when God's word is liberated from the confines of contrivance, deeply trusted by the messenger, and humbly delivered to the people.

We saw what the Holy Spirit can do with that.

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