

A Stop by Quiet Waters

Dick Germaine

“Pastoring, A High & Holy Calling”

Dear Friend,

My Bible reading has recently taken me to the book of Ezekiel where in chapters 40-48 the prophet unfolds the remarkable vision God gave him of the new temple and the renewed land. Knowing this prophecy goes far beyond the return from captivity I turned to the NIV Application Commentary for further insight. Iain M. Duguid concludes with these words:

“The danger for Israel throughout the Old Testament was that they would become more interested in settling down and owning property than in seeking after God. That danger applies similarly to us, for we too can become more interested in possessing the earth, or at least a little part of it, than in inheriting the land. We long more for a rich, comfortable, easy life than for a dynamic spiritual walk with the Lord and a powerful witness to his glory and grace.”¹

We pastors feel the magnetic, seemingly irresistible pull of our culture to give in, go along, join the pursuit of the things constantly and alluringly being set before us. To resist and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness is an unrelenting struggle marked by both success and failure, victory and defeat. There is hardly a day goes by that I do not pray at least once, “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.” It is incalculably difficult to be the bearer of a vision of a “better land,” and a “more rewarding life,” to those satiated with both the toys and philosophies of a man-exalting, Sovereign God rejecting, anything goes culture. To speak of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus leading to holiness, self-denial, seeking the kingdom of God above all else, being content with what one has, truly loving our neighbor as ourselves, and judgment to come does not make us popular with the culture, oftentimes not even with our own congregations. But battle the temptations in our souls and speak out against these things we must. When our Lord spelled out what it meant to be his disciple John wrote that, *“Many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”* ^{John 6:66}

Like the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament, pastors have been called to be, *“Ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”*² Ours is a high and holy and life-consuming calling which must never be viewed as merely our job, or even as our profession. In the eyes of Almighty God we are not professionals, we are redeemed, Spirit-empowered pastors called to proclaim salvation through faith in Christ and to shepherd the flock of God. We are likened to soldiers who don’t get entangled in civilian pursuits, athletes who compete according to the rules, hard-working farmers who will receive the first share of the crops. Duguid goes on to say:

“This world is not our home, we are simply exiles here, resident aliens whose hearts are elsewhere. This world’s judgment on us is not what counts. What counts is God’s judgment on us and the glorious inheritance that he in his mercy and grace has stored up for us... As we wait, we are to live lives completely centered on the new covenant temple, Jesus himself.

¹ The NIV Application Commentary, Ezekiel, Iain M. Duguid, page 551

² 2 Cor. 5:20 English Standard Version.

*Such lives revolve around the powerful worship of the awe-inspiring God, the living presence in our hearts of Jesus Christ our King, and the life-giving activity of his Spirit in our lives."*³

My dear brother/sister pastor, though you are tempted to give in and just go along with the culture don't do it! Though you may get weary from time to time, never give up! Though you may feel alone in your labors never cease! Though you find the world laughing at your strange, Bible-centered view of life never let it go! Through the years I repeatedly reminded my congregation that all our methods were up for grabs but never our message! It must never change no matter what laws are passed, what pronouncements are made, what ridicule is given us, what accusations are made against us! Remember the words of the Apostle Peter, "*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*" ^{1 Peter 4:12-13}

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith!"
Heb. 12:1-2.

PS. *If the Lord spoke to you with these words, please send them along to your fellow pastors, friends, and lay leaders for their encouragement. If you received this from a friend and would like to receive it yourself, free of charge, click on this link and sign up. We make no other use of the e-mail addresses we receive for Quiet Waters.* <http://www.barnabasministriesinc.org/contact.htm>

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 15 Stewart Street
 Hopkinton, MA 01748

³ The NIV Application Commentary, Ezekiel, Iain M. Duguid, page 551