

Bon Appétit

Jeremiah 3:15: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

As I enter my 48th year of ministry, these words of the Lord to Jeremiah are particularly meaningful. It should be the goal of every true pastor to feed the people that have been placed under his care. There is this sublime symbiosis that binds the heart of a pastor to his people and it ought to result in the spiritual maturity of those who are thus fed the knowledge and understanding of God's word.

If we may now carry the metaphor of "feeding" to its literal connection, we liken the preacher to a chef preparing a meal. This preparation must begin at the market where the choicest of meats and vegetables are sagaciously chosen. The scrupulous culinarian visually inspects every food element of the ensuing banquet so as to maximize the prospects of a successful feast. Once the selections are made the chef rushes back to his kitchen where he artfully applies his considerable skills of readying, trimming, seasoning, and baking to produce a meal that will please the palate while nourishing the body. A chef de cuisine takes great pains not only in the preparation but also in the presentation, employing garnishes and decorations to stimulate the appetite and add visual appeal to the table.

Sermon preparation follows a similar course. The minister of the Word must search the scriptures and choose doctrinally sound themes from which to assemble the "meal" for his congregation. "Strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12) "seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6) is the Bible recipe for teaching that nourishes and edifies. A balanced and varied fare is critical to the maturation of the believer and so the Bible with its plethora of themes and styles must be expounded in its entirety from Genesis to Revelation. But let the preacher always present this glorious Word in an interesting manner, garnished with enthusiasm and power, lest the recipients complain as in Numbers 11:6: "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna".

So let the hungry children expectantly gather at the table with plates full of the meat of God's Word. Let them eat to the full "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" and with "knowledge and

understanding”.

Have a blessed week,

Pastor