

AVOIDING PASTORAL BURNOUT

TEXT: *Num.11:1-29*

THESIS: To point out the problem of "Preacher Burnout" & the biblical RX for avoiding it.

INTRO.: A. During the 40 yrs of Moses leadership of Israel in the Wilderness years, we regularly read of the people murmuring against God or God's man. Then we see either God threatening to kill the people with Moses interceding or Moses asking God to kill the people with God cooling Moses off.

B. In this chapter, Moses & the Lord are angry with the people (v.10) & *Moses is praying for God to kill HIM! (v.15)* He has reached the stage of "**PASTORAL BURNOUT.**"

ILLUS.: Have YOU ever been there? Maybe you haven't asked God to kill you, perhaps you have asked him to chasten the people or asked for God to call you to a place where the people appreciated you more. Or maybe you asked God to call you to some foreign mission field where people flock to take tracts, Bibles & walk miles & sit for hours to hear preaching. Or maybe you asked God to take you out of the ministry or even to speed up His timetable for the Rapture!?!?

C. But God didn't kill ALL the people. And God didn't kill Moses. In fact Moses survived his bout with "**PASTORAL BURNOUT**" for he continued to lead the people into the Promised Land for about 38 more years.

TRANS.: If we discover how Moses survived His ministry crisis, the principles will help in "**AVOIDING PASTORAL BURNOUT**" ...

I. THE LOAD OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: v.10-13

A. Often Overwhelming:

1. Surely no mere human can carry such a load: "...the burden of all this people upon ME..." **v.11**
2. Moses echoes the complaint of any real man-of-God in v.12,13 when he evaluates the need vs. his personal resources. cf. **v.21,22**

ILLUS.: Often the leader is criticized for not having calloused hands, but he surely has calloused knees. He may not have an aching back, but he will often have an aching heart. He may have more flab than flex, & he may not have bulging biceps, but he must carry big burdens!

B. Surely Supernatural:

1. A mere man could not be expected to carry such a load, but a God-called man must do so.
2. God calls mere men, not archangels or seraphim to the ministry & if, as we preach, God's calling is His enablement, He must have a plan to help us do supernatural work. (He does!) **v.23**
3. He doesn't diminish the load, He simply increases our strength!

TRANS.: But before we look at the secret of "**AVOIDING PASTORAL BURNOUT**" let's shift from **the LOAD** to the...

II. THE LONLINESS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: v.14 "alone"

A. The Leader Is Often Lonely: "**alone**"

1. Moses is beginning to get insight into the true nature of leading many.
2. Though he is surrounded by millions of people, and even has an assistant Pastor (Joshua) & a Chaplain (Aaron) he is still alone!

ILLUS.: No one is more lonely in the congregation of his own people than the Pastor. There is no one in the assembly he can really share all his burdens with. (*He must be careful sharing them with his wife so she doesn't get discouraged and burn out with him!*)

For the spiritual leader the hymn "*No-one understands like Jesus*" could have been written "*No-one understands BUT Jesus.*"

B. The Leader Need Never Be Lonely:

1. Moses is talking to Someone here!
2. He is the One to Whom we must go to share the burden.
3. But Moses is flesh & blood & God is spiritual; Moses must deal with the people & their burdens daily, God only shows up on occasion...usually in emergencies!

TRANS.: God is about to lift the LOAD & LONLINESS of spiritual leadership...

III. A LOOK AT SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: v.17

NOTE: God sees His man trembling under the load & loneliness of leadership God hears Moses plea for help (v.15). God's answer to Moses is His answer to us today. Increase the number carrying the burden. Share the resp. & burden of leadership. Note Moses statement in v.29. God desires the number of Spirit-empowered, burden-carriers to be multiplied.

A. The Secret: **v.25 "the Spirit..."**

1. Sharing the burdens: **"the 70 elders"**

NOTE: Moses was still in charge, he simply delegated some of the work-load. Sometimes preachers feel threatened if other good & godly men join the church. Often they are afraid they will be seen as "less important" or perhaps "less powerful" - so they try to do it all themselves & wonder why they get a terminal case of "PASTORAL BURNOUT"!

2. Sharing the blessings:

NOTE: This is O.T., but the same thing happened in the N.T. The Apostles were being overwhelmed w/their resp. So they called Spirit-filled men to assist them. There was no jealousy, fear or concern about who got credit.

B. The Source: **v.26 "the Spirit..."**

1. Two out of the seventy are named & stay in the Tabernacle & preach **"in the camp."**
2. The critics & bigots are always around. (Incl. Joshua! v.27,28)

POEM: 'Tis true that he believes as we, Is born-again, we trust;
But him we must forbid you see, Because he's not of us."

Pastors are sometimes jealous over their assistants & the devil will use it to destroy the work of God in the church.

C. The Simplicity: **v.29 "His Spirit..."**

1. We need to pray & preach for leaders to arise from our ranks to assist us in getting the job done.
2. We need Spirit-filled believers as deacons, S.S. teachers, Bus workers, assistants, etc.

CONCL.: Yes the **LOAD OF LEADERSHIP** is heavy & **THE LONLINESS OF LEADERSHIP** is real, but a **scriptural LOOK AT LEADERSHIP** provides the secret of **"AVOIDING SPIRITUAL BURNOUT!"** Increase the number of burden-bearers. Delegate some responsibility. Pray for more laborers. Ask God for more Spirit-filled people in your ministry.