

"TENSIONS OF THE MINISTRY"

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"TENSIONS OF THE MINISTRY"

I Kings 19:3-15

INTRODUCTION:

I am to speak today on a subject of tensions -- which is an act of stretching - hence mental strain or nervous anxiety. That which puts a strained **condition** on the relations between people. Where you feel the pull.

This is a very good subject, because every minister struggles daily with the problem of how to live with tensions.

I heard of a conference on mental health at which the principle address was on the subject "How To Deal With Tension And Anxiety". When the time came for the address, the announcement was made that the speaker had to cancel because of illness. He had a severe case of the shingles. And you know shingles is a malady aggravated by tension and anxiety. The expert was the victim of the very thing about which he was to speak. This is true. For all of us have to deal with the pressures and tensions of life. So your speaker today is well aware of this because of the way we live, our life-style, the things that drive us from day to day.

I remember coming out of the Seminary without work to do, but had an invitation to come to Broad Creek Village and undertake at least a couple months of work. I had the guarantee of \$500 for the three summer months and that was about it. No church, no organization, nothing but a place being built with mud - no sidewalks, no church building. And I accepted it. Our services were first held in a rental office. A very small building or room. Dances were held on Saturday night and worship services on Sunday. But in two months time, ^{God} we had accumulated 58 people who said, "we'll be ^{charter} members of a ^{new} church if you will be the

Pastor. So we organized. And then we moved to the school building ^{which} ~~where~~ we rented and there I preached for ^{nearly} four years. This matter of tension is something that we all know about. The scope of this problem is a product of our time and our culture.

The signs of the times tell us that on any one day in this country, there are as many people in mental hospitals as there are people sick in all other kinds of hospitals combined. It is estimated that at least one in ten persons has some form of mental or emotional disorders requiring treatment.

Does tension exist? One clergyman found according to his own congregation of less than 100 people the following problems. This was reported in the Clergy and Mental Health Leaflet. First, a boy on parole from the State Penitentiary who was striving to remain within the law. Another boy who was on probation with the local police. A third boy who was flirting with a way of life that could only lead to unhappiness and ruin. A young woman confused by grave doubts. A girl despondent over a broken love affair. A young couple who had just buried their small child. A family ~~that~~ recently ^{bereft} ~~bereft~~ of its mother. A woman struggling with morbid fears. A man desperately battling the temptations of alcohol. A middle-aged couple whose home was on the verge of break-up. Another couple worried over their child's mis-conduct. A young man confronted a critical operation within the month. The clergyman knew all this because these people had consulted him quite recently. Had he known his congregation, ^{which} was about a hundred in number, even better, how many more problems might have been unearthed.

I should like to weave our thoughts around the story of one of God's preachers in the Old Testament - taken from the book of I Kings 19:3-15. For, I think, in these verses we find something of a preacher who was under tension in his ministry and who discovered that tensions could be controlled and dealt with. We only have

time to hit the highlights, but we see that this man of God had ~~been~~ preached the truth and the congregations as well as the leaders of the country had put such strain upon him that in V. 3, he fled for his life. He finally reached the point that he said in V. 4, that he wished somehow he might die. I guess every preacher has reached the place ^{where} ~~that~~ he has said, "I must flee from this place, or maybe death might be better." But the story goes on briefly; he layed down and slept and got some rest. And God fed him there on the mount. And after the storm, and the earthquake, and the fire - the still small voice came and spoke to him. ~~And~~ ^{And} Elijah received some work to do. ~~And~~ He was told that other people were suffering, even 7,000 were suffering, and why shouldn't he?

Now I want to divide this up into three thoughts. First of all, tensions are created. V. 3-10. Second, tensions are continued in V. 11. And I am going to use these experiences at the cave as symbolic. I don't think I will do the text an injustice. And third, tensions are controlled. V. 15. In which God made an assignment to the preacher.

✓ I. TENSIONS ARE CREATED - V. 3-10

First, by risk taken. By this, I mean, that quite often the preacher has to climb out on a limb. And this is exactly what Elijah had been doing. And because of the risk he had taken, he had to flee for his life. As someone has put it, the minister is certainly a man in a gold fish bowl. ~~And he is there because many people want to keep him there where he can perform.~~ But there are scores of people ^{Press} like Louis Cassels says, that the minister begins to think about leaving the pastorate because when he speaks his mind and gets out on a limb -- the situation that he

tackles is most fearful.

A young preacher went out in Kentucky from the Seminary ⁱⁿ ~~from~~ Louisville on weekends to preach at his post. He was known for his violent stand on the use of alcohol. Like most Seminary students, he did not have an over abundance of money. And this little church offered him enough financial security to go through school. The first Sunday he was there, he barely got to the church in time to preach. He noticed the big barn-like houses all around the church property, and dotting the hillside behind the barn. His church school superintendent had a pin on his lapel, indicating 25 years employment in none other than a distillery. The prime source of income in the church was from employment in the distillery. It is safe to say that he never preached a sermon on the evil of the liquor business while he was there. Now the story actually happened. And the point is to be well taken. In the great struggles of our time, many preachers have to ^{take} ~~make~~ a risk as to whether to commit himself, as he sees how the wind is blowing. Or whether or not he is going to stick with a spineless Gospel. Whether he is just going to be a voice telling the people what they already believe and perhaps, what they already want to hear.

Another angle of this risk thought is that quite often a young preacher is looked upon as being an apprentice. He goes out with the responsibilities and you know his plight. He has a feeling of himself as a man and his talents - maybe limited. And yet, sometimes people think of him as an interim. And maybe they think that someday his time will be right - he will be developed. And all this time, he has to deal with such trifles as phone calls, committee meetings, council meetings (Church Council Meetings). Put up with a Scripturally illiterate church. There may be some woman threatening suicide, some man threatening divorce, some

Deacon threatening to resign. All the other harassments against which a young preacher may feel that he is defeated. There is too much tension here for him.

Now in the ministry a man feels like he is going to invest himself. But he does have to climb out on a limb and his energy is spent on some of these tasks. Teaching, counselling, social action, discussion groups, administration, and even political involvement. And while he gets out on the limb, he may feel that he is in bondage or that he has a ball and chain stapled to him. He faces so many dilemmas and he wonders whether or not God is watching ~~on~~ in all of this. As he has to make his choice of text each week, determine the style and delivery of his sermon. At the same time he has to listen to all of these disasters that happen and it is risky business because if this limb breaks off, ^{he wonders,} will he have a soft landing? Just what will happen to me?

Now these things are real and something that we have to grapple with, ~~but~~ in spite of the possibility that the limb may break off, because it does sometime. A young man from our church went into the ministry. He went to college and then to Seminary, and lacked ^{ing} only about 12 hours of his work, ^{he took} and ~~got~~ a church in the State of Virginia. ~~And~~ He had a marvelous mind and a great delivery, but in the Seminary some professor had tuned his motor and he felt that he must lead a crusade for ^{better} race relations. And so he decided to get out on a limb, one Sunday morning, and he did. ~~And of course,~~ He knew that the farmers in that section had not treated negro people as they should, and he brought these things out in the sermon. ~~And~~ That afternoon the limb broke, and that night he resigned. These tensions sometimes are created by the risk we take. ^{of} Course, all of us have to take certain risks.

Quite often these risks are not of our own choosing. They may come to us by just the ordinary course of things.

I do not know your experiences but I know mine. One day I was called upon to conduct a funeral and it turned out to be a Klu Klux Klan funeral. I don't know whether you have ever been into anything like that or not. But it is a great revelation.

I remember reading once about a Methodist preacher down in Griffin, Georgia. And that preacher said that it was the most spectacular funeral that he had ever been called upon to perform. ~~It seems that~~ ^{local} A baseball hero had died, ~~a member of the team~~. And the members of the team had seen the rituals of funerals conducted by secret orders. ^{They} ~~And~~ came to ^{the preacher} him with a ^{request} ~~question~~ that he work out a baseball funeral.

"I was dumbfounded," the minister admitted. He remembered that many of St. Paul's illustrations are taken from athletics. These could be used in the Scripture readings. "We made up a ritual, too," ^{he wrote} "Members of the team marched around the open grave - the ball was pitched across the grave a couple of times and the cap of the deceased player together with the ball was placed in the grave. It may have been a bit extreme, but it pleased the ball team. I don't think the Lord is too much interested in funerals anyhow. But so love and respect are there. Our baseball funeral had both of these."

Second, physical strain. Tensions are created by physical strain. Spurgeon in his letters to ministers wrote, "It is a necessity that we are sometimes in heaviness. To sit long in one posture pouring over a book, or driving a quill is in itself a taxing of nature. But add to this a badly ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for ^{a something} ~~seizing~~ caldron of despair." Let a man be naturally as joyous as a bird. He will hardly be able to bear up year after year

against such suicidal processes.

Even the Apostle Paul may have been caught up into the third Heaven and heard unspeakable things. But a thorn in the flesh, a member of Satan buffeted him, and he had his depressions as usual. And part of Paul's depressions were from the fact of physical strain. I. Cor. 6:13-20 admonishes us to glorify God in your body. It is important, to know that we lead an exhausting life. And a preacher with his over-work is likely to go without the proper amount of sleep. He becomes a slave to his work sometimes. His days are filled completely and it is difficult sometimes for a minister to try and snatch a few moments for prayer. The foundation of good health, he must have sufficient sleep. A normal amount of it. And when we fail to get a normal amount of sleep, then we have nervous tensions and irritability will develop.

This physical strain is something that will create tension. Dr. Stewart Roberts, a medical doctor, once came to look over J. C. Adams, the preacher. And he told the preacher that he had to stay in bed. And the preacher replied that it was not possible because he had to make his expenses, and he had to study, and he just shrugged it off. ^a That is alright, ^v the doctor said. ^u "You either get more sleep or you die. You are not accommodating me by living, so do as you like." That brought the preacher to his senses. ~~And the preacher~~ ^{He} remembered that gratefully, because he said, "I resolved I would not accommodate him by dying, and I managed to spend 8 hours in bed each night after that." I still do, he said. And that was at the time the man was 75 years of age.

Physical strain is also brought on by the loneliness in our profession of work. We are isolated because of the leadership that is centered in our inner lives and someone has said, it is a lonely vocation. Because even the minister's wife feels loneliness. Even as much or more than the minister. The minister is in his vocation.

And there is a vacuum that is created in the wife because she has to be the mother and many things. But we have to remember that ministers's² wives as well as ministers have needs like all other persons, and we are involved as many other people are - but it is very lonely. That is people have a feeling that they want to get in on the inner circle. Jesus had trouble with some of his disciples with this. And they even quarreled about who was going to get special positions. But this is something that the pastor has to fight against or cope with. Here is something in his work that even his potential friendships have to sometimes be one-sided. He may not be able in his own community, in his own congregation, to feel this freeness with too many people. In other words, he is isolated in the midst of people. And everybody needs others. And his wife has needs. And the pastor is giving himself emotionally all the time. And he acts like a sponge - he is squeezing it out all of the time. He doesn't soak up the things that are going to renew and strengthen his own physical well-being. So I would say, physical strength, this was a part of Elijah's problem. Physical strain. And I really credit and believe that part of my heart attack was responsible to this very problem about which I speak. The lack of sleep. Most preachers feel that they are super, physically, and can go day and night.

Third, over-commitment of time. Tensions are created by over-commitment of time - our schedules. Now we live in the midst of the busiest society on earth. And yet a typical American spends five hours and twenty-five minutes a day - that is 1977 hours a year watching television. And we have our good intentions but we get tied up. We get overly burdened. And we must prove what is probably the most important thing and what is necessary.

A lot of people say, well the preacher has it easy. He has such a schedule that is so flexible that the demanding things upon his time are unending. And if

he is not careful, he will be over-committed.

Now a change of environment does not solve a minister's tension at this point. He might change churches every year. He might think that this is the right move. But he must become a creative person to find a challenge in the most unchallenging situation.

Ministers are anxious to get all of the work done. We feel guilty over the unfinished business. This results in a frustration, over the many pressures and demands that demand attention. And some preachers cannot go to sleep at night. And some find these demands torturous. Here is a matter that needs attention. How do I go about it? Here is a family that is having domestic troubles. Should I go to see them? Should I wait for them to approach me? Somebody may tell me about it. Do I feel coerced to go? Shall I wait? Shall I worry? Is it valuable time that I should spend stewing about this - or waiting trying to brew a better idea?

You remember the story of Mary and Martha. I think sometimes the minister gets cumbered about with so many things that he may lose sight of the one needful thing that he needs to do. I read about a minister that felt such tension and pressure that he had a nervous breakdown. He went to a psychiatrist ^{who} ~~and all that~~ ^{told him,} ~~the man had him to do was~~ "write down a list of the things that you have to do, that you do not seem to be able to get done." So when he brought back the list he said, "alright, number one, you need a choir director. Now I want you to go and leave and do just that one thing. I want you to get a choir director and then you come back." In this manner, he took him down the list. And when he was through, the minister was well. All in the world that the doctor did was organize the minister.

When things pile up, we tend to worry, about all of them - instead of concentrating on one of them. The tensions build up. We get heavily committed and we have great ideas but we are not able to carry through on these. Because of the activities of our schedule at the beginning of each day, we feel that we can relieve these pressures somehow. And maybe we could if we made a list of the things that we wanted to do and tried to follow through on those. But you know and I know, that we have to be flexible. Because in 30 minutes we may be doing something else. And it is hard to stick to a rigid schedule. I submit that this I have never really conquered.

We are pushed by the mission board, we are pushed in every direction. And the minister feels that he must pile up a large number of calls. There are others who feel that they must do other things. And of course, in their visits, sometimes they stay over long and spend too much time.

We are so over-committed in our time that we have not time to study. (Samuel Blizzard) made a study of 690 pastors. And he found that the ministers work an average of 10 hours a day. Four of which were spent in administration. Compared to 36 minutes on sermon preparation per day. Yet the work that they least enjoyed was the roll of organizer and administrator. And the work that they had been educated to do - to be preacher, pastor, and priest received the least amount of time.

So this is what we are speaking about. We get over committed on a multitude of things and we never get a chance to get down to the essential things that we were called to do. And this creates tension.

A minister
~~He~~ tries to be a denominational man. And this grudgingly takes time for meetings and sessions. And some of the members of his congregation desire that

he be a handiman, and maybe wait upon their needs.

And soon,

1 Until some preachers actually get so over-committed that they feel guilty if they take 3 hours off to rest or relax, If they take a day off, and some actually reach the place where the tensions are so tremendous that they forego a vacation.

Now this is what happened to Elijah. He was pressed, he risked his life, things didn't go well. And he is out here under tension wishing that he might die and God is going to deal with that.

II. TENSIONS ARE CONTINUED - V. 11

Now at this point, I would like to use these experiences of Elijah to symbolize just what takes place when the wind rent the mountains. The earthquake shook the earth, and the fire passed by. I want to use these things as symbols of ~~as to~~ things that helped to continue the tensions in the ministry. First, the wind rent the mountains. The strong storm. I am going to call this the congregational storms. The congregational storms that sweep and break to pieces things before the Lord. I mean by this, the congregation has "hired" the staff, they have "hired" the preacher, to do their work and they are to sit back and to criticize the game.

They look upon the church as a theatre in which the preacher provides the entertainment. And the church is just the audience. The congregation is not there to worship, but here is a woman spectator busy observing hats, clothing, and

apparel. She doesn't have time for prayer but she can tell who is at church and who is not. And there are few people who are really involved in the worship hour. This brings tension for the preacher. His critics sit there and they want him to give some new Scripture interpretation. Not from the Bible, they don't want to rehash anything. Don't get it out of the Bible - but here I sit. Just tell me something that I have not heard before. Make it better than I have ever heard it.

No preacher can really compete with the television releases. But people expect him to entertain week after week. When the first preachers went out to preach it was exciting news. It was a new message they had about the resurrection of Jesus. But the preacher today, if he can't dress it up, if he can't make it exciting, if he can't do something different, if he can't do something controversial - he is just not entertaining enough.

Also along with this congregational storm goes the man who sits there and dares the preacher to say something a little modern or a little liberal.

Within the congregation we have these mood groups that have no consistency in their attendance. The show must go on, but if there is no weekend trip, no athletic contest, ^{then} they will make the scene at the church. And they will ~~kind of~~ look at the preacher and say, "didn't you see me at church? Aren't you proud that I took my time to come to church today?"

And the curtain goes up, the preacher must have something attractive. He must have a big children's program, he must have a kids program, ^a ~~his~~ choir or grand-standing soloist, he must be able to tell some good jokes, he must get something going. They must have a new diet each week. They must get some big-named people ^{as guest artists} ~~to come in.~~ When you really think about those first dirty fishermen, carpenters,

and sail makers who went about preaching the Gospel and giving their testimony in comparison to what happens today and what people want of the minister. They want some great big athletes to come - you are going to honor the athletic team this Sunday in your church service. Next Sunday you are going to have a converted movie star to come and to perform. And put some big ads in the newspaper. She is going to give her personal testimony. A little hence you will have some big politician to come in, either that or some beauty queen to come and tell about her fame of parading across the stage.

If that same person were not important for other reasons, would he be important for his testimony. I wonder sometimes if the pastor, if ^{instead of} some of these big show people would ask the janitor to give his testimony, or ask the woman who scrubs the floors. Or ask that person who has tithed for 25 years. Where is God in their lives. This to me is congregational tension. They want a big business attraction - honoring the football, honoring fraternal order. I wonder if this does not prostitute the power of God. < I wonder if those people are praying or even singing the hymns. Or is it just like a spectator event. Some body will say I go to church because of the music, or I go because of the sermon. These congregational tensions.

We think about the hospital, the time that people stay in the hospital. Well, it's a thing that is real serious but in this day of hospital insurance - some people go to the hospital for rest. And the congregation, many times, wants the pastor to be there every day. Because the days are long in the hospital and since the pastor doesn't have anything else to do, he can make lengthy visits and sit down and spend half the day listening to the aches and pains. To me this is ridiculous. Really it is kind of dangerous for the pastor to go in among all the sick. He may subject himself to some diseases and transfer these to his home.

The preacher will come and the ^{church} secretary will give ^{you} him a note, and say, "so and so has been in the hospital for four days and did not receive a visit." Well, the

preacher has to tell that person and somehow get things straight and ironed out.

Some of the other things that the congregation creates a storm and tension for is the (matter of function's) they want the preacher to go to all the openings, little league, dedications of this new roof, ^{or that} and new building.

Another thing, they want him to be a (truant officer). If some member of the congregation misses church, the preacher is not producing.

< The congregation again puts pressure on him when the Chairman will come and say if we can get this man within a year, our church will double its size and double its budget. All this man has to do they feel is open the doors of the church and they will have members. > Some layman think of the church as purely a commercial thing. Like hiring a football coach - they are going to bribe him, they are going to build a new stadium. But within a year if he doesn't produce, they want him to resign and go back to Seminary and study more.

So the congregation puts the tension on him, asking him for additions. And sometimes the preacher gets caught in that old gimmick, "since I came", and it gets to be a familiar phrase. Now if you stay more than 6 months, 18 months, two years, ten years, 20 years - you may earn the right to say something like that. But what I am saying is that the congregational **storm** creates the tension that the pastor be a showman. And not a priest or someone to guide them spiritually.

The second thing was the earthquake - now I am going to use this as the symbol of the church quakes. And I have seen churches actually have earthquakes. Because of various godless things, as unity and others.

There are often church quakes when some Pulpit Committee wants to get some

crackerjack preacher. And the preacher will ask the committee whether or not they represent the thinking of the church. And they will always answer "yes" whether this is true or not. But the committee will always ask the pastor, "what about your program?" This means, "what kind of show can you put on?" Now they know that he knows how to preach and he knows how to teach and visit. But they want to know if he has any new gimmicks.

Sometimes these laymen think of their pastor as a transit. They never think of him as one who is permanent. And if he comes in, and they say, "people have done it this way as long as we can remember, and pastors have come and gone," and they emphasize the "gone" part.

Sometimes some people will tell you, "you'd better get used to us." That's the phrase that many people use. In other words, if you don't, you'd better start packing up. Common sense tells you that if the preacher has to get used to all the many many different people that he will have to deal with - he is really under pressure.

Then there are church quakes and people expect that the pastor be a good mixer and that one of his jobs is to do this well. I think sometimes the tension and pressure put on a minister is ungodly when we think about "shut-in calling." I think first of all somebody needs to give us a correct definition of what and who is a shut-in. Just because a person has reached retirement age in this day in which we live, people are retiring at 55, 50, and I had one retire in our church at age 49. Not on account of disability but he retired. Some retire because of disability, sight, or deafness, and other problems. And all the people are not in convalescence homes. And sometimes sons and daughters put them there for good reasons. And many times they will put them there and then call up the pastor and say my mother or my

dad is lonely and I wonder if you couldn't go out and spend a few hours with them. And there are some real cases of shut-ins and they are people who truly cannot get out. Most ministers are happy to call on these dear people, ^{and} ~~who~~ do, as their time permits, ~~to go and see them.~~ But if you have been in the ministry very long, you will receive about one phone call a week that there is somebody around town that you need to call on during your spare time. There is some frustrated woman or some uncle who has heart trouble, or somebody who needs the divine revelation, or just plain cheer him up.

It is so interesting sometimes to go ^{to} ~~and~~ see these shut-in people, ^{You knock} ~~and~~ ask where they are; and they are off fishing. And they are off to N. C., but somehow they can't go to church or come to the meetings. They demand that the church be brought to them. And gentlemen this is a church quake to me.

Another church quake to me is when (somebody dies) that really has never been very faithful and loyal to the church but they want a full choir of all the voices - the pastor, and maybe some other preacher or so around town. To put on this service with the tradition. But I don't see how any preacher today could visit every member every week, or every month, even every year as far as that goes, and still get the many things done that he is called upon to do. Some of these people have retired, they have time on their hands, and they think that the pastor is the one man who has more time than anything else. And they go on a sit-down strike and let the pastor do all that he will do. And they will sit down on him ^{for} an afternoon.

~~I think~~ In connection with this church earth quake, I think of what (Bishop Gerald Kennedy) attempted to translate how many laymen refer to their pastors.

Take branches doctrine to explain in Parkersburg.

layman 2000

He is a spiritual preacher. (He never distrubs me.) He is not a spiritual

preacher (his message is too relevant).

He brings politics into the pulpit. (I do not agree with him.)

His position will hurt the church. (We re-actionaries are displeased.)

His attitude will hurt church finances. (I will cut my subscription from 25¢ a week to 5¢.)

I will not remain in the church (if I cannot rule, I'll quit).

He is sowing descension. (For instance, (some people are waking up).

He is after money (he thinks his family should have an American standard of living).

He has a great future (he is a politician).

His ministry is successful (the church has subscribed the budget).

He lacks judgement (he stakes Jesus seriously).

He neglects a substantial member (the church is beginning to move).

He plays up to the new members (he is by-passing the road-blocks we set up).

He will ruin us financially (the tight wads have a guilty conscience).

At least he is a good pastor (he can't preach).

He disturbs me (I am beginning to grow spiritually).

The whole church is upset (I am causing all the trouble I can).

Now these definitions are the image of the pastor - you may catch these that the layman has an image of the pastor. And I think the Bishop uses this preacher's dictionary to help us understand that there are church quakes.

Third, the fire. A fire passes by - and I am going to call this enemy fire. God wasn't in this either, you know, according to the story of Elijah. The enemy builds fires. They want the minister to be a radical Christian witness. There may be a power struggle.

They are not interested in taking Christ to others. In a recent book, "Neurotics in the Church", the author says the dedicated preacher will have more enemies within the church than without. There will be those who are power mad within the church, and who want to control the church. And they may actually oust the pastor. ~~What~~ He says is, "we need to strengthen the church discipline to oust those who are trouble makers."

In the Saturday Evening Post a Presbyterian minister wrote, "Why I Quit The Ministry". He says, I still believe in Jesus Christ but the majority of today's church members refuse to care. You can even get church members today to picket, to march, to sit-in. — All of these things, but who can you get to share Christ?

Dr. Elton Trueblood said, "I receive a constant stream of letters from clergymen who are so frustrated in their work that they desire some kind of change in vocation. They say that the ministry today has a shortage. And the true feeling is that it is not the ministers who are at fault but it is the churches. People always have easy solutions. They have a system for filling their pulpits. But there are just too few preachers to go around.

< Certainly the enemies within the church think that the minister can preach, win the lost, and visit the sick. And this can be done in no time if he works at it. What he thinks is that the pastor has a whole lot of time on his hands. >

< Some of these people in the church will come and ask you, as one man did of his pastor, I need your services. You are good. My parents need your services - they are in a rest home. I don't have any time for religion. Truly this is an age of rebellion as never before. Rebellion against the church and against the minister, is taking its toll. >

Did you know that the dismissal of a pastor can start with as little as one rude word to the most influential person in the congregation. His mistakes are looked for and sometimes anticipated. This also applies to his wife.

Let me tell you an actual story that happened to Dr. J. C. Adams. Dr. J. C. Adams, ~~was~~ a Methodist preacher, ~~And he~~ had looked for the opportunity to move to another church, ^{Before} ~~and in~~ the conference. ^{and the bishop} ~~And he~~ had the place all lined up to go, ~~but then~~ the bishop wrote him a post card and said, "Dear Brother Adams. If what ^{I HEAR} is true, I cannot send you to the place spoken of. Sincerely." Well, this was a message of agony to the Methodist preacher. What could he have heard? what could I have done? He said, I wrote a letter but I tore it up. I tried to call him on the telephone but he was out of town. He said, I searched my heart and I prayed. And I remember the

Psalm, "commit thy way unto the Lord and trust also in him and he will bring it to pass." My spirit was eased. I knew that my life was in his hands. I saw the elder a few days later but I did not even mention the post card. He continued, when he seemed to get the courage, he explained. He told me that he had heard my wife was a dope ^{friend} ~~phone~~. The charge was so groundless and so absurd that it taught me to never worry again about what someone might have heard about me. I hope it taught that elder a little something about gossip," the Methodist preacher said.

When I was moderator of the Association here in Norfolk, I received all sorts of things from people. And actually, some came and asked me ~~about~~ certain things about certain ministers. But there are those enemies who spend their time in disturbing the fellowship of the church. And they try to get other people as disturbed as they are. But those who are faithful and are working members, do not do this. These people actually become adversaries to the pastor and to the congregation. James wrote 3:14-16, "but if you have bitterness, envying and strife in your hearts glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from Heaven but is earthly, sensual, devilish, and where envy and strife is there is confusion in every evil work."

Lowell Adams and Wesson in their book on "The Recreation Of A Country Preacher" said, we have all see human biters, not merely back biters but creatures who like to leave the marks of their teeth upon people. There are many kickers who kick over the traces and viciously lash out at their companions with little or no provocation. There are men who are always getting into quarrels. The main warm hearted and well meaning - there are shifters, creatures that lie down in the shaves instead of manfully putting the neck to the collar and going stoutly at the work of life. There is not a human being in whose mental constitution there is not something wrong. Some weakness, some perversion, some vice. By the time the wind storm passes, and

the earth quake settles, and the fire of these people who are morally rotten, prejudiced, and unhappy, Crack-pot creatures, "touchy" people, who never say a good word to any mortal - then it is time for the still small voice.

III. TENSIONS ARE CONTROLLED - V. 15

V. 15 - We have the solution. God gave Elijah work to do and sent him out to discover that he could live with his tensions. He was to anoint some kings. He had some work to do. He was to encourage a young man to take his place. He was to love the people and to suffer a little.

First, constructive work. God gave him work to do. Now many times our tensions are controlled by not moving to a new field. Sometimes maybe the closest person to you as you come into a new field might become your worst enemy. There are not many autobiographies written. That is, ministers do not really leave much behind where they had to lock horns with things, and these instances of personal dealings. Some one may yet be living or some kin to some situation. And so when a man goes into a church he could profit by the older man if he could get some information on him.

You remember C. Oscar Johnson used to tell about when he went to ~~the~~ Third Baptist Church in St. Louis. ~~that~~ A woman told him that he was different from the old pastor which they had. And that she was commending him - she said, I think your sermons are good. And I think your preaching is fine. But you don't hold me as well as our former pastor did. Now, if ~~we~~ had the stories of those who would tell us who have served the churches where you serve now, the near mental break-downs on the pressures of the people on them. Of his troubles, you would discover that you

would have to be as the Lord demanded in Matt. 10:16 - wise as serpents and harmless as doves. In your work sometimes you may be an intruder when you ring the doorbell. Old folks may welcome you but the young folks may not want you.

Somebody may feel that you are working for the money. But the big question in your life is, do I and am I doing my best in the place where I am.

All preachers are aware of the fact that they have to spend a lot of time trying to re-convert the converted. Now many pastors preach twice on Sunday and speak on Wednesday night and other times. But when we think of those preachers who really were great in years past ^{they} did not have to produce like you. They preached only once on Sunday and many of them took two months vacation in the summertime, away from the church. But sometimes you might have to go in and try and teach a Sunday School Class or rush in and preach in the pulpit and have a special meeting with some board after services. Then go for a funeral in the afternoon. And all of these things crash in upon you. The great answer is I think that we try to do some constructive work. Dr. John A. Brodus, ^{tells} ~~when we think~~ about the moment when they decided whether Southern Baptists would have a Seminary that would remain opened or closed and four faculty members prayed. They quietly agreed that, "the Seminary may die but we will die first." And ^{today} ~~of course~~ we have a multi-million dollar institution at Louisville. But this school stands because of the faith of these men who said, "we have some constructive and important work to do and we will give even our lives to it."

Second, compassionate love. I think this was something that God had to teach to Elijah. That he had to love all of those people - even Ahab and those who would put him to death. And sometimes we have to ask our own selves the question that Peter in Acts 10:29 asked Cornelius - "for what intent have you sent for me?"

I think that is a question for the church today. I think that some of the reasons why Cornelius said this to Peter in V. 33 - "now therefore are we all present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." You never forget we have a message in Elijah - needed to be reminded that he was to show compassionate love and preach this message. Bishop Edwin Hughes ^{wrote} ~~said~~, "I ~~was made a~~ minister." And he devoted a whole chapter to ~~the~~ controversies that deal with the ideas and extremists getting a balanced attitude in reaction. He speaks of the hatred in voice between the conservatives and the liberals, in discussing their own views. But he says the thing that we have to remember is that we are partners and foes. And this is where in our church and in our work, we are comrades. We are not really foes. And this is something that will help us to control our tensions.

In our age, when we are made about statistics, and we want to tabulate everything on an upward curve. We want our reports to be this way. We want our output and our productivity to be higher than that of our sister church or our neighboring church. ^{Paul} ~~And~~ would say, "though you break all records and have not love - you are sounding brass."

Third, courageous suffering. I think Elijah had to have this pointed out to him, that would help him control the tension. Constructive work, compassionate love, and courageous suffering. When people come to you and say, "preacher I think you'd better ease up or else you'd better leave." I think many a minister has been on the verge of asking himself - shall I quit. But I would say to the minister today - don't quit. I've been discouraged myself many many times and so has every other minister. And really you have enough disappointments to break down any man.

But we have accepted an assignment of taking up the cross and following Him.

And the eyes of the world are upon us. What we do for Christ does have effects. What happened in our church last Sunday, in my life, and in yours. We will help more people than we realized. There will be those faithful few. They will be more effective than you think. Because when you speak of Jesus Christ and give the message of Christ, you help people in their dark moments. There are people always disappointed. But Christ restores and gives a sense of purpose. For me to just keep thinking about people who disappoint me, ~~it~~ would make it easy for me to give up.

But if all people that I deal with and you deal with were finished products, I wouldn't need to bring them the Gospel of Christ. They wouldn't need the message of mercy and the message of forgiveness. All finished products - we must ever remember, that it is man's sin, the unresponsiveness to the Gospel, the prayerlessness the way that these people are and the way they live.

In 1961 the General Baptist Association of Virginia meeting in Arlington, Virginia published a tract ~~and it was~~ entitled, "Improving The Pastor - Church Relationship" ^{which} ~~and this~~ had to do very definitely with the tensions of the ministry. I think the final point says something to us - finally the church "will be in its healthiest condition when the pastor and people pray for each other regularly - earnestly and sincerely. Thus can a church undergird its ministry with power for when we open our hearts to the spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit will take care of our most insistent problems."

Dr. John Hutton in preaching a sermon in Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church on the subject, "The Breaking Point - What Next?" - ~~he~~ made this a point. "First, it is always possible to hold on a little longer. We never know what God has waiting for us around the corner." As a result of that sermon, a young man left that service with a changed life and a changed attitude. I believe that is what

God wants us and how we can control our tensions. And preachers will have tensions from the time you begin until the time you retire. Now any preacher who is 70 some years old on this job would never be looked upon as Sam Erving, on his job as a Senator. And as preachers, we are going to have to suffer. People have shop talk about retirement and all of these things. But we are going to have our own problems and we are going to have to learn to deal with them with our Christian faith and to know that we are going to be tested.

I know that each of us ^{has} ~~have~~ resentments against long working hours, limited income, people expecting too much of us, we live a restricted social life. And this is something that disturbs the mind of the minister. I think that ministers do mighty well. They complain very little to the public. Their energies are expended. And I think if we discover some new ways in meeting these difficulties and solving these problems before they get out of hand. Matt. 6:33 - Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be added. This put ease, comfort, and security - but our victory over the world will be our faith. And God will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ.

With the unattainable standards that men set for us - the high goals. Like Paul, I count as lost for the sake of Christ.

Luke 24, 25, 26 - says was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory, ~~for preachers to be successful~~. Whether we fail or whether we succeed we must be found at the cross suffering.

We will never get anything special because life is not easy for us. His cross was hard. It was made of green rough wood. It was unplanned, and full of splinters small and large. And we have deliberately chosen to take up this cross. Shall we ask why? But here are people asking us to do more. We have been asked to lift

the sign of salvation. And to help these people and our churches that they must lie on the cross. They must lie on it because they are in love with him who first hung upon it in utter desolation and agony. To me, this is the answer to a ~~harassed~~ ^{Tension Filled} minister. Elijah had constructive work, compassionate love, and a courageous ability to suffer. This is part of the solution.

Wedding - Inroom Family -

River Side - North Prange -

Junges -

Christina Huntly -

Spelt - Mrs. Ch -

Staff - Soc. -

Sch. Dir. Tues 4 p.m. how
Lay out -

Jagahel - life work even

embrace call home

Learn to smile - go on !!