

MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

Why Are You Here?

October 28, 2013

Henry Ward Beecher was a renowned 19th century preacher. He actually achieved "celebrity status" in his day. People would flock to hear him preach when he came to their community. On one occasion in Brooklyn, NY, many curiosity seekers arrived at Plymouth Church to hear the famous Henry Ward Beecher speak. However, to their dismay, Thomas Beecher, Henry's brother, rose to deliver the message that day instead. When people came to the realization that the renowned Beecher would not be speaking, they arose from their seats and headed for the doors.

Unmoved by what was happening, Thomas Beecher quickly brought things into perspective when he said, "Those of you who came here today to worship Henry Ward Beecher are excused at this time. However, those of you who came to worship God, please remain seated." Nothing more needed to be said.

Sometimes I think we may need to be reminded that when we assemble on the Lord's day, it's not to be entertained, impressed, or "wowed" by the speaker, but to worship God. When our mindset views the preacher as a the participant, and ourselves as his audience, we've lost focus. Actually, we are all the participants, and God is the audience. Instead of judging the preacher's eloquence, critiquing the song leader's selection and tempo, and timing the length of the closing prayer, it might be more helpful to consider how God is judging our performance. Give it some thought.

By Steve Higginbotham