

# Tim Conway Shares About His First Time Preaching

Tim Conway | *Excerpt from, "Homiletics: Called to Preach (Part 2)"*

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God is in the business of going with you where He sends you; and He is in the business of not going with you where He doesn't send you. Brethren, it is kind of like Moses you know, "Lord don't send us out there unless You go with us!" Men, you've got to come at teaching that way.

I will tell you this, I did not believe I was called to preach. I would have not sought preaching. In my lost days, public communication absolutely terrified me. I was the worst in high school. I dreaded it I hated it. I turned red. My knees failed. My tongue went dry, it was bad. It was bad. And it took God taking me into a situation, many of you know the story, there in a juvenile home, up in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and I was working with Youth for Christ. I was a volunteer sidekick for a paid staff guy who would lead all these services there at this home. He would lead the chapel services. It was a big home and there was lots of kids and lots of workers and he got sick one day. And I showed up and here's like 7 or 8 young people from the college class of a church on the north side of Kalamazoo. They came in and somehow one of them got it in their head, I don't know maybe the paid staff guy said, "Have Tim preach." The guy sat down next to me, while we were doing the singing, he sat down next to me and said, "You're preaching." I said, "No I am not." And he got up and left and he came back and he said, "You are preaching." And I mean, I kid you not, he probably asked me 7 times, and finally it was like the importunity of Luke 11, I caved.

Once I said I would, there was still like another song and a half to go before I'd go up. I sat there in utter terror. I had left my Bible in the car. I had a track in my pocket by Conrad Murrell. It's that one with the ark and there's a smiley face on the side that said, "Smile God loves you." My legs barely carried me to the pulpit and when I got there, I mean such a thing happened, as next to my conversion it was one of the greatest miracles I ever experienced in my life. What happened right at that moment. Now I didn't recognize where God was taking me in the rest of my life. And again I hesitate to emphasize these things too much because what happened to me is not going to happen to the rest of you. Someone has said they saw fire come down from heaven. Someone has said they felt like wave after wave of liquid love he described it. This is something that was happening... Again I recognize that depending on the measure God may use somebody depends on the kind of experiences that they're going to have.

I'll tell you what that experience did for me: it showed me that when I went into a pulpit God would be with me. You want that assurance. If you're sitting in a Bible study with three people you want to know that that's where God wants you to be and that He's going to go with you when you go there. Brothers, why would you want to go there? For your ego?

So anyway, God makes teachers. You remember what happened, you remember Moses. "Lord, don't send me I can't do this." And the Lord said, "Moses I designed the mouth, I make the tongue, I am the one who creates that." In other words, "I give that ability." I mean God gives that ability. You remem-

ber John the Baptist he said, "We can't receive anything unless it's been given to us from heaven." This is something God gives. This is something....

Anyway, God will make it clear. And I want to emphasize that because I get the feeling that some men, they fight and they claw, and they strive, and they coerce, and they maneuver to make it happen. But if God's in it, God will guide you, God will show you, God will direct you, and if you're directed, once you get there, God will help you. That is huge, because men if God has given me a gift of mercy... we can have multiple gifts... but if God has given me the gift of mercy and not the gift of teaching, then you know what? When I go to show mercy God is going to help me. I would rather go into that into that realm, in that direction, where I know God is going to help me. I would rather have God help me clean the toilet. Than me fight, coerce, and maneuver to get in the pulpit, only to get there and not have God's help. Wouldn't you all agree?

One of the things that happened when I stood in that pulpit, that first time, is my legs barely carried me into the pulpit, when I got there it was like such a sense of peace descended upon me, all my faculties, my mind was absolutely clear, strength was in my legs, and my mouth was ready to speak. The thing is as I looked at those people, as I looked at those young people, such a burden came over me for their souls, such a burden came that I had a truth that they didn't know that I needed to impart it to them. You see that goes way beyond just wanting a platform. You just want to be heard, you want to be famous, you want to make money, you want to be popular, you want to be - you know - the showman, you want to entertain, you want to be the comedian. But there's a burden to impart something to the people.