

# SIMPLE TRUTH: Thanks to our Pastors

*By Shawn Parker*

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Parker

I've discovered this year that the Mississippi Baptist Convention has an excellent team of pastors that is better than most and second to none. As I've visited with them and shared in worship, they have proven to be men who love the Lord, walk in humility, and reflect a genuine concern for people. I've seen them stand in pulpits and preach powerfully, and I've seen them roll up their sleeves at a disaster site and work tirelessly.

I know firsthand that being a pastor is one of the most rewarding experiences of life, but I also know that it is a lonely role to play. Quite often a pastor feels the soul-wrenching burden of being the spokesman for God in every setting he finds himself. No matter where he goes or who he is with, he is always the pastor.

I also recognize that the burden our pastors have felt this year has been intensified beyond the norm. Many of these men have preached to empty worship centers and into cameras with little assurance that anyone is listening. Many of them have watched from a distance as their church family struggles with sickness and crisis and death. Many of them have conducted

funerals and weddings in the strangest of settings, and have wondered about their effectiveness in these situations. This has indeed been a strange season of ministry!

October is a time when we collectively express our appreciation for pastors. So, I want to take my hat off to all the servants of the Lord who have labored this year to honor His name and strengthen His church. I suspect you have done far more than you realize to help normalize life by keeping your people focused on our Lord. At the very least, I can say that you have been an inspiration to me as I have watched and listened and felt your strong influence across the state.

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I also want to challenge every church member to express your appreciation for your pastor, if you have not already done so. You can write a note, send a card, give a small gift, or simply offer a specific compliment to your pastor. The best way to encourage him, however, is to devote your life to Christ as a disciple and grow in His grace and knowledge (2 Pt. 3.18). Every pastor worth his salt will feel more honored by your spiritual growth than anything else you can do. Finally, I'd say to all of us that life is a call to serve Christ! Whether you are a pastor or not, I hope you'll roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty in obedience to Him. An old preacher once said, "I never want to reach out someday with a soft, uncalloused hand – a hand never dirtied by serving – and shake the nail-pierced hand of Jesus." And to this, I simply say Amen!