

A Tribute to Rev. Dr. A. Louis Patterson Jr.
By
Dr. Keith Woods

My heart was saddened last Wednesday, April 9, 2014, when I received the news that one of my all-time favorite preachers, the Rev. Dr. A. Louis Patterson Jr., long-time Pastor of the Mount Corinth Baptist Church of Houston, TX, had gone home to be with the Lord.

Patterson was one of the world's greatest preachers and teachers of God's Word, who was appreciated, respected, revered, and sought after across ethnic and denominational lines.

I first heard him in the early 1970s on a cassette tape my grandfather gave me of him preaching at the L.K. Williams Ministers Institute at Bishop College in Dallas, TX. Not long after that, I heard him live in one of his dozens of trips to Los Angeles to preach and/or lecture. When I started preaching in 1981, I was first personally introduced to him at the Concord Baptist Church in Dallas by the late Dr. E.K. Bailey. Through the years, I have heard him hundreds of times.

Being a lifetime preacher junkie, who loved preachers and preaching, and started taping preachers' sermons when I was in elementary school, I was hooked on A. Louis Patterson the first time I heard him on a tape.

Long before I started preaching in 1981, God was using several preachers I heard to serve as models and examples of responsible biblical preaching and teaching. Dr. Patterson was one of the preachers that God used to introduce me to expository preaching. As a youngster, I couldn't understand how some preachers could read a scripture at the beginning of the sermon as a text, then never mention the scripture again or explain anything about it during the sermon. I had heard a lot of great preachers, even thought at that age I obviously was not mature enough to be a great critic of preachers, but there was something about Patterson's exposition and verse-by-verse explanation of the scripture that stood out to me until this day.

Rev. Gerald Britt Jr. of Dallas says "there are certain characters, certain personalities whose career looms so large that it seems that they should be here always. When it comes to the Kingdom it seems as if their influence, already firmly established, should make them permanent fixtures in our lives so that they can continue to exert that influence.

No matter how well we knew them, there is some pain in our hearts when we hear that they are no longer with us.

Dr. A. Louis Patterson, Jr. was a masterful pastor, a great, great Bible teacher and a spellbinding preacher. He handled preaching as an authority backed by Authority, so that there was no guesswork as to whether or not what he was saying was true. It was

unalterably true and you didn't have to take Patterson's word for it, he could show you, using scripture, the etymology of a word, the original meaning of a phrase, the grammatical construct of a sentence how and why he believed what a text said.

And I loved the poetry of his preaching. He was a master of alliteration. He strung words together with alliteration and with a rhetoric that was so compelling that his preaching style had an otherworldly attractiveness to it."

Dr. Robert Houston of Frankfort, KY says that "Dr. Patterson was the acknowledged "Godfather" of expository preaching among African-American preachers. Generations of preachers have since imitated and emulated their preaching after Dr. Patterson.

He was a preaching lyricist of the highest order. To hear Dr. Patterson was to hear gumbo-listic preaching – he hit you with the text, oratory, poetry, interrogative statements ("I ask myself each day, Al Patterson are you...."), engagement, tenacity for the truths of the text, humor and truth. You would leave a preaching moment with Dr. Patterson in awe.

"Dr. Pat" as many of us call him sent young preachers flocking to the front row. He was a living example that you didn't need a whoop, didn't need the accompaniment of musicians, didn't need a soulful strut in your voice, and you didn't need a fancy suit to preach. He didn't just close but it was celebratory. He didn't try to whoop but it was like lion's roar. And the favorite of many a preacher (including me) was when he began to gear into his close he had almost a "crying close" when he would drop to the bass of his range, ".... and I— don't know how long it will be . . ." That was the Patterson moment I waited for in the sermon.

He wasn't just a preacher, he was "THE TEMPLATE for preachers."