

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Preaching The Gospel

By Micky Galloway

In keeping with the series of articles examining specific words that denote specific responsibilities of stewardship of the gospel, please consider the following on **“preaching”** the gospel. We must use the gospel to “compel” (to “constrain, whether by threat, entreaty, force, or persuasion” *W.E. Vine*), others to respond (Lk. 14:23). As good stewards of the gospel we are to be prepared to “defend” (give answer), to “persuade,” (to reason or present intelligent arguments), to “warn.” Timothy was to **“preach the word”** (2 Tim. 4:2ff). *Keerusoo*; is “to be a herald; to officiate as herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald” (*Thayer*). All of the above is voided if our preaching is not distinctive! We will have failed our stewardship. The preaching of Paul and Silas was so powerful and impacting that the Jews said they were violators of Caesar’s laws and that in other places they had **“turned the world upside down”** (Acts 17:1-9). Could weak, non-distinctive, platitudes often heard today turn that world upside down? Can such preaching change our world for the better today?

We are often invited to accept preaching that is non-distinctive. From a very popular denomination in Lancaster, I read, *“We stand firmly in the center of historic Christian teaching. We have deep convictions concerning the clear teaching of the Bible, and at the same time, we allow room for differing opinions about the things that can be legitimately debated by thoughtful Christians...In other words, we do have boundaries, but our boundaries are broad and inclusive.”* Evidence of the same attitudes in churches of Christ is presented in a letter from a “church of Christ” preacher inviting me to a meeting, *“to foster and promote unity and appreciation for diversity among the various congregations of the church of Christ.”*

This is a constant problem. Anyone who desires to preach the gospel would do well to examine the sermon content, the manner, and preaching methods of those great preachers of whom we read in the Scriptures. We have entirely too much preaching that means nothing, and the need of the hour is for men who have the courage to preach a distinctive message.

Apostolic preaching was true to the Scriptures. Their preaching had to be **“as the oracles of God”** (1 Pet. 4:11). Noble people searched the Scriptures when they heard the apostles preach (Acts 17:10-12). Such action of pure motives denotes logically the absoluteness of scripture; all assumed standards for life’s belief and conduct must be measured by God’s inspired word! Some having heard Jesus, but confused as to who He was, said, **“Hath not the scripture said...”** (Jn. 7:42). That which is **“inscribed in the writing of truth”** (Dan. 10:21) was not to be contradicted.

Christ can’t be preached without using scripture faithfully. Jesus said, **“Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me”** (Jn. 5:39). In Thessalonica, Paul and Silas **“reasoned with them from the scriptures”** (Acts 17:2). Of what benefit would it have been to the worshipers in that synagogue if Paul had challenged them with human philosophy? The doctrines and commandments of men have never been good for anyone religiously (Matt. 15:9). Though the Jews were religious they were lost (Rom. 10:1-3), and Paul and Silas had the message of truth that could change their condition. Christ was their subject: **“This Jesus whom I proclaim unto you, is the Christ”** (Acts 17:3). They were explaining and showing them God’s plans for Christ in saving the world. The Ethiopian was reading scripture (Isa. 53) when Philip the evangelist met him (Acts 8:27-34), and the preacher **“beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus”** (Acts 8:35) that led to his conversion to Christ (Acts 8:36-39). It is foolish for one to think he can preach the saving Christ to a lost world and not use scripture. Paul preached Jesus **“according to the scriptures”** (1 Cor. 15:3-4). He said that Christ died and rose from the dead **“according to the scriptures”!** This is where the power is, brethren!

Apostolic preaching was bold, and straight-forward. At Paphos on the island of Cypress, Paul and Barnabas

spoke the word of God to Sergius Paulus the proconsul. However, Elymas the sorcerer withstood them and sought to **“to turn aside the proconsul from the faith.”** But Paul **“fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”** (Acts 13:7-10). Paul did not mince words. If Paul were alive today you can be sure he wouldn't refer to homosexuality and lesbianism simply as “alternate lifestyles”! In Romans 1, he referred to such things as **“against nature”** and of a **“reprobate mind.”**

Apostolic preaching was not adverse to calling names and identifying specific false doctrines. Paul mentioned Hymenaeus and Alexander whom he **“delivered unto Satan that they might be taught not to blaspheme”** (1 Tim. 1:20). He called the names of Hymenaeus and Philetus, **“men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already”** (2 Tim. 2:17-18). He said, **“Demas has forsaken me”** and that **“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm”** (2 Tim 4:10, 14). He even named Peter's sin of hypocrisy when he acted inconsistently with the truth (Gal. 2:11-13). Yes, there is a difference between exposing error and abusing the adherent of the error. We may show kindness to the man and yet expose the error which he holds.

It often becomes necessary to tell who preaches what. There is a vast difference between the truth of the gospel and the theories of denominationalism, and that difference ought to be held up to the people who hear. Jesus said, **“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”** (Matt. 15:13). This would not be so necessary if denominational preachers would preach the doctrines of their churches, but they are like some of my brethren who listen to the clamor of the audience for “soft preaching.” Often, the average member of denominations does not know the doctrines of his own church! You may preach ever so strongly upon some point of error, but he does not know you are talking about him and his need to change, for his preacher has not preached what that denomination believes.

Jesus Christ and the apostles did not hesitate to let men know they were lost! Paul called Elymas a **“child of the devil,”** and **“enemy of all righteousness”** (Acts 13:10). There was no reason for Elymas to think that Paul considered him in a safe condition. Peter plainly told Simon to repent and pray that God might forgive him (Acts 8:20-23). He let him know that he stood condemned. And Jesus said the Pharisees were children of hell (Matt. 23:15).

With such worthy examples before us, why should we fail to preach so that men in sin and denominational religions can see they need to be saved? Isn't that our stewardship? – ***Fifth Street East church of Christ Bulletin***, February 17, 2019. ■

Preaching Christ and His Church

By Joe R. Price

“1 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1–2, NKJV).

Jesus gave His apostles power (capacity) and authority (the freedom to act) over demons and diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to work miracles which confirmed the divine nature of their message. The New Testament identifies the kingdom of God as the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; Col. 1:13). Preaching the kingdom of God is central to preaching Christ. When the evangelist Philip preached Christ, he preached **“things concerning the kingdom of God”** (Acts 8:5, 12). We fail to preach Christ if our preaching minimizes His church (His kingdom). There is rich irony in one thinking he can preach Christ to sinners (so they can be saved and added to the church, His kingdom, Acts 2:47) by not preaching the church (the kingdom) to them! Such is the feeble and futile attempt to preach Christ but not His church. We cannot preach Christ (the Anointed One, the King) without preaching His kingdom, His church. Truly, the gospel of Christ is the gospel of the kingdom (Lk. 4:18, 43-44). Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom, and so did His apostles. When early Christians preached Christ, they preached His kingdom (the church). When we preach Christ, we must preach His kingdom, His church. – ***Sword Tips***, April 30, 2018. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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