

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“What Shall We Say Then?”

In Romans 6 Paul urged the Roman Christians to live in righteousness. With the question he posed in Romans 6:1-2, he refutes the false idea that God’s grace is made abundant by continuing in sin. God’s grace is abundant when man walks in obedience to God, not when man continues in sin. In Chapter 5, Paul compared the abundance of God’s grace to sin. While man’s sins abound, “*grace did much more abound*” (Rom. 5:20) Paul declared. So, Paul posed the question, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*” and he answers his own question emphatically by saying, “*God forbid*” and then reminded the Romans that since they were buried by baptism into the death of Christ, they were then raised in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection and therefore, “*should walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4).

A gospel preacher who was invited to hold a gospel meeting was asked by the preacher of the congregation inviting him what he thought about having the meeting in a neutral place and not mentioning the name of the church due to prejudice on the part of some denominational people. Question: Does the attitude this preacher exemplified by asking such a question share any likeness with the bold nature of Christ and His Apostles as they preached the gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world during the first-century church? Not at all! With the question Paul posed to the Romans in mind, please consider the following:

“*What shall we say then?*” If a Jewish visitor is in the audience, shall we avoid preaching “*Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” because of the prejudice of Jews (1 Cor. 2:2)? “*God forbid*” – Mk. 8:38; Rom. 1:16; 9:33; 2 Tim. 1:12.

“*What shall we say then?*” If a person of the Muslim faith is in the audience, shall we avoid teaching on the Deity of Christ because of the prejudice of Muslims? “*God forbid*” – Matt. 10:32, 33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:17; 1 Jn. 4:2, 3, 15; 5:1.

“*What shall we say then?*” If members of denominations are in the audience, shall we expect the preacher to avoid preaching on the identity and purpose of the Lord’s church because the denominational world teaches, “one church is good as another,” or for fear of “embarrassing our visitors” or being accused of “blasting denominations”? “*God forbid*” – Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph. 2:21, 22; 4:1-16; 5:22-33.

“*What shall we say then?*” If we have evolutionists or atheists in the audience, shall we avoid teaching that God exists and that He is the Creator of all things, because of the prejudice of evolutionists and atheist? “*God forbid*” – Gen. 1-2; Psa. 33:6-9; 74:15-17; 95:3-6; 100:3; 104:24, 25, 30; 139:14; 148:1-5; Isa. 43:7; Jn. 1:3; Acts 17:24-29; Rom. 1:19, 20; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; 11:3.

“*What shall we say then?*” If immoral folks are in the audience, shall we avoid preaching “*repentance for the remission of sins*” because they may be offended when the truth is presented on certain moral issues such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, same-sex “marriages,” polygamy, pornography, use of tobacco, gambling (including playing the lottery), abortion, immodest dress (including wearing shorts that expose the thigh), drinking alcohol, stealing, and lying, etc.? “*God forbid*” – Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Rom. 1:21-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 7:1, 2; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:28; Col. 3:1-10; 1 Pet. 4:1-4; Rev. 21:8.

Did John shun calling out the adulterous marriage of Herod and Herodias for fear of being accused of being judgmental (Mk. 6:14-29)? Did Paul shun to teach the “*resurrection of the dead*” for fear of offending the Sadducees (Acts 23:6-14)? Did Steven fear calling out the unbelief of the Jews for fear of being accused of being “negative” (Acts 6:8-7:60)? The answer is obvious to those who love and obey the truth! Many other examples could be given, but these are sufficient.

Well, ***“What shall we say then?”*** We must declare ***“All the counsel of God”*** (Acts 20:27). We must ***“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine”*** (2 Tim. 4:2). If we seek to please men, we will not be the servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Therefore, we must preach (speak) the truth in love (*agape* love), seeking to save the lost souls of sinners and teaching all things commanded by God for man to do (Eph. 4:15; Acts 10:33; Matt. 28:19, 20; Jn 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 Jn. 5:1-3; Rev. 22:14). Now, what will YOU say then? – *tgmc* ■

“Don’t Call Names”

Luther Blackmon

Sometimes I have suspicioned that we call names out of spite and vindictiveness. Whoever does that advertises his littleness. But the person who says that we should never call names advertises his ignorance of the true spirit of the New Testament writers. Of course, Luke could have said, “There were a couple in Jerusalem, a man and his wife, who sold some property and misrepresented the amount they gave, and for this the Lord killed them!” But for some reason, he told us exactly who they were. And Peter said, ***“Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...”*** I think I know some preachers who are too nice to use the word ***“lie.”*** That is, unless something is told on them personally. One preacher just said that he had no place in his vocabulary for the word ***“liar.”*** All I can say is that his vocabulary is not big enough, and is too sweet.

Peter said, ***“Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place”*** (Acts 1:25). Peter indicated that he had some doubt about Judas going to heaven. “What a terrible thing to say. He was judging the poor fellow.” I read an article once which made a feeble attempt to place Judas in a better light than that which is generally cast upon him. However, I doubt that even his champion hopes to meet him “over there.”

Paul tells us that ***“Elymas”*** was a ***“child of the devil,”*** an ***“enemy of all righteousness.”*** He told Elymas that. Can’t you just imagine how mortified some of the sophisticated upper crust would react to that kind of preaching today. I shouldn’t wonder if Paul would get “fired” right off.

John Mark turned back from the work and went not with Paul and Barnabas. Later Paul and Barnabas had such a disagreement over Mark that they split up. Luke says the contention between them was ***“sharp.”*** I have known many who said they would not for anything let their “unsaved” friends read a paper in which brethren are having ***“sharp contention.”*** Wonder if they tear out this chapter in Acts? (Acts 15:39). Later on, Paul speaks very favorably of Mark. He redeemed himself, and Paul held no grudges (2 Tim. 4:11).

Apollos preached an imperfect Gospel in Ephesus, ***“knowing only the baptism of John.”*** Aquila and Priscilla taught him better and he continued his work. Was it necessary to put this in the divine record? Evidently the Holy Spirit thought so. (Acts 18:24-26).

Paul said that Peter acted the part of a hypocrite ***“when he was come to Antioch.”*** Peter was human and made human mistakes and some of them are recorded for all succeeding generations to read. This one is found in Galatians 2:11-13. The word ***“dissimulation”*** means hypocrisy.

Paul said, ***“Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.”*** He said Hymenaeus and Alexander had made ***“shipwreck of the faith,”*** that Hymenaeus and Philetus had ***“erred... teaching that the resurrection had passed already.”***

There are times when gospel preachers ought to be like the old dentist. A young dentist moved to town, and put up a sign that read: “Teeth extracted without pain.” The old dentist put up one that read: “Teeth extracted regardless of pain.” Sometimes it is necessary to name the sinner as well as the sins. It hurts, but it should. – ***Truth Magazine***, January 30, 1975. ■

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

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