

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## THE PREACHER

By Raymond E. Harris

The word *“preacher”* is found eleven times in the Bible. In 2 Peter 2:5, Peter speaks of Noah as *“a preacher of righteousness.”* In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon spoke of himself seven times as *“the preacher.”* In 1 Timothy 2:7 and in 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul speaks of himself as a preacher. And in Romans 10:14, Paul writes of preachers in general.

In both the Old and New Testaments, preachers are also described as a *“Man Of God.”* That expression is found 78 times in the Bible. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, David, and Timothy are a few so designated.

The words *“Evangelist”* and *“Evangelists”* are found three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11).

### The Place or Purpose for Preachers, Men of God, or Evangelists in the Affairs of God

There have always been proclaimers of God’s Word, heralds of glad and evil tidings. In 1 Corinthians 1:21, Paul wrote that *“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

Today, all across this country and around the world there are countless multitudes of faithful, able, dedicated preachers. However, there are others filling our pulpits that I do not believe understand the mission and work of a gospel preacher.

It is reported that many years ago a pioneer preacher, who had a school for preachers, would say on the first day of every school year, “Boys don’t preach unless you have to.” That’s still good advice today! Unless a man is driven by a love for: (1) God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), (2) the word, (3) the church, and (4) the souls of lost mankind, he should stay out of the pulpit. The purpose of preaching must be to convert sinners and to edify the saints. The purpose of preaching is not to please, entertain, or make the audience feel good.

### Some Fifty Years Ago I Was Taught in No Uncertain Terms:

- If you want to be a clown, join the circus, but stay out of the pulpit!
- If you want to talk politics, go to Washington, but stay out of the pulpit!
- If you want to be a comedian, get on the radio (now TV), but stay out of the pulpit!
- If you want to be dramatic, get on the stage, but stay out of the pulpit!
- If you want to appear intellectual, go teach in college, but stay out of the pulpit!
- If you want to seriously, soberly and simply proclaim God’s Word, by all means, take the pulpit!

### The Life of a Faithful Gospel Preacher Will Always Be a Struggle

Many enter into preaching who have no concept of what they are getting into. On the one hand, life as a gospel preacher can be exciting, thrilling, stimulating, and spiritually fulfilling. But, it is not all fried chicken, glamour, glory, and glitz.

Preaching is life in a goldfish bowl. It is a life with petty complaints about your wife. Petty complaints about your children, your sermons, and your classes. Most of these complaints will come from those who never preached a sermon or taught a class in their life. It can be a life where you do not even receive a cost of living raise for three or four years. And then the brethren will be shocked and wonder why in the world you are

thinking about moving.

## **Some Preachers Quit**

It is common to hear of brethren who quit preaching and go into secular work. They become disillusioned, discouraged, disappointed, or fall into sin. But that is nothing new! We learn in 2 Timothy 4:10 that Demas did the same thing.

## **Some Preachers Ought to Quit Preaching (I wish they would)**

Over the years, some preachers have left a trail of split, splintered, fractured, broken, and wounded churches. I marvel! Why do the brethren continue to use them? It seems that some waste a life time doing little but hurt and harm to the cause of Christ. And when they finish their evil work in one place they simply move on down the road to another congregation and start it all over again. And, sometimes the devastated church will go so far as to recommend the church wrecker to another congregation!

## **Some Preachers Have Quit and Don't Know It**

Yes, they have quit preaching against: dancing, social drinking, gambling, immodest dress, unscriptural divorce, mixed swimming, evil TV, evil movies, fornication, instrumental music in worship, premillennialism, institutionalism and denominationalism. This "famine of the Word" (Amos 8:11) is filling churches with weak, unsound members that are not grounded in God's Word.

Some today hardly bother to extend the invitation or teach and explain the New Testament plan of salvation. Some time back I had the opportunity to attend a service at ten different gospel meetings. At the end of seven of the ten sermons, the preacher concluded by saying, "If there are those present who would like to become Christians tonight, please come to the front of the building as we stand to sing." Any non-Christian present who had not been taught God's plan of salvation on another occasion, would not have had any idea what was going to happen when they got to the front of the building. And that was at what we think of as an "evangelistic service."

Others who are so very positive with their preaching no longer set forth the uniqueness of the church of Christ. Little is said about the "one true church." Several months ago I listened to seven taped sermons of about forty minutes each. I do not recall hearing one verse quoted or read in its totality. Each sermon contained no more than two or three allusions to a passage.

Some preachers seem to see themselves more as church managers, counselors, motivators and promoters rather than proclaimers of God's Word. Today, too many preachers are quoting Swindoll, Lucado, Dobson, Graham, Colson, or Stanley instead of Jesus, Peter, James, John, or Paul. Brethren need to learn that you cannot go to the Philistines or the Samaritans for teaching that will convert sinners or edify saints! – *Truth Magazine*, April 19, 2001. ■

***"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Tim. 4:1-8).**

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

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: [www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com](http://www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com) - Email: [lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com) - Phone: 209-365-9250