

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Proclaim The Saving Truth

By Don Givens

There is no more wonderful service than to impart saving truth, Lost sinners must know the truth and the truth can make them free. Our Savior commanded, ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel” so that creatures could hear, believe, respond in repentance and baptism and be saved*** (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16).

It is clearly seen then, that the preaching of the word ***“publicly and from house to house”*** is of utmost importance (Acts 20:20). Every disciple of the Lord is to spread the glad tidings of salvation. Who is not thrilled to share such tremendous news? The gospel is ***“glad tidings”*** (Luke 2:10,11). As the angel said, it is truly ***“good tidings of great joy.”***

The disciples who were driven out of Jerusalem waited for no instructions, no organized personal work program, or human clergy “ordinations,” but ***“went everywhere preaching the word”*** (Acts 8:4). We desperately need the attitude of Paul when he proclaimed, ***“Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel”*** (1 Cor. 9:16).

As one preaches and teaches the word, he must have a life consistent with the content of the gospel he proclaims. In other words, do not ruin what you say by how you live! Zealous, righteous, and blameless character must fortify the oral lessons of the teacher.

The evangelist Paul told the younger evangelist Timothy to ***“preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching”*** (2 Tim. 4:2). It is the Word that is to be preached, not your opinions, not your surmissings, and not ***“the ways that seem right unto men”*** (Prov. 14:12). Carefully note that the apostle commands us to be longsuffering. Too many teachers are short-sufferers.

Preach the sufficiency and inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Cater not to the worldly wisdom of the crafty fools (1 Cor. 3:18-21).

With the rock of Truth hurled from the sling of faith, you can smite unbelief as it parades in modern society under the guise of “sophistication.” Swallow not the bait of the devil which says that only the ignoramus believes the Bible and only the weak-minded need the faith. Show the people that the nice, pretty baits of pleasure, power, and profit only hide the hooks of damnation, destruction, and doom.

Preach repentance from sin, rather than making apologies for it. Firmly declare, with love for souls, that the sinner must repent or perish in hell (2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 21:8). Remember that men laugh at sin instead of turning from it. They toy with it instead of hating it. Although men may joke about hell, there will be no joking in hell. Teach men to hate sin as much as they hate the hell to which it leads. Even though some have eliminated hell from their doctrinal belief, it has not been eliminated from God’s Word.

Rebuke sin wherever and in whomever it is found, and start with yourself. Be courageous enough to identify sin as wickedness in all of its filthiness and putridness, even though it be found in your best friend as well as your worst enemy. In all these rebukes remember that ***“the Lord’s servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves”*** (2 Tim. 2:24, 25) and ***“in all things showing thyself an ensample of good works”*** (Tit. 2:7).

Be just as broad as the Scriptures. Be just as narrow as the Scriptures. Study the sermons of Peter, Paul, Stephen, but especially those of Jesus. Think not that you can have “better manners” than the apostles. Denounce

riotous living; expose the grimy hog pens of sin; and as you do so offer the amazing grace of the Heavenly Father to the returning prodigal.

As you preach the Word remember that your greatest wage and your best pay is the approval of the Lord and the glory brought to God. No wage is so satisfying as the peace and joy you will have knowing that you are laboring together with God (1 Cor. 15:58).

Do not expect overwhelming gratitude from people you serve. Truly, you are serving the Lord. About ninety percent of the good you do in this life, you will not know about in this life! Therefore, do not teach the saving truth just when you can see “visible results.” Much good that you do will not be “visible” to you. Remember that the prophets of God have always been on the receiving end of more “mud” than “medals,” and more bricks than bouquets.

When humiliated by a seeming failure, the Lord will halve your burden by helping you bear your disappointment. When you are elated with success, God will double your joy by sharing it.

As many faithful preachers and teachers of the precious Word have said before: “Preach sin horrible, death inevitable, judgment certain, hell hot, eternity never ending, and heaven beautiful.”

Preach the saving truth! Spread the good news! Go, and may God be with thee. ■



Be Careful What You ‘Like’

By Greg Gwin

Facebook and Instagram are the world’s most popular social networking websites. One of the features of these sites is the ability to ‘like’ something that has been posted there by another user. Typically, to ‘like’ something means that you find it funny, or agree with what is being said. It is a way of indicating that you appreciate it in some way – that you are a fan of it – that you just ‘like’ it.

Unfortunately, there are frequent examples of Christians ‘liking’ things that should actually repulse them. For example:

- Someone posts an inappropriate picture of themselves in immodest clothing – yet several of their ‘friends’ and ‘followers’ will indicate that they ‘like’ this.
- Another discusses some recent immoral behavior – effectively boasting about the sinful thing that has been done – and his social media buddies nod their approval with a thoughtless ‘like.’
- Often people will reference some risqué movie, an ungodly television show, or a worldly concert or performance. They suggest that they really enjoyed it and recommend it to others – and many are quick to ‘like’ this, too.

In all of these things and more, we need to be reminded that God’s Word says we should **“not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them,”** and warns us that **“it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them”** (Eph. 5:11, 12). Surely, this is the polar, opposite of ‘liking’ such things.

And, one more thing to consider – increasingly we are hearing of certain brethren who are posting questionable and erroneous doctrinal statements on their social media sites. Or, they may ‘link’ to some article or comments by a religious false teacher. They endorse this, and their ‘friends’ ‘like’ it as well. But the Scriptures teach us that we should not **“bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”** (2 John 10, 11).

Be careful about your influence and example before you ‘like’ something on social media. Think! ■

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 - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250