

A Problem Area for Preachers

Paul told Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). It has been suggested that this phrase literally means to preach when folks like it and when they don't. In another place the apostles prayed for "boldness" in their preaching (Acts 4:29). So, preachers are to boldly proclaim a message that will sometimes be unpopular.

In the process of doing this work, a preacher is in a precarious situation. This boldness may cause his hearers to think that he is over-confident. Some may imagine that he is close-minded. There may be the impression that he is not open to other points-of-view, or that he wants to stifle what others have to say. Sadly, in some cases and with some preachers, these accusations are true.

However, no preacher 'worth his salt' wants to discourage open discussion of issues. And, while he may speak forcefully on a given topic, he acknowledges his own limitations and the possibility that he can err in under-

By Greg Gwin

standing the Scriptures. If he is obedient to the Word, he knows that he (like all others) must continue to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

In this age of "political correctness" it has become increasing unpopular to tell people that they are wrong about anything. But, of course, that is a significant part of what preachers do. Those who are doing their best to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2) will inevitably touch some areas that are 'close to home.' When this happens, we urge you to seriously consider what has been said. Honestly examine yourself to see if you need to apply the lesson. Be willing to re-think your previous position. And, finally, do not hesitate to share your thoughts and concerns with the preacher. If he is the kind of man he ought to be, he will gladly discuss any issue with you. Give him the chance to do so!



Those Graduating

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Megan McMurray | 6. Josh Carter | 11. Olivia Hillard | 17. David Simpson |
| 2. Brad Hartsell | 7. Orie Cecil | 12. Drew Martin | 18. Spencer Sullivan |
| 3. Aurie Adams | 8. Abby Deason | 13. Anna Leigh Peek | 19. Josh Sutton |
| 4. Stephen Ambrose | 9. Andrea George | 14. A. J. Price | 20. Madalyn Vines |
| 5. Andrew Cagle | 10. Maci Guthrie | 15. Stefan Richardson | 21. Kaylee West |
| | | 16. Rafia Qadeer | 22. Lauren Ledford |

Sick

Jeff Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Donna Pridmore (Erin Miller's Mom)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Andrew Westphal	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Dale Herd (Brother of William Herd)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Eli Williams	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Diane Lewter (Kyle Lewter's mother)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Toni and William Herd	Amy Baswell Hall

May Birthdays

- 2 - Taylor Bethea
- 2 - Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3 - Paula Davis
- 4 - Cadence Pittman
- 10 - Ian Norman
- 10 - Ryan Hasty
- 11 - Scott Perkins
- 11 - Caleb George
- 12 - Daphene Whatley
- 12 - Patrick Davis
- 13 - Jana Hall
- 13 - Anna Grace Long
- 15 - Bryce Daniels
- 18 - Ty Randolph
- 19 - Madison Seals
- 22 - Sarah Holliday
- 24 - Andy Roberts
- 25 - Church Hahn
- 26 - Fallon Hartsell
- 28 - Barbara Weeks
- 28 - Candy Long
- 31 - Rachel Tolliver

News and Notes

- ☒ - Kevin Simpson has returned home from the hospital and continues to recover.
- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers Fallon Hartsell as she is expecting twin girls!
- ☒ - The Kids class will meet at 5:15 today.
- ☒ - The Ladies class will meet at 10 AM on Thursday morning at Laura Humphrey's home to study "Good Homes".
- ☒ - David Anderson, Kevin's dad, had further tests and no serious problems were found!
- ☒ - Frank Hand, Laura Humphrey's dad, is making slow improvement and seeing additional doctors.
- ☒ - Jeff Miller continues in hospice care.
- ☒ - Cliff Parson's grandfather, Hank Selby, died and was buried in Little Rock, AK.
- ☒ - Toni Herd's uncle, Bill Rhodes, died.
- ☒ - VBS forms are to be given to Jared Johnson.
- ☒ - Barbara Weeks had surgery this week and is recovering.

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Volume 5, Issue 26

May 4, 2014

Seeking the Truth

By Barney Keith



Thoughts to Ponder

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)

As tragic as it is, "Many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) One of the most discouraging things to people through the ages has been the prevalence of all sorts of religious doctrines. Every sincere person needs to recognize the existence of error, but at the same time realize that truth can be sought and known. Jesus promised that "the truth will make you free." (John 8:32) Truth is the only antidote for error.

Truth is accessible to all men alike. God is no respecter of persons, and "would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4) Yet there are certain basic considerations which are essential for the sincere truth seeker. Let us notice some of them.

1. The initial battle is with your own will. If you really want truth you can find it. (John 7:17) The desire of the Holy Spirit is that you "be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17) But you must make up your mind that you DESIRE to know. Then you will be ready to begin the search. A "good and honest heart" must come first.

2. You must have a wholesome, respectful attitude toward the truth. To search for truth will be a waste of your time if you do not plan to accept it—whatever it may be. Paul declared

to the Thessalonian brethren that certain people perish "because they received not the love of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:10) He stated also that they all will be "judged who believed not the truth." (2 Thess. 2:12) Hence, one must love the truth and believe the truth to avoid God's condemnation.

3. Be sure that your source of information is reliable. God's revealed word is the only infallible source of religious truth. (John 17:17) In the production of the Bible "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21) They could not err, therefore, in what they spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately there are many people who are not concerned about the source of their religious faith. Perhaps it has been inherited from parents. It may be that they have accepted what is popular in the community, or have acted wholly upon their feelings. Man needs a perfect guide. He cannot direct his own steps. (Jer. 10:23) He cannot simply take it for granted that anything he happens to believe and do will be acceptable to God. Let no one substitute human wisdom and reasoning for divine revelation, but depend entirely upon what God has spoken. He has spoken in the Scriptures.

Paul enumerates certain characteristics and powers of the scriptures "given by

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Elders

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) They are God-breathed; they are profitable; they equip one perfectly; they are all-sufficient as a guide for man in his search for forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. To find out whether any doctrine is true, one must "search the scriptures" (Acts 17:11), with the understanding that whatever cannot be established by the word of God is not the truth.

4. Recognize that it does not lie within your province to change that which the word of God teaches. Be content with what you find in the Bible. Remember, too, that even those men who are called "preachers," "priests," "rabbis," and "theologians" have no authority at all to bind upon you any tradition or commandment of men. In fact, no man has any binding authority whatsoever. Preachers — and all others — are just men. Nothing more! But the Author of the Bible is God. The Holy Spirit simply revealed to humanity what was in the mind of God. He knew what God desired. He communicated this to the special ambassadors chosen by the Lord. He also gave these men the spiritual words with which to express spiritual truths to men. Read very carefully Paul's discussion of this matter. (1 Cor. 2:6-16)

Never be guilty of trying to make God say more than He has said in His revealed word. Nor, for that matter, should you be content to do less than He has said. It is a fearful thing to pervert or corrupt the word of the gospel. (Gal. 1:6-9) If you want to know how to be converted to Christ, read what the Scriptures reveal. Nothing else is needed. Anything different from the Bible will condemn rather than save. If you want to know the truth about how to worship God, the same Scriptures will supply that information. The Bible alone makes known God's will to you. Steer clear, then, of any disposition to alter this divine revelation. It is perfect; you are not.

5. Do not allow anyone to hinder your obedience to the truth. A soul (yours) is too valuable. The gospel of Christ is God's power to save. (Rom. 1:16.) Your concern must be, "What does Christ teach me to do to have remission of sins?" Read carefully such passages as **Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6: 3, 4.** The simple requirements of Jesus Christ are faith, repentance, confession of faith, and immersion for the remission of sins. Let no one stand in your way to dissuade you from obeying Him who is the "author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5:9) Believe the

truth to avoid condemnation (and because it is the truth). Obey the truth to have your soul purified. (1 Pet. 1:22)

Such devotion to the truth as described above must necessarily produce the results that our Lord promised. There is nothing wrong with the truth. The trouble is with man who finds so many excuses, so many interferences. How much do you want the truth? Is any price too great to pay for it? Surely there is nothing as important as obeying Him who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6) All who seek salvation in the Lord's way will find it and the truth will make them free.

A Final Word

In the New Testament we can see clearly the attitude that certain men had toward the truth of God. Some of these we need to imitate; others we need to reject. A marvelous example is found in the Ethiopian eunuch described in **Acts 8:26-39**. He was completely without prejudice. He really wanted to know what the prophet Isaiah meant. He was willing for another to teach him. In fact, he "desired" that Philip teach him. He knew that he needed instruction. (Acts 8:30, 31) It is no wonder that he obeyed the truth just as quickly as the opportunity was afforded. He was a sincere seeker of truth.

Then there is the remarkable spirit manifested by the people in Berea. (Acts 17:11) They were not gullible, but they did receive the word "with all readiness of mind!" They searched the Scriptures to find out "whether these things were so!" They knew what the standard of truth was, and they used it. They were not resentful, but receptive.

How different was the reaction of the people of Antioch in Pisidia, as described by Luke in **Acts 13:44-46**. They were not truth-seekers. They were bound by human traditions and their personal prejudices. Consequently, when the truth was preached by Paul, "they were filled with envy and spake against those things..., contradicting and blaspheming." How sad a spectacle! They seemed not to care that they were putting the word of God from themselves and judging themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." (verse 46) This is what anyone will do unless he is very careful to cultivate the five principles enumerated earlier in this article. Let all of us search our hearts on the matter of attitudes toward the word of God and then be sure to "let the word of Christ dwell" in us richly. (Col. 3:16)



Two Men Know They Are Saved

By Bill Hall

Two men "know" they are saved. The first man bases his assurance of salvation on his experience. He had been assured that when he completely turned his life over to Jesus Christ, accepted Him as personal Savior, and received Him into his heart, that an inner peace and feeling of well being would sweep his soul; that he would be able to recognize that feeling when it came; and that this peace and feeling of well being would be unmistakable evidence of his salvation. In keeping with that teaching he did "receive Jesus into his heart." He did feel this wonderful peace sweep his soul. And he "knows" that he is saved.

The second man's assurance is based on the promise of God. He had read in God's word, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). From other passages he had learned the necessity of repentance and confession of faith (Acts 2:38; 7:37; Rom. 10:10). Trusting God's promise of salvation, he obeyed from the heart those commands (Rom. 6:17), and has never doubted since that God forgave him of all his past sins, according to His promise.

The first man's assurance of salvation is based upon an unsure foundation. The Bible teaches neither the action he has taken nor the criterion he has accepted. We do not question his feelings; but we do question that such feelings are proof of salvation, for they are the product of his teaching. The cultist who has been taught certain gross practices in religion and has become the victim of his perverted leader will experience similar feelings. If the feelings

The second man has based his assurance on a solid foundation. God's promises are sure. He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). What He has promised He is able to perform (Romans 4:21).

of the latter are not sufficient proof of salvation, neither are the feelings of the former.

"But an angel appeared and spoke to me," someone may be thinking; or "I spoke in tongues." The Bible teaches, however, that even unusual, inexplicable occurrences in one's life cannot set aside the teaching of God's revealed word. Many who will

be in hell will have said, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils [demons]? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Mt. 7:22). But all their experiences, even "miracles," will not substitute for their doing the Father's will as it is recorded in the scriptures (Matt. 7:21; see also Gal 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; Deut 13:1-5; Col 2:18, 19).

The second man has based his assurance on a solid foundation. God's promises are sure. He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). What He has promised He is able to perform (Romans 4:21). The person who obeys His commandments through truth in His promises can know, because God is faithful. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3).

We ask our readers, "Who really demonstrates strong faith in God: the one who simply trusts God's promises and finds assurance in His word or the one who must experience some overwhelming feeling that sweeps his soul?" God's judgment will be based, not on what we "know," but on His word. Be not deceived!

