

“With All Your Heart” (Cont. from pg. 3) Biblical standpoint the rational acceptance of the word of God produces faith. This not a faith that comes from nothing. God’s word is its source. Paul further told the Romans: “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

Our love for God must be “with all of our heart.” So many in our world claim wholehearted love for God, yet walk in sin, ungodly thoughts, attitudes and ignorance of God’s word. Let’s never make their mistake of thinking that giving our “heart” to God just means that we have strong emotions for Him. The “heart” which God wants is much more

than just feelings, passions and emotions. It is what thinks, believes, forgives, is cut and motivates to good works. That is what God wants. He will be satisfied with no less.



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L. A. Stauffer

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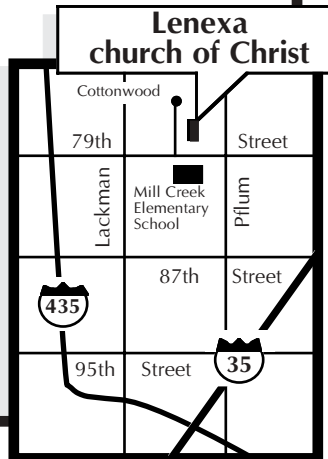
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MEETING TIMES
Sunday – Bible Classes 9:30 AM
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Wednesday – Bible Classes 7:00 PM



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EDIFIER

...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. – Romans 14:19

Volume VII

September 26, 2004

Number 16

Pray for the Preacher

by Jim Stauffer

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians he urges them to: “Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” (4:2-4 ASV). Similarly, in the letter to the Ephesians after teach them to “pray always” he asks: “And on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19-20).

In these two passages, Paul makes a plea to the brethren of these two congregations to pray for both the preacher to have boldness and to have opportunity to preach the word with boldness. It is interesting that in both cases, he is in prison for this very act. That is, he was jailed for preaching the gospel boldly. This would seem to indicate there is a constant reminder in all of us from our flesh

that going against the grain by preaching the gospel of Christ can cause physical suffering. Paul had already spent years preaching the gospel in its simplicity and had as a result been intimidated on several occasions. The city of Thessalonica ran him out of town when they accused him of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:1-6). Just prior to that he had been jailed in Philippi for demonstrating the power of God and in the process, costing some slave owners their material gain (Acts 16:11-40). I make these references to emphasize the need preachers have for the prayers of the brethren. If Paul needed prayers for courage and boldness, think what those of us who are attempting to follow his example will need.

As we look at the passages above we wish to notice first the prayer he requests in Col 4:3 that an opportunity may come for him to preach the word. As we live day by day opportunities exist everywhere (Cont. on pg. 2)

Pray for the Preacher (Cont. from pg. 1) but usually we are not aware of them. They may be in other areas or they may be with people we have little or no contact with or more importantly they may be with people we would not think to have contact with. Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4 and as a result so many came from the city, Jesus made His statement in verse 35 about the fields being white with harvest. When Paul attempted to deflect credit for conversions in Corinth in order to quell a rising division among them, he said he planted, Apollos watered, but that it was God who gave the increase. (I Corinthians 3:6) All this was the result of his preaching first in the synagogue, then later going to the Gentiles when the Jews refused to hear (Acts 18). The point is that both in the synagogue and in the homes of Gentiles he was afforded an opportunity to preach the gospel. Is it any wonder he would ask the people of Ephesus and Colosse to pray for him to have opportunities to preach?

The second thing he asks them to pray for is his ability to **“make known with boldness**

the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19). In the Colossian passage he says **“that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak”** (Colossians 4:3,4) As we have alluded to above, Paul had a long history of preaching the gospel boldly. Yet, it is obvious he felt the need of God’s help and was requesting the brethren to assist him in requesting it. There are many cases in the Bible of God’s servants showing courage in preaching with boldness. The one we shall cite is the Apostles in the early stages of the Church after having been jailed, beaten and released, were then threatened again in an effort to intimidate them to such an extent they would stop preaching Jesus. Subsequent to that the Apostles appealed to God in the shadow of the crucifixion of Christ by Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews to **“look upon their threatenings and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness”** (Acts 4:29).

With all this evidence before us concerning the life of those who preach the gospel, we must also be aware of the need for God to give us opportunity and courage to speak boldly as we ought.



“With All Your Heart”

by Kyle Pope

Mark 12:30 reads - **“you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.”** Our world speaks often of the

“heart.” Unless we are speaking of our health we aren’t talking about the vessel that pumps blood through our body. Rather, we are talking about the seat of our emotion and sensation. We say that the person who

pursues their interest “follows their heart.” The stomach of the hungry man is said to be “the key to a man’s heart.” We often use it in contrast to thought and reason. The foolish lover may be said to “follow her heart, not her head.”

The heart as it is portrayed in Scripture is not independent of thought and reason. Consider a number of passages which illustrate this. As Jesus teaches in parables, He explains to the disciples His use of parables and why they are not understood. He says - **“the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”** (Matthew 13:15) The heart as the Bible portrays it can grow dull. When Jesus speaks of defilement, He tries to help the people understand that defilement is internal. He teaches: **“out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”** Jesus shows that the heart is the birthplace of these defilements. The heart can become hardened (Matthew 19:8) and the heart can doubt (Mark 11:23).

That is not to suggest that the heart is a wholly negative force. It is the heart that forgives a person. At the end of the parable of the unmerciful servant, who refused to forgive, although he was forgiven, in speaking of the servant’s punishment Jesus says: **“So My heavenly Father also will do**

to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.” (Matthew 18:35). The scribe of whom Jesus said that he was not far from the kingdom, referred to the “first commandment” cited above, saying **“to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices”** (Mark 12:33).

Unlike the modern heart that is divorced from reason and thought, the heart as the Bible portrays it “thinks.” When Jesus perceives the disciples arguing about who was the greatest he is said to know the **“thought of their heart”** (Luke 9:47). The focus of the thoughts of the heart effect the reception of the things of God and the deeds that one does. The sinner **“out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil.”** (Luke 6:45). The word grows when it is planted in the **“noble and good”** heart (Luke 8:15). This is what explains conversion. The proud heart who hears the gospel doubts because their dull, hardened heart will not let it grow. The humble heart, who hears the truth, like those on Pentecost, **“were cut to the heart”** (Acts 2:37) and obeyed the gospel. Paul told the Romans that it is the heart that **“believes unto righteousness”** (Romans 10:10). From a **(Cont. on pg. 4)**



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