

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

September
20
2015

DOES PREACHING THE GOSPEL STILL WORK?

Jim Stauffer

We have just completed a gospel meeting here at Lenexa. Bruce Reeves presented 6 lessons over a 4 day period and did an excellent job. What do I mean by excellent? The obvious answer is he showed skill in the presentation of the material. The more important answer is his material was taken from the message the Holy Spirit revealed to men of the first century; men chosen by the Lord to carry it to us.

The question asked in our title is, "Was it effective?" For the answer to that question we must go to those same scriptures. Jesus illustrated both the value and the effect of preaching the gospel with His parable of the sower. In essence He taught us the seed sown (the word) was alive, powerful and effective when the soil (heart of man) was prepared to receive it. He describes some as soil that was packed so hard the seed could not penetrate it. Other soil was so rocky the seed could not take root and survive the heat of the day. Another type of soil allowed the seed to be choked out by weeds (cares of the world). He then says there was good soil, *these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.* (Lk. 8; Mat. 13) It is, Jesus said, as did Paul, *the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* (Rom. 1:16)

And such has been the case in the entire history of man. When Jesus said, *Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest* (Mat. 11:28), He was telling us the value in hearing His word. He was telling us of the positive result of preaching the very gospel He commanded His apostles to preach to the world (Mat. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16).

When Peter preached the gospel on Pentecost those who *received his word were baptized*" and they and others were added to the church daily as they were saved (Acts 2:41,47)

When Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian in Acts 8, the word took root in his heart and he confessed Jesus and was baptized. Similar results occurred with those in Samaria (Acts 8), the household of Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia and the Philippian jailer Acts 16). You see it is not the word of God that has changed in its message of life. It has not lost the power Jesus

attributed to it in the parable of the mustard seed (Mat. 13:31,32). If there is a difference between the effect of the word today and the first century it is in the hearts of men.

We should not be discouraged, however, because even Jesus told us most men fall into one of the first three categories of the parable of the sower. Most men will, due to the condition of their hearts, reject the word of God. *Mat. 7:13 Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.*

What we must do when we hear God's word is just what the honest men of Berea did. *Acts 17:11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.* What we must not do is reject it for selfish fleshly reasons such as Felix, the Governor of Judea did even though he trembled with his fear of God's message. We must not as his successor Festus did, accuse those who teach God's word of being mad. And even more so we must avoid being like King Agrippa whose knowledge of the Law of Moses enabled him to understand more fully than the others, the message Paul carried. And yet he was only "almost" persuaded because his earthly power would have been threatened by his obedience to the gospel.

Those of us who attended these lessons and followed along in our Bibles to verify the accuracy can truly benefit to the fullest if we will surrender to the message. That means accept it regardless of the sacrifice it demands.

If you think the price of obedience to the gospel is too high, consider the apostle Paul. *Phil. 3:8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: 10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the*

continued on page 2

fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; 11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. He was so devoted he lost his life in defense of the gospel as did many of those first century Christians. **Rev. 2:10** *Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*

Are we truly good soil or just pretending to be?

DISOBEDIENCE

Ways of Disobeying

Doing What God Prohibits:

Adam and Eve were guilty of doing the very thing God forbade. So far as we know they had fully complied with God's requirements to dress the garden and keep it. But God had also given them a prohibition. They deliberately did what Jehovah prohibited. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*, was a prohibitory commandment broken by the Hebrews on many occasions.

Example 1. The Prophet Sent to Bethel (1 Kgs. 13)

A prohibitive command was broken by the prophet who came out of Judah to Bethel to prophesy against Jeroboam's altar. The prohibition was: *Thou shalt eat no bread, nor drink water, neither return by the way thou camest.* As this prophet was returning by another route, an old prophet, having heard of him, overtook and brought him back; and by lying to him succeeded in inducing him to eat. While at the table, the man God had honored by sending him to cry against the altar erected at Bethel, heard these words, *Forasmuch as thou hast been disobedient unto the mouth of Jehovah, and hast not kept the commandment which Jehovah thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and has eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy body shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy father.* He paid the penalty for his disobedience with his life.

Example 2. Sabbath Breaking (Num. 15:33-36)

God forbade work on the sabbath. A man was found gathering a supply of wood on the sabbath. He was brought to Moses and Aaron, and the congregation. *And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done unto him.* No penalty had yet been declared concerning such case. However, now at God's command they stoned him to death. (Let it be remembered that Christians were never commanded to keep the sabbath - it was a commandment to the Jewish dispensation, and given to the Jews only. The Sabbath question will be fully discussed in a subsequent lesson).

Taken from Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1 C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside, pages 133,134.

ARE YOU JESUS?

A few years ago a group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had

assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner.

In their rush, with tickets and briefcases, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly missed boarding. All but one. He paused, took a deep breath, got in touch with his feelings, and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned.

He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain his taking a later flight. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the terminal floor. He was glad he did. The 16 year old girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, and at the same time helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the crowd swirled about her, no one stopping and no one to care for her plight.

The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket. When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?" She nodded through her tears. He continued on with, "I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly."

As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, "Mister..." He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "Are you Jesus?" He stopped in mid-stride, and he wondered. Then slowly he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning and bouncing about in his soul: "Are you Jesus?"

Do people mistake you for Jesus? That's our destiny, is it not? To be so much like Jesus that people cannot tell the difference as we live and interact with a world (shopping, working, reacting to others that are serving us) that is blind to His love, life and grace. If we claim to know Him, we should live, walk and act as He would. Knowing Him is more than simply quoting Scripture and going to church. It's actually living the Word as life unfolds day to day.

"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

-Author Unknown (via kirkwoodcoc.org) Taken from The Sincere Milk of the Word, Author Michael Hickox

The Indwelling of the Spirit

Few people would question the fact that the Holy Spirit in some way dwells within the Christian. Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in*

you..." (I Cor. 6:19). He further wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9). There is considerable disagreement, however, as to how the Spirit dwells within a Christian. It is not our aim in this short article to deal with that issue, but we do want to suggest three facts that must be remembered as one studies the question.

(1) The age of miracles is past. The only people in the gospel age who ever performed miracles were those who either received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46) or received spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:5-23; 19:1-7). No one receives either of these today. The purpose of the miracles was to reveal and confirm truth (I Cor. 2:7-13; Mark 16:19,20). Since all truth has been revealed (John 16:13) there is no further need for miracles. One's conclusion, therefore, concerning the indwelling of the Spirit must be compatible with this fact.

(2) The Christian is led by the Spirit through the scriptures, the word of God (Psa. 119:105; II Tim. 3:16,17; Eph. 3:3,4). He does not have some inner voice, separate from the scriptures, that somehow guides him into infallible conclusions in relation to truth and right. Nor is there anything in the scriptures that suggests that God's providence somehow works through the indwelling of the Spirit. Consequently, one makes a serious mistake if he interprets his feelings or subjective thinking as some kind of message provided by the indwelling Spirit.

(3) Statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit were not placed in the scriptures as problems to be wrestled with. They were placed there for one's assurance and consolation. A Christian sustains a very close fellowship with deity — so close that it can be said that he dwells in deity and deity dwells in him. In persecution, trials, temptations, and death his recognition of this close relationship sustains him and helps him to become triumphant in Christ. The apostles never felt the need to explain how this indwelling takes place.

Pentecostalism and other misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit force the Christian of this generation to be concerned with this problem. If, however, statements concerning the indwelling of the Spirit become primarily to him a problem to be wrestled with; if his obsession with the "how" of the Spirit's indwelling blinds him to the "fact" of that indwelling, he makes a serious mistake and may fail to find the joy and consolation that should be gained through the Lord's promise.

Differences will continue to exist, but a constant remembrance of these three facts should protect any one of us from dangerous conclusions in relation to this question.

by Bill Hall

PORTRAITS OF SALVATION

God sent His Son to die for us. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus did not sin, but He was willing to die for our sins. We are new creatures; a new day has dawned. Attempts to characterize salvation by using only one term or definition is to take away the richness and fullness of our

rescue from sin. Something so great and grand cannot be adequately defined by just one term. For example, the church is variously referred to in Scripture as the bride of Christ, the body of Christ, the house of God, the church of God. Christians are disciples: sometimes they are branches, sometimes sheep. In describing our salvation, we find several terms that express the beauty and fullness of our salvation.

Consider the word **propitiate**. It is defined as "to appease, to render favorable." The idea of wrath is a part of the meaning of this word; in this case, it is the judicial wrath of God against sin, rather than the arbitrary, capricious wrath of pagan gods. God's wrath is a holy wrath; it is not spiteful or vindictive. Rom. 3:24,25 says: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." The majesty of His law must be upheld; the penalty for sin must be paid. God's righteousness remains intact, not because of our own sacrifice. Jesus paid the penalty for our redemption. His death propitiated God's wrath against sin.

Consider the word **redeem**. This word was employed in the market place. It means "to buy back; to pay the ransom price." As captives of sin, we lack the ability or power to free ourselves. Divine rescue was necessary. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). He paid with His life; He shed His blood. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6).

Consider the word **justification**. This word is the opposite of condemnation. It is a legal term employed in the courtroom by the judge. Justification is by God's grace; our salvation is utterly undeserved (Rom. 3:24). Justification is possible through the blood of Christ. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. (Rom. 5:9). Justification is appropriated upon the basis of faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). What are the effects of justification? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.... (Rom. 8:1,2).

Every picture of salvation points to the sacrifice of Christ. Every picture says loudly that God took the initiative in reconciling us to Him through Christ. The better we understand our need for salvation, the better our understanding of propitiation, redemption, and justification. These words do not flatter us; they do suppose the magnitude of our need. These words should send us running as fast as we can possibly get there to the outstretched arms of Jesus!

By Randy Harshbarger via. Gospel Power, Vol. 11, No. 21, May 23, 2004.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.
Lenexa, Kansas 66216
913-764-9170

Check out the following websites

thelenexaedifier.com

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL, AND JAN PATRICK.

STEVE WIMP REMAINS IN ROOM 322 AT SHAWNEE MISSION HOSP.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAY: GOSPEL OF JOHN - RON PECK -
WEDNESDAY: THE THEME OF THE BIBLE - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON A.M. - THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10