

“A GREAT DOOR AND EFFECTUAL”

Paul wrote, “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9). Beloved, when we look at our lives today, can’t we see the same for us? There is a “great door and effectual” for us. Let us notice what Paul is saying in this phrase. The word “great” means (from ‘megas’), “of external form, size, measure” (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.) The word “door” comes from ‘thura’ meaning, “of "openings" for preaching and teaching the Word of God, 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev 3:8” (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.) Also, meaning, “to give access or present opportunity” (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993). And, the word “effectual” means, “Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective (1 Cor 16:9; Philem 6; Heb 4:12) (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993). Paul had a great opportunity to preach the gospel that required much energy to accomplish. We, too, have a great opportunity to preach the gospel, that opportunity is the whole world, even in our own neighborhood. This opportunity will require of us our energy to go through, or use this door opened unto us.

Second, Paul said, that “there are many adversaries.” The word “adversaries” means, “from anti (473), against, and keimai (2749), to be placed, to lie. To oppose” (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993). Also, “in the pres. part., the one lying against, an adversary, opposer” (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993). Paul had many adversaries. Luke wrote, “8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus” (Acts 19:8-9). There were false teachers, religious enemies, besides the wicked cities into which he would go and preach the gospel. We, too, have our many enemies, the same kind as Paul, false teachers, religious enemies, besides the wickedness of our time.

What are we going to do? Are we going to look at our enemies and quit, or are we going to look at the open door, use our energy, and go forth and preach the gospel? The choice is ours to make. Jesus said, “...unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37). Maybe the reason that there are few “labourers” is because some are looking at the “many adversaries.” The few are looking at the open door. May there be more “labourers.” Beloved, Jesus said, “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21). May all of us “hear” and “do” God’s word.

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ALL HE ASKS IS ALL WE HAVE

Why do so many people fail in living the Christian life? While many answers have been offered, I believe there is one overriding reason that fits every case. People have either failed to understand or have been unwilling to surrender to the central requirement of faithful discipleship: Jesus will not accept second place. He must be absolutely first in our lives, wherein lies a great challenge.

He has made plain the preeminence He must have. We must love Him more than we love material things (Matt. 6:19–24). This means we must not neglect our service to Him in order to amass wealth. Also, we must generously support His service with the wealth with which he has entrusted us. Further, we must not seek wealth by dishonest or dishonorable means.

He told us plainly that we must love Him even more than we love our dearest ones on earth (Matt. 10:34–37). This means that we must not yield to family loyalties or pressures that would cause us to disobey Him. Even if one’s family disowns him for becoming a Christian, one must still serve the Lord.

The basic (and most difficult) sacrifice He asks of us is self. We must present our bodies as “living sacrifices” unto God (Rom. 12:1). Jesus said his followers must “deny [i.e., no longer recognize, refuse to acknowledge] self” (Luke 9:23). We must “crucify” self so that self “no longer lives,” but Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20). This difficult challenge is the major point of failure. A narcissistic generation that has grown up on a steady diet of do your own thing and if it feels good, do it does not find it easy to give up its fornication, drug (including alcohol) consumption, materialism, and all of its other sin and shame.

Even some saints care more about their “right” to drink their beer than their hope of Heaven. Our age is convenience-crazy and pleasure-mad. Our world operates much as Israel did in the days of the Judges: “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). Men have become vain in their reasonings and their senseless hearts are darkened, leading them into unspeakable evils (Rom. 1:18–32). Sadly, this is true of many of the elect. If you doubt it, consider how many church members attend Bible study and worship only when they please and do what they please otherwise, with hardly a thought. Consider how many are still “stiffnecked” about giving generously of their money, in spite of the strong Scriptural demands. Worldliness among the saints is winked at in many, if not most, congregations. The sad truth is that many of us do exactly what we want to do in both doctrine and practice, just as the world does. We can never be faithful to Christ until we understand that what He asks of us is all we have and are.

Dub McClish, Denton, TX

**CALLING THE NAMES OF
FALSE TEACHERS**

There is a strong consensus of opinion among some in the brotherhood today that you should never call names when it comes to identifying one who is a proponent of false doctrine. It is viewed as an act of hostility if you name a brother who is publicly espousing a Scripturally untenable position. It has been a practice of mine, as long as I have been preaching, to call attention to what some brethren are saying on certain issues, and to mention their names in connection with it, if necessary.

In those areas wherein some brethren are propagating false and dangerous notions, it is always necessary to mention their names in connection with them. If a brother has written a divisive book or made heretical statements publicly, then we should not hesitate to let people know what is being said and who is saying it. It would be less than honest to do otherwise.

To simply say that “some brethren” suggest thus and so is not enough to warn others of what is being taught and who is teaching it. If there is an issue troubling the brotherhood of Christ and there is a brother out there promoting it, then, we need to know who it is that is saying it is so that we can heed the New Testament injunction to “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). You cannot mark a phantom and avoid an unknown. Thus, you cannot obey God by treating the false teacher with nameless courtesy. The obligation that we have to mark and avoid the false teacher is greater than his self-perceived “right” to say and publish anything he wants to, no matter how twisted, and expect no one to raise an eyebrow or say anything by way of criticism.

It is not vindictive pride that prompts me to suggest to you that calling the names of false teachers, whether in or out of the church of our Lord, is right and proper. The precedent for such a straightforward approach has been set by Jesus and His inspired apostles. Jesus said, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1). In that brief statement, He identified both the problem to be avoided and the ones responsible for promoting it, thus, violating liberal “etiquette” on both counts. Again, Paul wrote of a doctrinal concern of his day, saying: And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:17–18). Let the brother who thinks that calling names is wrong tell wherein Paul erred in the above statement. If he cannot be so bold, then, let him tell wherein we err if we do as Paul did. It is right and proper to call the names of those teaching falsely in order that others might know. One day Another will call their names, and they will answer. We pray for their repentance before that time.

*Lester Kamp
Denver, CO*

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron’s sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Our sympathy is extended to Les Culpepper in the passing of his beloved wife Helen on March 12. Services were held on March 17.

Adrienne Farmer went to the emergency room last Tuesday with chest pains. She had two stints replaced on Wednesday and is recovering at home.

Holly Albrecht was baptized into Christ on March 15. We welcome Holly as a new sister in Christ.

Ken Chumbley made it home safe Friday night about 10.00 p.m. A report on his trip to England will be in next weeks bulletin.

There will be a pot luck meal after services today. Plan to stay and eat.

THE CAMEL’S NOSE

Draw the circle bigger, boys! It’s just too small, you see.
We’re caught up in yesterday’s thinking, and it’s way too narrow for me.
Add another room, please for my brothers here and there,
I’ll even change my teaching, and preach it round or square.
Be it faith or be it opinion, I get the two confused.
And when brothers contend earnestly, I’m more than a little amused.
If it’s not too much trouble, can we cancel Sunday night?
The Super Bowl at six—it should be a “super” fight.
And I won’t be at Bible class next Wednesday, that’s for certain,
My softball team needs me to pitch. If I don’t, we’ll be hurtin’.
And whoever said that it was wrong, forsaking worship to go and play?
Why that’s so 1950s, friend; that was great in Grandpa’s day!
I’m still against every error, and false doctrine I won’t preach.
But I won’t withdraw from those who do, regardless of what they teach.
Re-evaluation and Reaffirmation, that just won’t go with me.
I think it’s wrong, but I’ll go along with my friends at MSOP.
We all just need to loosen up, let the tree grow as it’s bent!
And all the while that breeze I felt, was the camel’s nose—underneath my tent.

*Lynn Parker,
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