

“SUCH A GOOD PREACHER”

First remember hearing the above statement when I was quite young as I tried to point out the error in so many denominational preachers. As you started to show their teachings regarding “baptism,” for instance, they would come back at you with, “but, he's such a good preacher.” I guess that was to mean that since he was such a good preacher, he was immune from being in error? Through the years since then, I heard the same statement many times in relation to gospel preacher. And, sometimes, it was the end of the discussion.

The very disturbing thing about that statement, since we now have so many “good preachers,” is the fact that I finally realized the truth of the matter. People equate a good orator with “truthfulness.” If he has a good voice and can persuade the audience, he is considered to be a “good preacher,” whether or not he can speak the truth. This was well demonstrated when the Jews brought along Tertullus, their best “orator,” when Paul was brought before Felix to defend himself (Acts 24). He had a way with words and was very “smooth,” yet, the whole truth was not presented.

We have some “good sounding” preachers in the world around us. Billy Graham was a good preacher in their sight. Oral Roberts was a good preacher. Jerry Falwell was a good preacher. Pat Robertson, J. Frank Norris, Charles Spurgeon, T.L. Wilkinson and many others have been good orators. The point which I would like to make clear at this time is how wrong I have been in stopping short on my arguments when that statement was made. Instead of taking and running with it, the matter was discontinued. Shame on me!

Every one of the above listed “good preachers were not. And, how can I say that about such well known men? Listen to me carefully; when a man professing to speak for Almighty God refuses to preach the “whole counsel” of God, he is NOT a good preacher. Each of those men which I listed have been well documented as to refusing to teach on certain subjects, or they have twisted the scriptures to mean something different from what the text actually means. Any time that happens to any man, he is not a good preacher, or does he speak for God.

Jesus Christ gave us the best example. He spoke the very words which God have him to speak. During his ministry he often declared, “I come to do thy will, Oh God.” This should be the attitude of every “good preacher”. But, we see in the Lord's kingdom today, men who profess to be ministers of God, who are actually serving themselves and keeping their jobs. Some of these men openly refuse to teach on certain subjects for fear of their jobs. Others refuse to preach on them because it is a “controversial subject,” as Graham has said so many times.

But , in the present apostasy of the Lord's body, it is especially heart-breaking to see so many of our members defend as preacher who refrains his tongue form certain subjects by saying, “but he is such a good preacher”. When our preachers fail to teach the truth about “fellowship,” as 2 John 9-11 and Ephesians 5:11 and Romans 16:17 teach us, it matters not how eloquent their speeches may sound, they are not a “good preacher”. When they refuse to speak the truth of God about marriage and divorce, fornication, adultery, covetousness, the seriousness of “vow keeping,” immodesty, drinking, use of drugs, homosexuality, stealing, lasciviousness, witchcraft, seditions, heresies and a host of other things which disgrace the Kingdom of Christ, they are definitely not “good preachers,” regardless of how smooth they sound.

By our continued “fellowship” with them, it is contrary to the command which God gave us, mentioned above. It makes us guilty right along with the sins of others when we “go along to get along,” rather than to rebuke, reprove and exhort them. Some may become our enemies, but, we have obeyed God in our efforts.

Alan W. Fonville, St. Paul, AR

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

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Some Thoughts...on Pressing Issues and Breaking News

It is a busy world in which we live, is it not? Why, to see the News Channels on Cable is to see nearly the whole of human experience each day: murders, sex scandals, homosexuality, political intrigue, and just about any scandalous or titillating engagement imaginable. Preachers often point to such things and say something like: “You see, ‘troublesome times are here’—surely the end is nearing.” (They also usually, about here in the presentation on their television programs, flash their addresses and indicate whether they accept credit cards or not.) While there is no denying the immorality prevalent in our society today, is it the case that the world is worse today than it ever has been in the past?

Even a cursory reading of the Bible indicates that men have been sinning for all of human history in much the same ways that they now sin. From Sodom to Babylon to Athens to Rome and even on to the United States of today there have always been more sinners than righteous. The evil has the issue if it is to be decided merely by a head count...but I find no indication in Holy Writ that it is to be so decided. The world will end when the Lord is ready for it to end—period. While I am appalled at the degenerate programming on network and cable television, I am not surprised—does not the medium merely reflect the values of the ones controlling it? Would you be surprised to learn that many in Hollywood are sexually immoral?

What should the Christian do? He should preach the Word (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-4). Of course, we cannot support or endorse any of the evil or wickedness so often seen; we must speak against it, we seek out and find every opportunity available to us in the effort to help righteousness win and evil be defeated. What the Christian should not do is try to falsely point to the prevalent immorality as an indication of the end of time and he/she should certainly **never** try to use such conditions to raise funds—if you need money, ask for it; leave the end of time out of it.

Tim Smith, Dothan, AL

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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THE HOLINESS OF GOD

One of the attributes of God clearly seen in studying the Bible is that of “holiness,” our God is a holy God. In examining the scriptures we see that this Holy God requires that His people be a holy people. This holds true both respecting the Israelites, God’s people under the Old Covenant, and to Christians, God’s people under the New Covenant. *“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (I Peter 1:15-16).

The word “holy” is a translation of the Greek word “HAGIOS” and is used in the sense of being devoted or set aside to God. The word translated “saint” is from the same Greek root and thus it is proper to call saints “holy ones.” The Christian, then, is one who is devoted to God, who is set aside to the service of God. Since this is so, then Peter points out that the Christians manner of life (conversation) must be holy.

The essentiality of the child of God being holy is seen in that it is a prerequisite of seeing God: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14). For one to be holy implies a purity of life: *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”* (Matthew 5:8).

Since the Christian is devoted and set aside for the service of God, it follows that he will be opposed to sin as is God: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? ...But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* (Romans 6:1-2, 22).

The apostle Peter, when speaking of the end of the world and the return of the Lord points out what kind of persons Christians are to be in light of our Lord’s return: *“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God”* (II Peter 3:11-12).

Let us then remember the admonitions of God’s word and strive to live pure, holy and separated lives that others might see that we are different because we are God’s people and do not indulge in those things that are contrary to the Lord’s will. Also, we must realize that only as we are living a life that is devoted to God and separate from sin can we have the hope of seeing the Lord.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who has having health problems, and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver was out of town on Sunday.

The Wilsons, Aarons and Rachel Fitzpatrick all have family in the Houston, Texas area. All are doing well and their homes are fine. However, they all lost power for a while but it has now been restored. Let us keep them and who are affected by Hurricane Ike in our prayers as they recover from this devastating storm.

We will have a put-luck following the morning services on September 28. Plan to stay and eat together.

TRACKS OF GOD

“Father,” said Thomas, looking up from his studies. “How do you know there is a God?”

“Why do you ask that question? Do you doubt the existence of God?” asked the father.

“Well, I heard one of the professors say that we could not be sure that there is a God. Is there any way really to know?”

“Well, my boy. Do you remember the other day that you were laughing about Robinson Crusoe’s dismay at discovering that there were other persons on the island beside himself? How did he discover them? Did he see them? No, he discovered one track of a bare foot in the sand, and he knew that only a human being could have made it, and he knew that whoever made it could not be far off, for the tide had not yet reached it. All those things he knew to be true, although he had not seen a human being within miles of the island. And the knowledge was all gained from a mark in the sand.

“If one print of a bare foot in the sand is absolute proof of the existence and presence of a human being, what are we to suppose when we see the prints of the Master’s shoe, as Bunyan calls it, covering the whole wide world? We see on mountain and valley the print of the fingers of God. We see a million plants and flowers and trees that only God could make grow. We see all the rivers and the springs of the world fed from invisible specks of atmospheric moisture. What do all those things mean—those millions upon millions of footprints on the clay of the world? They mean God living, present, ruling, and loving! They mean God and nothing else!”

Author Unknown