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The Urgent Need for Faithful Gospel Preachers

“Unless they hear they cannot live,” “and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Never has there been in our lifetime a greater need for Faithful Gospel Preachers! There is no greater way for faithful men to contribute to the cause of Christ than by preaching the gospel.

Even before sin was committed in the Garden of Eden, there was in the mind of God a plan of salvation for man. The “wisdom of God” would be evidenced by Christ and his church, “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). Early on it was made clear that the “seed” of woman would “bruise” the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This would occur when Christ came and set up his kingdom or church, thereby overcoming the power of the devil to keep men in the prison of sin.

God’s great message of salvation would need to be heard by people everywhere, even the whole world. How could this happen? God would provide the message through inspired men, but He would not deliver it to all those who needed to hear it. This is where man’s part comes in. This inspired message would come through man, but not “by the will of man,” “but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). “According This would be The Truth, and nothing but the truth, with all errors of men excluded.

The revelation of truth in New Testament times would occur as men were guided by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth...” (John 16:13). Later, the apostle Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, would write, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God [“Every scripture inspired of God, ASV], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Again, we note what Peter says about the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). Let God be thanked that we have God’s complete will revealed unto us. There is no need for any additional revelation.

When God revealed His all-sufficient message of salvation through inspired men, there was yet another all-important part for man to play. That was the getting of God’s message to the world. This accounts for Christ giving the “Great Commission” to “go into all the world” and “teach all nations” (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20).

Even though God, through His goodness, revealed His will through inspired men, it cannot accomplish God’s intended purpose unless and until heard and obeyed by man. When we stop to think that the salvation of men is dependent upon the hearing of God’s word, we should see the **great urgency** in getting it to them. This is a work which God has given his servants to do. As suggested above, “unless they hear they cannot live {spiritually}.” Furthermore, “how can they hear without a preacher?” Brethren, we have a great work to do! Who will answer the call?

It is our intention in the following to give serious attention to the importance of **Preaching the Word**, and the opportunity and responsibility we have as servants of the Lord. Upon us depends the salvation of unnumbered souls. What a great change we would see in the cause of Christ, and what a

great blessing it would be, if our brethren made use of their full potential in serving as **Faithful Gospel Preachers**. We begin our discussion of preaching by considering:

EARLY REFERENCES TO PREACHING

We are using the term “Preaching” in the sense of one who heralds or proclaims a message. In our discussion it will have reference to preaching or proclaiming God’s message of salvation.

NOAH. The first “preacher” referred to in the Biblical record is that of Noah. The apostle Peter is discussing the false teachers and the destruction which will come upon them. He said that if God “spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eight person, **a preacher of righteousness...**” (2 Pet. 2:5). Noah was being used by God to get his word to men of that day. Though all the people, with the exception of Noah’s family of eight, would not heed God’s word, Noah is listed as a man of faith, who “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). Those who perished in the flood were without excuse since they could have heard and obeyed God’s word as delivered by Noah.

DAVID. The Psalmist says of David: “I Have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD thou knowest” (Psa. 40:9).

ISAIAH. The Messianic Prophet said: “THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn” (Isa. 60:1-2). Here we can see the benefits to be derived from hearing God’s message and obeying it. But this can happen only when men take God’s word to the lost, a purpose of preaching.

NEHEMIAH and **JONAH.** In connection with the building of the wall of the city of Jerusalem, a message was sent to Nehemiah by the heathen in which it was said of Nehemiah: “And thou has appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah...” (Neh. 6:7). The Lord said to Jonah: “Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee” (Jonah 3:2).

SOLOMON. The book of *Ecclesiastes*, authored by Solomon, is also called “The Preacher.” The first verse says, “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem.” The term “Preacher” is from the Hebrew word *Kohleth*, and is used for one who calls people together, as in an assembly to instruct them with reference to God’s will.

The idea of preaching or proclaiming God’s word is found many times in the Old Testament where the term “preach” or “preacher” is not used. But God’s word was to be taken to the people by men to whom it was given originally, and by those to whom it was taught. That is often by preaching.

THE EMPHASIS ON PREACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are so many references to preaching in the New Testament that it would require much more space than we have available to mention them all. There are more than 30 in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and more than 80 in other books. We will, therefore, make reference to only a small number of those references.

In the New Testament a number of Greek words are translated “preach” or “preaching.” These words carry the idea of: To bring good news, or tidings. To proclaim as a herald. Or to tell thoroughly. The good news to be proclaimed is God’s message of salvation through the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

JOHN THE BAPTIST. The first reference of preaching in the New Testament is: “IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:1-2). The preaching of John had to do with God’s plan of salvation, first mentioned in Genesis 3:15. John was doing a great work by preparing a way for the Lord, and for the establishment of His church. It is only through Christ and His church that salvation is possible.

Though John did not establish a church, and great as he was, the “least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Lk. 7:28). But the **preaching** of John the Baptist was that great and important link between the Old Testament and the New.

JESUS. The first reference to Jesus **preaching** is the following: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Then, the record says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23). To His apostles Jesus said, “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach upon the housetops” (Lk. 10:27). Jesus called his twelve disciples together, “And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God...” (Lk. 9:2). Many, many other times reference is made to the preaching of Christ, and to His command to others to preach the gospel.

One of the greatest messages from our Lord about preaching is that of the “Great Commission” according to Mark’s account: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:15-16). Here is the way, the only way, for people to be saved from their sins, that is by obeying the gospel, God’s power of salvation (Rom. 1:16). This was in the mind of God from the beginning. What a privilege it is to have a part in the furtherance of God’s plan of salvation by the **preaching** of the gospel!

Christ, having accomplished His God-ordained mission of offering himself as a sacrifice, and by His blood purchased His church (Acts 20:28), now leaves it in the hands of men to carry the soul-saving message to people all over the world. The complete Gospel message would be given by God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jno. 16:13), but then it would be duty of the Lord’s people to get the message out. So much of the New Testament is about this very thing, the preaching of the gospel, and reaching the lost.

PAUL. One of those who played such a great part in getting God’s word to the people in his day was the apostle Paul, the writer of thirteen or fourteen books of the New Testament. Here is a man known for the persecuting of Christians with great zeal, before he was converted. When he obeyed the gospel it seems that he tried in the greatest way to make up for the hurt he had done the cause of Christ, by preaching the gospel with great zeal and fearlessness the remainder of his days.

Such was Paul’s devotion to the preaching the gospel, that though he had every right to be supported materially in his efforts, he often refused support lest it in some way hinder his preaching. Not only did Paul see the value of preaching, he expressed his conviction relative to his duty to preach, when he said: “...yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Cor. 9:16).

What a grand example is Paul’s preaching for men today. Just think how we have been blessed in hearing and obeying the will of God! Why not use our abilities to bring such blessings to the lost in our day? Only the Lord knows how many might be converted by our efforts as a preacher. It could be family, friends and many souls yet unknown.

The value of preaching is shown by Paul when he said, “...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Cor. 1:21). The preaching of Christ, though foolish to so many today, is indeed a display of “the wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:24). Many trust in “worldly wisdom.”

After obeying the gospel, Paul devoted virtually all his life to the preaching of the gospel. He endured persecution to no end. Many trials did he face, including false brethren, but he would not quit, he would not give up!

Paul, having undergone so much persecution, in his last letter, urged Timothy, his son in the gospel to: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).

The above is only a small part of Paul’s activity with regard to preaching. The benefit he rendered to the cause of Christ is immeasurable, not only by his own efforts but his encouragement to various others to preach “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). Much more could be said.

THE APOSTLES. The apostles, other than Paul, were active in and devoted to preaching. The “Great Commission” (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47) was in our Lord’s last words to his apostles. This, it seems to me, shows the great importance of preaching, and emphasizes the work the apostles had to do themselves, and the teaching of others to do the same.

In Acts 5, the loyalty to their great work was shown by the apostles when they were imprisoned. And upon being released by an angel, they were found “standing in the temple, and teaching the people.” The high priest reminded them that they had been commanded not to “teach” in the name of Christ. “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, , We ought to obey God rather than men.” The apostles reminded the council that they had slain Jesus and hanged him on a tree, and that God had exalted him to be a “Prince and a Saviour.”

At this point the council took counsel to kill the apostles. At the counsel of the Pharisee Gamaliel, the apostles were beaten and released. Note how the apostles responded, in Acts 5:41-42.

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

How the Lord’s cause needs men of such conviction and fearlessness in our day, when some will not preach when faced with trivial difficulties in comparison to that of the apostles.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. When Saul was making havoc of the church in Jerusalem, the church was scattered abroad, with the exception of the apostles. The loyalty to preaching God’s word is clearly seen by these members of the church, even in the face of persecution:

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Phillip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”....”But when they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:4-5, 12).

Much more could be said about preaching as set forth in the New Testament. Stephen, who was stoned because of his proclaiming the truth is an example. But we now turn our attention to some other matters about preaching. Surely, no fair and honest person would overlook the importance of preaching and the part it has and will play in the furtherance of Christ and His church, and the salvation which is found only therein. The evidence of the supreme importance of **preaching** is simply overwhelming!

WHO SHOULD PREACH?

Only Christian men should preach, that is proclaim God’s word in a public way, as we usually define preaching. But not all men should preach, and there are a number of reasons why this is so. After setting forth some thoughts on who should preach, we shall consider some reasons why some **Should Not Preach.**

As to **Who Should Preach?** we are not suggesting that one who begins preaching know as much as one who has studied and preached for many years. Yet there are some basic things which should apply in the beginning of one’s preaching. In my nearly fifty years of preaching I’ve observed some things which affect preaching. In most instances these things have a connection with teaching set forth in the New Testament. Some may be matters of judgment. For whatever they are worth, we begin with:

Faithful Men. By Faithful Men we mean Christians who are trustworthy, reliable, true to God, putting the “Kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33) first. Men who are sound in doctrine and practice.

Paul wrote Timothy, saying: “And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to **faithful men**, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). The “faithful men” are those who can be trusted to pass on the unadulterated truth to others. Unfaithful men could hardly be expected to encourage faithfulness in others. Example is a strong teacher.

Paul said, "Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found **faithful**" (I Cor. 4:1-2). Paul wrote to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ..." (Col. 1:2). Tychicus is called "a faithful minister" (4:7), and Onesimus is referred to as "a faithful and beloved brother" (4:9). Abraham is called "faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9). Paul says of himself, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Tim. 1:12).

The importance of being **faithful** is set forth in Revelation 2:10, where it is said, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This means to be faithful unto the point of dying for the faith. This is the ultimate price one can pay.

Uncompromising Men. Compromise is the name of the game in much of today's religion. Never have we seen such a spirit of compromise within the Lord's church as we are seeing now. Truth is to be "bought" but never "sold" (Prov. 23:23). Paul said he was "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17). Rather than compromise it he would defend it. Paul speaks of "false brethren unawares brought in." But, he said, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:4-5). It is no less than a shame to the cause of Christ that we now have a growing number of men who are willing to "give place" to all manner of false teachers and their doctrines.

If we would please God, the option to compromise truth is in no sense ours to exercise. More and more preachers are compromising the truth by fellowshipping the denominational religions. Can you think of anything much sadder than that of a "so-called" gospel preacher standing in the pulpit of a man-made church, bidding "God speed" to those who have gone all out in compromising God's truth?

Only **Uncompromising Men** should preach! The church would be blessed in our time if all preachers who are compromisers would leave their pulpits, until and unless they come to prize God's truth highly and stand strongly for it.

Men Willing to Use Their Talent. Many faithful Christians do not have the talent to preach, and our Lord doesn't expect such men to preach. On the other hand, there are many talented brethren who could be effective preachers of the gospel. It is a matter of whether or not one wants to use his ability in this way. The Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30), set forth a great lesson in that we are responsible for the use of our abilities. Pardon my personal reference, but when I obeyed the gospel I felt that I should preach, and immediately made preparation to do so. I've never been a "big" preacher and don't expect to be, but I've spent almost fifty years doing what I could to help the Lord's cause by preaching.

There are older brethren who have the ability to preach, if only they would put that ability to use. It is now a common thing for faithful brethren to be crying out for someone to preach for them. This is in places where a sound congregation cannot be found, and such places are growing rapidly. Just think what a blessing one could be by locating some place where a Faithful Preacher is need and wanted. Retired brethren could prepare themselves by attending a school of preaching, or by private study.

There is much preaching talent going unused by men who have preached and have the ability to do so. It is my personal feeling that one cannot "retire" as a preacher, as long as one has the ability and is able to do so.

Men Who Cannot Be Satisfied Without Preaching. The field is wide open! In many places people are crying, "Come over and help us." This should be in the minds of those who want to preach, but who allow some trivial thing to keep them from doing so. No gift to another is as great as that of taking the truth to that one.

Those who have the ability and knowledge to preach but are lacking in interest, should examine themselves as to their spiritual standing.

Men Who Are Unafraid. A Faithful Preacher must have the courage to stand up in behalf of "all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:27). The preacher who preaches all the truth will step on toes. It

may be tempting to “keep quite” on some things, and a number of preachers do that very thing. But they do not do so with God’s approval. Paul said, “...for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

If the truth is preached, one will receive some criticism, and other forms of persecution. Paul wrote Timothy, warning him that, “...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). There’s no question but that a faithful preacher will “live godly in Christ.”

Men Who Believe In The Distinctiveness of The Lord’s Church Preachers who are not convinced of the distinctiveness of the church are now entering the field. I can remember when this was not a great problem among preachers. Our Lord either built and bought one church or none! Those who doubt this should never stand in a pulpit, and our brethren who believe the truth should not allow it. If one doesn’t believe the truth set forth in: Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, that there is one true church, that one could not preach all of God’s word.

Men Who Believe In The All-sufficiency Of God’s Word. Paul says that God’s word will “thoroughly furnish[ed] unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jude speaks of “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (v. 3). The ASV says “once for all delivered.”

Those who believe in the Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit are affirming that God’s word is not all-sufficient. We will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12:48), not by subjectivism.

Men Willing To Sacrifice. Hardly is there a more rewarding work than preaching the gospel, but there are some sacrifices to be made. One may not always be able to live in the most desired place. A great amount of time and effort is required, and this rules out some things one might want to do. One will not become rich materially by preaching, and cannot have everything some brethren may have. Being separated from family and relatives by considerable distance is some times the case. But whatever sacrifice is made, the reward of preaching the “Unsearchable riches of Christ,” is worth it a hundred times over.

WHO SHOULD NOT PREACH?

We’ve noted a few who **should** preach and we shall now note some who **should not** preach. We are discussing this from the standpoint of the church. In the denominational world there are too many far-out things to consider. We begin with:

Those Who Preach For Money. That one who preaches the gospel is entitled to material support is without question. But someone suggested that if one is Preaching for the Money, that one might do something different for more money.

I remember a preacher in years gone by, who at different times asked me if I knew of some place which was open. If I told him of some place, his immediate question was: “Walter, how much do they pay?” The emphasis seemed to be more on the money than anything else. This is not to say that a preacher should not have adequate support.

The individual whose primary motive for preaching is to serve the Lord because of his love for Him and his desire to do the Lord’s will, will preach, even if the money is not there. In times gone by many of our brethren farmed or worked at some other secular job, and also preached. Paul made tents to help support himself as he preached.

It surely appears that a number of preachers today put money as one of the highest priorities. It is tempting for this kind of preacher to preach what people want to hear, in order to keep his good setup.

Men Who Already Know It All. The individual who thinks he already knows everything is not going to grow in knowledge. There is no room, since everything to know is already known. In some cases this kind of man may “know” things which aren’t even true. This is a problem with some preachers.

It is better for one to say “I don’t know,” than to pretend he does, and then show his ignorance through an incorrect answer.

Men Who Don't Practice What They Preach. I was told of a Methodist preacher by some of my brethren years ago, with whom he shot dice in times gone by. His advice to the men was, "Don't do as I do, do as I say." Some professing to be gospel preachers have been known to be of that sort.

The young preacher, Timothy, was told by the apostle Paul to "...be thou and example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). If one doesn't practice what he preaches, brethren are likely to find it out, and if they don't, the Lord knows. And the term that describes this kind of man is properly called "hypocrite."

Men Who Can't Take Criticism. Men who preach the whole truth and "contend for the faith" as men ought, will be criticized! Our Lord, Paul and others were criticized but they didn't quit, but even seemed more determined. Some of our liberal brethren who are known for their preaching of "pseudo love" get really out of shape when they are justly criticized. One should take criticism only when standing for the truth, never for error..

Men Who Think They Can Solve All Problems. Sometimes brethren, especially younger ones, begin preaching with the erroneous idea that they can "turn the world upside down" and solve all the brotherhood problems. Those who think in those terms are in for a shock, which sometimes brings on such discouragement that they give up preaching. As long as evil exists (as long as time stands) there will be problems, some of which are never solved. The New Testament warns of problems, and even the apostles couldn't solve some of them.

Men Who Expect To Learn Truth From Their Religious Neighbors. A number of our brethren have been misled into thinking that they can learn truth from the denominations. This has led some brethren into error. The religious world around us does not have any truth that we do not have, but they have a large catalogue of error, which has appealed to a great many brethren in recent years.

One of many examples of the above is the preacher at the Broadway congregation in Paducah. He had an article in the newspaper, *Things I Have Learned From Our Religious Neighbors*. In that article he avers that he learned things from: Baptist, Catholics, Pentecostals, Methodist and Episcopalians. He has obviously "learned" some things which are not according to truth. Broadway has a multi-million dollar Family Life Center, which provides for a "Recreation Ministry." Just recently the Broadway preacher had a one-minute sermonet on the Paducah radio station, in which an organ played the entire time, with the sound some decibels above the speaker. If one minute, why not two, or three, or four or more?

Men Who Preach To Please Men. Paul said that "...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). God's pure word should be pleasing to men but in too many cases it isn't. It is not uncommon for a congregation to seek a preacher whom they know will preach what they want to hear, when they don't want to hear all the truth. Preachers who are willing to accommodate such weak brethren are not worthy to stand in a pulpit, claiming that they are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such men are "compromisers."

Men Who Can't Do Anything Else. Forty some odd years ago, when I was in Freed-Hardeman, the Preacher's Club met from time to time. One time the students were asked to state why they were going to preach. One of the students response was, "I can't do any kind of work." He implied that if he could "work" he would choose to do so. While preaching is work, it does not involve the physical activities of many jobs. Personally, I never intentionally refer to preaching as "a job," or "work." It is more than what we usually refer to when we talk about "work" or a "job."

OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT PREACHING

During my almost fifty years of preaching I've observed some things which do not appear, in my judgment, to contribute to the preaching with which our Lord would be most pleased. It behooves the sincere followers of the Lord to use their best judgment, even in matters which are not matters of faith. We will give a few examples.

Don't Hog A Conversation. Our manner of conversing with others may indicate something about what we think of self. In the first place, it is a matter of courtesy not to completely dominate a conversation. In some cases a preacher may dominate a conversation to the point that he does not even hear or given any attention to what another might say, or try to say. This is not the way to cultivate a good relationship with others.

Don't Think Too Highly Of Self. The apostle Paul had something to say about this. "...to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think..." (Rom. 12:3). Years ago, a preacher was in a meeting where I preached. He was invited to the home of a member, and because they did not have an indoor toilet, he acted in a most insulting way. Another thought he was to be looked up to as "a professional," like a doctor, etc. A young preacher, fresh out of school, looked down on the members of the congregation, as though they were almost completely dumb. All the while, he showed his lack of learning by using words incorrectly, to say nothing of his rude attitude.

Don't Acquire A "Preacher's Voice." Some preachers seem to flip a switch which completely changes their voice when they speak about spiritual things. "God" is sometimes pronounced as "Gawd." There was a preacher who when offering thanks for food would change his voice so much that he would not have been recognized by his voice.

Don't Limit Association Too Much. All of us are going to have some friends to whom we feel a little closer than brethren in general. Even our Lord had close friends. Lazarus is an example. "Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!" (John 11:35-36). When a preacher limits his association to a very small circle, his influence will be affected and his work will be less effective than it could be and should be.

Don't Be Known For Sarcasm. While in some instances some sarcasm may have a place, this is not generally the case. When the truth is spoken, in harmony with God's will, the effect of it may be damaged if it is accompanied by a sarcastic attitude. God's word can be spoken with "boldness" yet without sarcasm.

Things other than the above could be mentioned, but the manner in which God's word is presented can have considerable effect on how it is received. We can well imagine our Lord, Paul and others speaking with firm and uncompromising conviction, yet with a show of real concern for the hearers. This might be described as "...speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

SINCERELY PRAYING FOR MORE FAITHFUL GOSPEL PREACHERS

In the foregoing of our discussion we have tried to point out the great and essential part that preaching has to play in God's plan of salvation. God, in his goodness, has furnished us with his complete and all-sufficient word. Yet it is a fact that preachers are to be in the forefront of getting that soul-saving message to all the people of the world.

Thousands of eternity-bound souls, who have never heard God's word, are dying daily and the number of souls is increasing at a rapid rate. But we have fewer **Faithful Gospel Preachers** now than we had decades ago! What is happening? Are we using our talents, or are we burying them? Brethren, just think of the unused potential we have in our brotherhood, from the standpoint of those who could be preaching God's message of salvation. Let us think of those who could be Faithful Preachers.

Young Men. There are many, many young men who have the ability to preach. Will more of these young men use their talents? What greater service can one render than that of preaching? Paul told Timothy to "Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:15-16). This represented a double benefit for the young preacher Timothy. Not only would his own soul be saved, but that of others who heard the word. What a rewarding service, to help others accept God's plan of salvation! It could be one's parents, brothers and/or sisters, and other family members, as well as untold others.

Older Men. Numbers of men who are no longer “young men,” have made one of their greatest decisions of life in deciding to preach the gospel. I personally wasted several years. I didn’t obey the gospel until I was 27 years old, but I immediately started making preparation to do what I could by preaching God’s word. Others, much older than 27 have also made a decision to preach. Souls have been saved by the preaching of these brethren that would not have been saved otherwise.

Retired Men. Many men are now retiring at an age when they have many useful years left. Some of these men already have enough knowledge of God’s word that they could be of great service by preaching. They might not be fitted to preach to a large congregation, at least for a time. But just think of all the brethren across our country who are crying out for someone to help them! More and more I’m hearing from places where faithful brethren cannot find a place where they can worship with a good conscience, due to the error which has taken over. A few brethren could start meeting in someone’s home until they had need for a larger facility. This has happened many times in the past, and the need for such today is becoming greater all the time.

Vocational Preachers. The apostle Paul was a “tent-maker,” yet he was one of the greatest of preachers. A very close friend, our brother Don Waggoner, did a wonderful work in Indonesia, while working at a secular job. Hundreds or thousands have obeyed the gospel as a result of his efforts. There are numerous places here in our country where there is great need for a preacher, but the congregation is not large enough to support a preacher on a full-time basis. While working with the brethren in India, I noted that some of the most promising preachers were those who were teachers, mail carriers, etc. They were preaching and supporting themselves by their secular work.

Self-Made Preachers. In years gone by a great many preachers were self educated in God’s word. They were effective as preachers. While it is good to have training, many have been effective preachers without any formal training. Many could be preachers, if they would just use their talents. The need for such men has never been greater in our lives.

A MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO BE A FAITHFUL GOSPEL PREACHER

We have pointed out different men who could be preachers of the gospel. We now want to suggest that for those who are able to do so, **A Most Effective Way To Be A Faithful Gospel Preacher.** When I decided to be a preacher, I gave up my secular job and moved to Henderson, Tennessee so that I could attend Freed-Hardeman College. I entered Freed-Hardeman as a preacher student. Nearly all my subjects were Bible or Bible related. After almost two years, I later took some additional subjects and graduated from F-HC. While I received some good training, for which I will always be thankful, I would not recommend that a person go to Freed-Hardeman now. Things have changed greatly within the past thirty years. In fact, I don’t know of any of “our schools” which I would recommend. Liberalism has influenced all of our schools that I know about.

A School For Training Preachers, in my opinion, is the best way for a man to prepare to preach the gospel, if one is able to devote a couple of years to intense study and training. Some cannot do this, but for those who can it is a wonderful opportunity!

For the benefit of those who have any interest in doing God’s will by preaching the gospel, we are going to give information about a preacher training school, where one can receive true and excellent teaching of God’s word. That school is: **The Northwest Florida School Of Biblical Studies,** located in Pensacola, Florida, and under the oversight of the Ensley congregation. The meeting place is at 57 Hannah Circle, Pensacola, FL 32534. Phone: (850) 479-4405; 476-1417. Plans are now underway to build new facilities for the congregation and the school.

It was my privilege to attend the Tenth Annual Lectureship (Sept. 15-19) of the school. I have participated in the lectures for the past several years. I have been able to observe several positive things about the school. One of which is the quality of the men who have received their training there. A number

of former students are speakers on the lectureship. The ability of these men is very evident. They uphold “sound doctrine” and this reflects the teaching they have received.

Though the school is not a large one, the quality of training is second to no one that I know of. Being small means that students get much more personal attention than would be the case in a large school. The relationship between the students and the congregation is simply remarkable. I’ve not seen a more promising group of students than those currently enrolled.

My son-in-law, Alan Adams, serves as an Instructor and Dean of Students in the school. We are including an article by him, in which he has a great deal to say about the school, and also includes a number of comments by a number of former or current students.

Let me say in my conclusion that if one should ask me to suggest a sound and reliable school of preaching, I would without any hesitation highly recommend **The Northwest Florida School Of Biblical Studies**.

To men, young and older, let me urge you to consider serving our Lord as a Faithful Preacher Of The Gospel. A greater service you could not render and a greater reward you could not receive! I urge you to consider what our Lord said to the “seventy.” “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Lk. 10:2). We have never seen a time when the need for laborers was greater than right NOW!

It would be well for those brethren who have the capability to preach, or could acquire such, to think deeply about the example of the great Messianic prophet, Isaiah. He was aware of his “undone” condition. But the seraphim laid the “live coal” upon his mouth and informed him, “thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isa. 6:5-7). Now, listen to Isaiah’s response to the Lord: “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (v. 8)

Our Lord must be brought to tears, as He was over the city of Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41), when He looks upon the multitude of countless millions who are headed for eternal destruction. If our Lord “wept” [burst forth in sobs} over the lost, we should be affected emotionally. We should be made to think more about the opportunity we have through preaching to rescue some of those who are perishing. But before our “Lord” can send us forth into His harvest, we must be willing to go.

Brethren, let us go all out in praying for and encouraging men to preach. Think of those who are crying for spiritual help, and what can be done as the greatest of favors for those souls. Let us go all out in making our resources available to support those who are willing to devote their lives to preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

If heaven is our goal, let us do all we can to make sure that it will be our eternal abode. This will include helping others, even by preaching, to have the same goal. “Heaven will surely be worth it all.”

--- Walter W. Pigg

Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies A Choice School, and a School of Choice

Alan Adams

It’s a year later, and to a listener, the six-word tag, *Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies*, no doubt still sounds like a foreign phrase from my lips. Be assured, however, that this school, its principles, its purpose and its people, has taken up residency in my heart.

The past year has been for me a roller coaster ride the likes of which no *Six Flags* could rival. Yet, having ended the first lap, seeing two graduates move on, and literally before my eyes watching students grow academically and in character and commitment, it has convinced me of the need to stay on round after round

I've been preaching for over twenty-five years; in that time I have seen an inordinate number of ill equipped, irresponsible, and sometimes even arrogant men foisted upon churches as gospel preachers. That's why I think we are really onto something here at the *NWFSBS*, something that warrants this great investment in precious time and resources from so many. Were it merely a matter of academics—in which arena this school holds its own—there would be little ground for boasting about distinction. There is no great dearth of bright people in the brotherhood, but neither is there a surfeit of wholesome, honorable, and uncomplicated preachers. We are committed to filling this void.

NWFSBS has a philosophy of rigorous academics and a realistic, yet positive, view of the preacher, his life and his work. Thus, we have below some thoughts from three students which reflect what we are striving to accomplish.

Scott Klafft, a Michigander by way of Tennessee, and a graduate now working with a local church in South Carolina says:

“Many things come to mind when I think about the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, the first of which is God’s providence. Of course no one can point to any one thing and say, “Here is where God intervened,” but I have no other way to explain it. The day I was immersed into Christ I told someone I didn’t think I would be satisfied until I was standing behind the pulpit. Before long, I was praying for the means by which this could be accomplished. Through faithful congregations of the body of Christ, God provided, not only financially, but also with events that helped me decide which school to attend. What does the school mean to me? It quite literally was the answer to my prayers. “Another thing which comes to mind when I reflect on the *NWFSBS* and its two-year program is brotherhood. Never in my life have I formed such close friendships in so little time. Sure, we had our rocky patches and conflicts of personality, but just like a group of brothers in the flesh, we would spat and get over it, but no one else was allowed to mess with the family. This bond between us happened so quickly we probably were never aware of its occurring. It is a bond that is not easily broken. Though we may end up hundreds of miles from one another, when we come back together, it is just like we never parted. What does the school mean to me? It was the center and beginning of life-long relationships.

“Although it may not seem like a positive thing to say, another thing that comes to mind is struggle. When I was first started talking about going to a preacher training school someone once told me, “It will be the hardest thing you will ever do.” At the time I was not impressed, but I had no concept of how profoundly true that was. When it seemed like the instructors were purposely overburdening us, the truth of the matter is we were learning that our limits were now being tested and our capabilities were not as low as we had thought. What does the school mean to me? The triumph over struggle gave me confidence.

“Besides the academics, and privilege of gaining from the knowledge and scores of years of collective experience of the instructors, the atmosphere for spiritual growth is at an optimum. Within one quarter spent, each student’s growth is tremendous. This is, in part, due to the consistency and integrity of the instructors’ lives as well as the Biblical soundness of their teachings. I can unequivocally recommend the school as it stands at the present. I hope many other young men will seek a foundational education with the *NWFSBS* for many years to come. What does the school mean to me? It means hope toward the future that the church will have sound preachers to take the gospel to the world.”

Rodney Hilliard, a Mississippian and a second year student, has this to say:

“When we consider what helps society progress, one thing has to be the goals we set for ourselves. Goals are no doubt an important part in aiding a person reach his potential. Achieving our goal of becoming gospel preachers involves several steps.

“One step in reaching this goal is deciding if and what school to attend. The experience for some may be discouraging and overwhelming. Although some of this results from a lack of personal motivation, sometimes the blame lies in the school that has been chosen. I believe sadly that there are

many schools that are not giving the aspiring preacher what he needs to preach the word, not only hurting the preacher, but the congregations he will labor with later in life.

“Although some schools are lacking, there are those that are doing the job, one being the Northwest School of Biblical Studies. I would now like to share with you some of the reasons the school means a lot to me.

“The school has given me tools with which to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). They have helped me tap into abilities I possessed but for which I needed training in how to use. By having capable instructors, who are knowledgeable, sound, and love the truth, I have progressed and am able to preach the word of God. It has allowed me to set higher goals and to realize my potential is greater than I had thought.

“I have also learned other practical things that help make a gospel preacher better able to perform his duty, allowing him to more effectively reach people from the pulpit and enabling him to be an effective minister of the gospel unto people (2 Tim. 4:5).

“Most would agree that there is no better place to learn than in a homelike atmosphere where one can relax. The school has that “home feeling” to it. Her size is such that it allows for a closeness between students and instructors. From this, friends are made and become like family. Everyone gets to know the other on a personal level with willingness to help anyway he can.

“It is an atmosphere where the Bible is respected and followed, where each student wants to learn more and receive the word with readiness of mind (Acts 17:11). We are challenged and prepared to work diligently, “abounding in the work of the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). There is a spirit of “consider[ing] one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24-25).

“*NWFSBS* has these and other qualities. It means a great deal to me to be able to study here and continue preparing myself to preach. The experience gained will not only be an asset to me, but also to others I will teach. I believe the school’s operation and the conduct of its instructors make it a desirable place for those with the goal of becoming gospel preachers to develop the skills needed to preach the word of God.”

Roger Scully, also a second year man and a Cajun from Morgan City, LA, offers his thoughts on his school of choice:

“I have for several years noticed a constant digression in the brotherhood and a resulting need for sound gospel preachers. I have seen the need for men to be properly trained to preach, teach, and defend God’s truth (2 Tim. 2:2); thus, my decision to attend a school of preaching and do what I can to help.

“Having made the crucial decision to attend a school, I had some concerns as to the school that I would attend. I wanted to attend a school that would be (1) sound in its teaching, (2) have a qualified staff of instructors, (3) be under the oversight of a strong eldership, and (4) have concern for the well-being of its students. After checking into several schools I set my mind to attend the Northwest School of Biblical Studies. Allow me to say that my decision has been one without any regrets.

“I have recently completed my first year and cannot say enough about the wonderful experience with which my family and I have been blessed. From the kindness of the Ensley congregation, whose work the school is, to the friendships that we have developed with fellow students and their families, to the knowledge that has been shared with me by the instructors, it has truly been everything that I expected, and more.

“Thinking about the school many things come to mind, not the least of which is the amount and intensity of the work. It does at times seem overwhelming, but I know now it is necessary. The instructors have a great responsibility to make sure that we are equipped to “go into the world and preach the gospel,” and they take that responsibility very seriously. They make sure that we have the knowledge and understanding necessary to do the work of an evangelist. They also make sure that we do not “sell ourselves short.” They push us to our full ability and for that I am thankful.

“Another thing that comes to mind is character. I have really grown a lot as a person since I

have been here. That is greatly due to the influenced that is around us. The instructors live what they teach, and make sure that they set the proper example for us. If competence breeds competency, I'd like to think that character breeds character.

“One thing, in my mind that particularly stands out about the school is the fact that there is no compromise when it comes to Bible truth. This is especially important to me, as well as it should be to any soldier of the cross. With more and more congregations and schools willing to compromise when it fits their wants and needs, I am thankful that this school has stood and continues to stand where the Bible stands.

“Attending *NWFSBS* has certainly been a life changing experience, and I still have one year left. I am thankful for my supporters who make it possible for my family and me to be a part of the school. I highly recommend the school to anyone who has a desire to learn more about God's Word and grow as a Christian. For me *NWFSBS* is the school of choice.”

There you have it. If personal reflection were the one and only test, we have the good word of brethren from Michigan all the way down to the bayous that *NWFSBS* is a choice school and a school of choice. Brother Kenneth Burleson, the Director, has for years worked hard to bring things to the level we have. Working for and with him this past year has been so refreshing and personally rewarding.

You will note that of the various common observations of the three men above, one in particular is that of the workload. They are not exaggerating, it is intense. No less so, though for the teachers. I'm convinced that the increase in my volume of gray hair during this past year is disproportionate to the actual passage of time. I would gladly have it all turn gray and fall out if it means more and better opportunities to aid in the preparation of preachers.

We need for you to begin, and /or continue sharing your resources with us toward this great end. We covet you advice and suggestions. We depend upon you to point us toward solid prospective students. May we continue to “communicate” in this great endeavor. Call or write us at Northwest School of Biblical Studies, 57 Hannah Circle, Pensacola, FL 32534; (tel.) 850-479-4405 or 476-1417.

Alan Adams, Instructor and Dean of Student
1653 Pine Lane Drive
Cantonment, FL 32533

3RD ANNUAL BANNER OF TRUTH LECTURES, Murray, KY

June 23-26, 2003

Speakers now being selected. Why not make plans now to keep that date open so that you can be a part of this spiritually uplifting series of lessons?

The facility we used for the 2002 lectures has been reserved for 2003. A great opportunity to hear 28 sound and edifying lessons!

Gospel Gleaner

The *Gospel Gleaner* is a quarterly publication of the Mabelville and Mountain Home churches of Christ. The editor is Dennis Gullede. Staff Writers, as of the Jan. - March, 2002, issue were: Bill Dillon, Guy F. Hester, M.W. Kiser, Max Miller, John T. Polk II, Allen Webster.

I've not been well acquainted with the publication, but I did pick up two or three copies a few months ago from a congregation in this area.

Since I do not receive the paper or have anything to do with it, I was somewhat surprised to see a short part of an article (just over half a page) which I wrote in *Banner of Truth*, Nov. 1996, in the April-June issue of *Gospel Gleaner*. My article was more than six pages in length in *B.O.T.*

From time to time I have written that people who want to use material carried in *Banner of Truth* are at liberty to do so. In the above case, I don't know what the motive of the editor or staff was.

Since the small portion of my article, titled "When Does Opposition To Error Go Too Far?," was printed, I've wondered if it was for the benefit of some of the *Gospel Gleaner's* Staff.

Since my belief that one congregation can withdraw its fellowship from another, is considered error by some on the staff, I sincerely believe those brethren have gone "Too Far" in opposing what they claim to be error, but have yet to show that it is error. Perhaps some of the readers of *Gospel Gleaner* are not aware of an e-mail which was sent out to more than twenty people, by a Staff Writer, containing a suggestion that it be passed on to others. The e-mail contained a paragraph in which I was belittled, insulted and made fun of. This appeared to me to be "taking vengeance" on me, when unable to show me to be in error.

Let it be understood that I have nothing to do with *Gospel Gleaner*. I've never sent anything to the publication to be published, and that includes the portion of my article referred to above. I would hope that the portion of my article referred to above would be considered seriously by the Editor and his Staff, and that they would desist in causing division.

- - - Walter W. Pigg

READERS' RESPONSE

"Please add my name to your mailing list. May God bless your work in standing for sound doctrine - **Roger Genung.**" - AR. (*Thanks for your encouragement. Ed.*)

"Just received the lectureship tapes and wanted to tell you how good I think they are. Haven't heard them all yet but the first 8 are among the best I've ever heard. I am making copies for others. We have several shut-ins who enjoy the tapes. We really intended to come to the lectureship but the date passed by. We really appreciate the work you all are doing and would like to be able to support further - **Lucile Krantz.**" - TN. (*We trust you will be able to attend the lectures next year. We have made reservations for June 23-26. Those who miss the lectures miss some excellent lessons which are needed.- Editor.*)

"Thanks brother for the latest issue (June 2002) of "Banner of Truth." You are so right! When men get back to the "Old Paths" the church will once again be what God wants her to be. Here in Northwest, Alabama we are seeing just about everything. In the Wednesday, August 28 issue of the *Times Daily* there was a lengthy article about the Darby Drive church. They have just bought 111 acres of land on Cox Creek Parkway (in Florence). They are building a new church building to seat 1,500 and a multipurpose facility. Also, plans are to build two (2) baseball fields, one (1) football field and one (1) soccer field on the site. I questioned someone a few days ago about all this and the answer was "we've got to do something to draw the young people and keep them coming along with their parents." Needless to say when our conversation ended he walked off laughing at me. It truly makes me sick at my stomach to see such going on in the church our Lord died for. As I told this man, it is nothing short of denominationalism....I just want to let you know how much I appreciate your strong stand for the truth. The congregation here (Valdosta church in Tuscumbia, AL) is another one that is standing firm. We lose some and gain some in doing so. But the ones we gain are strong brethren. Thanks again for the publication- **Ed White.**" - AL. (*The picture that you have shown is very similar to what is going on in many places. Only the size may be different. The Social Gospel is simply taking over in so many*

places. Concern is primarily for “here and now” and the hereafter has little meaning. How sad it is to think how that at one time the area around Florence, Alabama was one of the strongest areas for the church. There can be no greater evidence of apostasy than what you have described. Rank indifference is the problem! Where will it end? - Editor).

“My wife and I send a small donation to help defer the cost of postage. We both are disabled 100% and it can’t be much. We are so grateful for the work of spreading the truth that mere words cannot express our gratitude. God bless all of you for your unwavering faith for the spiritual truth. Our fervent prayer is the continuance of your publication and the conversion of the lost to obey the truth in the church that Christ built, Matt. 16:18). **Ricky and Rebecca Barr.**” - TN. *(We greatly appreciate everything we receive to help us in our work with Banner of Truth, whether it be a small or a large amount. Not only do we appreciate the support, but we also are greatly encouraged by the concern shown by our fellowhelpers. From the positive response we receive from our readers, all across our country and in some foreign countries, we are convinced that our labors together are not in vain. - Editor).*

FELLOWHELPERS

May and June 2002

Lou Nell Elkins	50.00
Emogene Collier	25.00
Kenneth Kemp	25.00
Mrs. John Brown	75.00
Elizabeth Sublett	20.00
Robert M. Price	400.00
Clarence E. Hall	100.00
Anonymous	75.00
Larry Pennington	50.00
James W. Berry	10.00
Mrs. John A. Wyatt (In memory of John A. Wyatt)	50.00
Richard Adams	50.00
Bernice Harrison	10.00
Maurice Brown	15.00
Norma Snook Jackson	25.00
Alfred & Mavis Murdock	100.00
Alton Fonville	20.00
Anonymous	200.00
Jerry Moon	10.00
Mrs. Helen McCasland	5.00
Pine Ridge church of Christ	100.00
Alhambra church of Christ	50.00
Maple Hill church of Christ	200.00
Church of Christ, Sullivan	100.00
Fairview church of Christ	100.00
Macon Road church of Christ	100.00

Mount Zion church of Christ 500.00
 Total May & June Contribution 2,465.00

***“That ye may be fellowhelpers
 in the truth” (3 John 8)***

Our sincere thanks go out to our concerned brethren who make our work with *Banner of Truth* possible. Our supporters are indeed *fellow helpers in the truth* as our mailing list continues to grow to more than 6,400 copies each month.

We are greatly encouraged by brethren all across the land who are deeply concerned about walking in “the old paths” of Jeremiah 6:16). If we stand together we can accomplish much. Ed.

***Banner of Truth Financial Report
 May and June 2002***

Balance on hand May 1, 2002	15,345.36
May and June contribution	<u>2,465.00</u>
Total funds available	17,810.36
May and June expenses:	
Mailing Banner of Truth	1,305.95
E-mail for six months	90.00
Plates for printing	263.60
Address labels for bundles	49.95
Labels	68.02
Phone	12.24
Postage	<u>29.64</u>
Total May and June expenses:	1,819.40
Total funds available	17,810.36
Less total May & June expenses	<u>1,819.40</u>
Total on hand June 30,02	15,990.96

Christians and Politics

Election time is just around the corner! In what way should members of the church be involved in this process? Some maintain that we should have no part in politics. Others believe that we should use the opportunity as citizens of our country to support those who would make moral conditions better.

There are no perfect politicians and never will there be. But who can deny that some are better than others? For example: There are those who uphold, abortion, homosexuality, and often align themselves with those who would remove virtually every vestige of Godly influence from our society. Like brethren who uphold “our schools” when they stray from the truth, there are those who support politicians who are opposed to the moral standards set forth in God’s word. Bidding “God speed” to such people is saying in effect: “We ought to obey men rather than God.” If you go to the polls, and you should, think about this when you vote! - - *Editor*

Our Apology. This issue of B.O.T. is for July and August. We have simply been unable to keep up! It seems that my work increases all the time. I'm thankful that our work grows, but there is a limit to what I can do. I just had my 77th birthday, and that has affected the work I get done in a given period of time. We are so thankful for the brethren at the Dexter and Hickory Grove congregations that help so much in getting the paper ready to mail, once it has been printed. What a blessing it would be if some retired brother, who knows how to operate an offset press, would move to our area and help us in our work! That would enable us to do more than what we are now doing. - *Editor.*

Editor's e-mail: < wpiggbot@charter.net >

Visit BOT on David Lemmons' web at:

<http://www.hcis.net/users/dlemmons/BOTlist.htm>

Readers may get on David's LemmonsAid Email List:

< LemmonsAid-Subscribe@YahooGroups.com >

Welcome New Readers, do let us hear from you. Your input appreciated!