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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking

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Editor's Note: Some time ago, because of age and infirmity, I decided it might be best for me to quit writing. I had few protests but chose to ignore them since they had been long time friends. From time to time I see things that need to be addressed and since no one (at least publically) seems to be addressing them I decided I would. So, for as long as I am able, I decided to pick up the pen again, (ahem, the computer), and let go.

WHAT COMES FROM OUR PULPITS?

For the most part, when one enters a building of the church of Christ to worship on Sunday morning, some of those who are older expect certain things. There will be singing, some good and some bad, depending on the congregation and the leader. There will be prayers, some “warmed over” (pretty much the same as last time) and some that are thoughtful, sincere and fresh. There will also be the taking of the Lord’s Supper since it is the first day of the week and every week has a first day. There will also be “the passing of the plate,” in other words, the contribution taken up, generally just after the Lord’s Supper has been served.

Then there will be preaching, or that which will pass as “preaching.” Let me put it this way, there will be “speaking,” not necessarily preaching. You see, to most of the older crowd, as we are being called now, “preaching” means Bible. The man in the pulpit quotes or reads a good deal of scripture during this time. You see, the Bible says, “[Preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.](#)” (2 Timothy 4:2 ASV) Why? Because “[For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and](#)

marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

Also “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.” (Hebrews 11:3) You see, this last passage settles once and for all evolution, the big bang theory and all the rest. You say you have heard all that before? Good! That is the way its supposed to be. “and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut 6:7)

How can our children, our young people, our young married who are raising families come to know the importance and power of the word of God unless we DILIGENTLY teach them?

Why is it necessary? Because the power to convert and mold lives in the image of God is the word of God. There is no real power in eloquence, cleverness, telling fanciful stories. People can be entertained with these things but there is no real power in them to convert. Oh there is power to entertain, power to feed ones ego, power to tickle the ears of those who want it so, but not the power we really need, the power to convict us and convert us and cause to obey.

Why preach the word? The Bible says in Isaiah 55:11 “so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Emphasis mine) The Bible also says,

For the word of Jehovah is right; Psalms 33:4

By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Psalms 33:6

Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction on himself; But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. Proverbs 13:13

“PEOPLE DON’T LIKE IT”

How many times, after having preached a sermon that relied heavily on the scriptures I have heard that statement? Mostly made by preachers. At the same time and from the same audience you hear “we haven’t heard preaching like that in a long time.”

Why won’t people put up with strong preaching from the word of God? There are at least two reasons for this: 1. Family, friends, or society have persuaded preachers, that is not the way to do it. 2. Is it because they do not care enough about souls? I see lethargy in the church today I have never seen before.

For example, when the brethren gather at the building for worship or Bible study, the subject matter is not the same as in days past. There was a time when what was discussed was the church, those who needed help, the sick and infirm, people we were trying to convert. These days we hear little about those things. It’s baseball, football or some other sport. A lot of time it is politics or things of that nature.

The United States is living in some of the most difficult times we have seen in many years. Politicians in Washington have been elected to office because there weren’t enough people who cared enough about this country to go to the poles and vote.

One reason there is such a lack of scriptural preaching in our pulpits is that there aren’t enough people, enough leaders, that care enough to insist on Bible preaching and demand it.

POWER OF THE PULPIT

The greatest influence in any congregation is the pulpit. Like it or not, that’s the way it is. The man in the pulpit is before the congregation more than anyone else. To the congregation he is a “man of God.” And he should be. Some preachers say they have been fired for preaching the truth. They should be proud of that fact. They should have enough conviction that they believe it is better to be fired than to burn for not standing on the scriptures.

So some won’t listen. You think this is the first time in the history of God’s people that has happened? All you have to do is read the Bible, the history

of the people of God. Remember Jeremiah? Israel was said to be “without understanding; that have eyes, and see not; that have ears, and hear not...their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of Jehovah is become unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it... Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon ... that was in the court of the guard: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon (cistern) there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire.” (Jeremiah 5:21; 6:10; 38:6)

What about the apostle Paul? “I speak as one beside himself ...Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not” (2 Corinthians 11:23-31) I haven’t heard of any of our preachers of today in this country being threatened with the loss of life or the perils Paul mentions. Yet some of them are still influenced by the masses.

Preaching the truth may not immediately bring the results we desire. We have become accustomed to instantaneous results. And some are prone to change the message, thinking it will work better. God’s word cannot be improved on. It will accomplish that which He desires. Preaching the word will ultimately prove effective. God has so promised and He “cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2)



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