

## *The Forgotten Practice of Debating*

David Halbrook

What do you think about debates? A debate lets different ideas be examined side-by-side. It is not sinful fighting but a God-given way of showing that truth is superior to lies.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah debated the prophets of a false god. In the end, the truth was clear and lies were exposed.

Some people today imagine that Jesus said only positive things to make people feel better. Actually, Jesus often debated and as a result, it was obvious that He taught the truth (John 6, 8; Matthew 22:15-46). People who say "I don't debate religion" are not like Jesus. Paul debated religion and said "Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ" (read these verses: Acts 15:2; 17:2; 18:4; 19:8; 1 Cor. 11:1).

Religious groups once debated Bible topics. Did you know that Baptists used to challenge Methodists to publicly debate baptism? That was useful. Today in Kentucky two men are debating the topic of God versus evolution. We invite you to write us if you disagree with an article. We can even discuss publicly debating a useful topic (is your preacher willing?). Elijah, Jesus, and Paul prove that honorable debate is God's tool to spread truth and defeat error.

Editor's Note: This article appears in *Arkansas Weekly* on Tuesday. The current debate referred to is between a Baptist and evolutionist. Though people will not learn to become a Christian by this debate, it does provide us opportunities to discuss a variety of topics with others, such as the purpose of debates, what makes a debate honorable, how to prove spiritual truth, why there are few debates today, etc.

*Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.*

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Please check the bulletin board in the back. There are several items that need volunteers (preparing Lord's Supper, roadside signboard).

*We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

February 2, 2014

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*Bold and Fearless Preaching*

Terry Benton

The first preaching was in the difficult circumstances of being personally persecuted by the leaders of the dominant religious leaders of the city of Jerusalem. Read over Acts 4:1-32. We can see in this chapter that bold and fearless preaching was uncompromising to God's solid truth, but it was just such preaching that was needed and it resulted in growth of the church (v. 1-4), while also resulting in persecution (v. 5-21), but the early disciples knew it was worth it, and that persecution was a high honor that identified them with Jesus' rejection and suffering and helped them to love and appreciate Jesus even more than ever. The boldness of Peter and John should be copied by preachers today (v. 19-20). We should not be guided by fear of men but the love of God and conviction that truth is worth living and dying for. If your preaching is not worth the price of being rejected, then your preaching is worthless anyway. But, as preaching boldly grows and becomes openly opposed, it is time to remember that bold, soul-loving and truthful preaching must lean heavily on a rich and deep reliance upon the strength of God. So, the next section (4:23-31) was how the apostles were strengthened in prayer. The result was that they "spoke the word with boldness". Good, solid preaching must lean heavily upon God in prayer, but the content must be "in the name of Jesus" and that means it must be authorized by Jesus in His word. Preaching is not solid unless it is accurate and fully biblical, and preached in love for God and the souls of those who hear, and strengthened by a preacher's heart prepared in prayer. Let the principles gained from Acts 4 show us the kind of solid Bible preaching we need today. Let us insist on it, and help it along with diligent prayer for those brave enough to take this task in hand.

Editor's Note: This article focuses on preaching but don't limit preaching to our assemblies. Like the men and women scattered from Jerusalem, we too must be bold and fearless when personally, privately preaching the word (Acts 8:3-4).

## *Live Peaceably With All Men #2*

*Bobby K. Thompson*

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” (Romans 12:18). It is the will of God that Christians strive to live peaceably with all men. They are not to be trouble makers, but peacemakers. “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matthew 5:9). As much as depends on them, they are to seek peace with all men. Peace is a beautiful word which should be characteristic of all men’s lives. However, this is often not the concern or interest of many. They had rather dwell upon strife and vainglory than enjoy peace with one another. This prompted Paul to write, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” The attitudes and dispositions of some people will not permit others to live peaceably with them. The possibility is not favorable due to their carnal desires and worldly objectives. Nevertheless, efforts are to be made by Christians to live peaceably with all men. “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.” (Romans 14:19). There are things which make for peace. Christians should be aware of these things and make them a part of their lives. Developing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives involves following after things which make for peace, and having qualities which help us to live peaceably with all men. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:22-26). When there are those desirous of vain glory, provoking one another and envying one another, a peaceful relationship is difficult to exist. Walking in the Spirit will eliminate these things and motivate brethren to live peaceably with one another. Last week, we mentioned that peace is hindered by misunderstanding and disrespect of authority. **Peace Is Also Hindered By:**

**Pride – proud look.** Some people are determined to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. They view themselves as being superior to everyone else, and they want others to know it. One of the things that God hates is this proud look as mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-17. Paul cautioned brethren, “For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to

every man the measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3). Humility is what pleases God rather than pride and the proud look. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18). Peace and tranquility have been lost in congregations due to some brethren being filled with pride rather than the spirit of humility. John wrote about Diotrephes in his third epistle. “I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.” (III John 9). Though the words pride and proud are not used to describe his actions, it would appear that a lover of preeminence would be very similar to them. His love of preeminence was disrupting the peace of that church. John said, “Wherefore, if I come I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.” (III John 10). Like Diotrephes, some people are determined to have their way. It’s either their way or you are on your way! Pride can disrupt peace! Humility can help preserve it! “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:” (I Peter 5:6). **Peace Can Also Be Hindered By:**

**Meddling – busybodies.** The scriptures condemn the practice of meddling and being busybodies in other people’s affairs. Such practices create problems among individuals, and peace is certainly affected. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “And that ye study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with our own hands, as we commanded you;” (I Thessalonians 4:11). “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” (II Thessalonians 3:10-11). Peter also wrote about busybodies, when he said, “But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.” (I Peter 4:15). A busybody involves meddling in other men’s affairs, which are not another man’s business. We have known brethren to refuse to help brethren in sin because they did not want to be busybodies. When one is doing what is God’s will, he is never a busybody in the sight of God. We need to be involved in helping people spiritually, and this is not being a busybody! This is the business which God has given a Christian to do!