

GOSPEL MEETING: THIS WEEK (APRIL 15-20)
BRUCE REEVES WILL PREACH THE WORD
WEEKNIGHTS AT 7:00
TOPICS OF THE WEEK

Sunday (10 AM): Why Are Christians Left in the World?

10:45AM: What Visitors Should Expect

When Visiting a Faithful Church of Christ

Sunday (5PM): The Enemy of Evangelism – Excuses!

Mon. (7PM): Righteous Judgment

Tues (11AM): Challenging Texts in Romans:

The Power of God's Grace (Rom. 7)

Tues. (7PM): Understanding Baptism – Was Your Baptism Biblical?

Wed. (7PM): The Hidden Wounds of the Faithful

Thurs. (11AM): Challenging Texts in Romans:

The Sovereign Love of God (Rom. 9)

Thurs. (7PM): Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Fri. (7PM): The Day of the Lord Will Come!

** The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few (Matt. 9:37)*

** And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another,... (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

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The Exhorter

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

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

April 15, 2012

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THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

Stan Cox (<http://soundteaching.org>)

In 2 Timothy 4:5, the Apostle Paul exhorted young Timothy, “*But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, **do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.***” The admonition is serious, and any man who would take on the work should have an understanding of what God requires of him. It is also important that all Christians know what is the evangelist's work.

Too many times I have heard the simplistic answer, “The evangelist is to evangelize!” The Greek word for *evangelist* means, “the bringer of good tidings ... one who brings good news.” So, looking at the definition, the evangelist preaches the gospel to the lost. When this is contended, it is sometimes intended to limit the work of the evangelist to that single act, preaching to the lost.

While bringing the good news to the lost is certainly an important and vital part of the evangelist's work, the text of 2 Timothy 4 shows that it entails much more. Consider the following admonition in the same context, “*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables*” (verses 2-4). The “*they*” of the text obviously indicates Christians who were losing their love of the truth.

The evangelist's job is to disseminate the truth of God. We may certainly differentiate between **edification** (“building up” the saints), and **evangelism** (preaching to the lost). However, to take the next step and limit the evangelist only to the work of preaching to the lost is without scriptural basis, and has led to division among God's people. (Some, who advocate what they call “mutual edification”, take issue with an evangelist doing exactly what Paul told Timothy to do in this context).

What does an evangelist do? As Paul indicated, he preaches the word! — to the lost, and to the saints. He contends with the errorist, convinces the skeptic, rebukes the recalcitrant and strengthens the feeble. The Word of God is the tool of the evangelist, and it is to be applied to all men, no matter their standing before God.

To equip himself for the work, the evangelist must prepare. He does so through diligent study. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). The Lord does not need men preaching the gospel who are not practiced in wielding their sword.

Further, as not all are qualified to serve as elders, not every man is equipped to do the work of an evangelist. The deficiency is rarely in talent or education. Most commonly a preacher fails because he lacks conviction, knowledge, compassion or love. A love for God’s word leads him to study and to an uncompromising stand for truth. A love for the souls of men leads him to share the message of salvation even in the face of persecution and repeated rejection.

The denominational pastoral system leads to more misconceptions regarding the evangelist’s work. Some would have the evangelist in the position of oversight. That is not his work. It is the elder, (bishop, pastor) who is given that important work. While it is possible for an older, qualified man to serve as both an evangelist and an elder (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17), it is wrong for an evangelist to usurp authority that is not his.

Others would have the evangelist do the deacon’s work. The office of deacon is an office of service. Visitation and the physical needs of the saints are the deacon’s domain (1 Timothy 3:13; cf. Acts 6:1-7). While the evangelist has the same responsibilities of benevolence, love and hospitality as any Christian, God expects no more of him in this regard than any other. The fact that some brethren do expect more of him in this regard is lamentable, and has led many men to neglect their ministry in the word.

God has clearly defined what the evangelist is to do. His work is important, honorable and if done properly, consuming. Luke recorded the sentiments of the apostles, *“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables”* (Acts 6:2). While the office of the evangelist is different from that of the apostle, the evangelist’s work in *“the word of God”* is the same. All Christians should respect and honor that work, and respect and honor the men who do it.

DO WE LAY IT TO HEART?

Robert Turner

Every parent knows the difference in "Do I have to go" and "Do I get to go?" "Do I have to go to bed" means the child wants to stay up. "Do I get to go to the show" means the child wouldn't miss it for anything.

Isn't it strange that some of us will wave those same clear signals with reference to the Lord's service, and not see that we are being just as transparent as our children? "Do we have to go to Bible study" says the same thing about our desires as it does when voiced by our child. When one asks, "How much must I give," he is saying clearly, "I do not want to give anything, and would like to know how little will pay the bill." Either that, or he has failed to grasp the most fundamental and essential element in the spirit of acceptable service unto God.

There can be no coming to Christ except we deny or give self (Matthew 16:24). Translated into the context of "doing," this means we must first want to do all possible (100% committed) to serve the Lord. The proper spirit must motivate the doing, or it is shallow and empty - may even be an abomination in His sight (Hosea 6:6). God told the priests of Judaism, "If ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to My name, then will I send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" (Malachi 2:2).

Lay it to heart! That means truly respect God; take Him seriously. The priests had offered polluted bread on the altar (Malachi 1:7); offered blind and lame animals as sacrifice (1:8). They said of worship, "What a weariness it is" (1:13-14)! To make this current, they said, "Do we have to go to worship?" "How much do we have to do, or give?" "Do it any old way, just get it over with; we want to go home to the TV." And to top it off, when rebuked, they acted innocent and said, "When did we ever do that" (Malachi 1:7)?

"Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain" (Malachi 1:10). Better to close up shop - call it off - than to play at worship, and not lay it to heart.

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