

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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PREACHING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

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“FOR GOD SO LOVED the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) This familiar verse is rightfully quoted to emphasize the depth of love manifested by God in sending His son, His only son, to die for the sins of mankind and provide a way to everlasting life.

We must never lose sight of this demonstration of love as it propels us to mirror that same spirit while we strive to bring others to a knowledge of the truth. Remember it was the apostle Paul who said: “For the love of Christ compels us...” (2 Corinthians 5:14)

Often God’s unselfish love in giving His son is the emphasis that is placed on the passage; but it also behooves us to give thought to the re-

main teaching that “...whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The question we must ask ourselves is—How is belief (faith) obtained that we might appropriate everlasting life? The answer comes from the beloved apostle Paul who informs us: “So then faith (belief) comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) This is why preaching is necessary: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of

good things!’” (Rom. 10:14-15)

Thus we see that preaching on the part of the humble proclaimer must come from a love that one has for the souls of his listeners: “speaking the truth in love...” - “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls... (Ephesians 4:15) (2 Corinthians 12:15) Or as the newer translation records: “So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.”

However, Bible preaching also demands that the words proclaimed have a penetrating content of truth that pierces the listener’s intellect (heart), causing him to act upon that truth. “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10)

The Southeast Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Ct.

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone:

330.628.7432

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study:

10:00 am

Worship:

10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:

7:30 pm

All too often bold preaching is perceived to be harsh and unloving, when in actuality the hearer has heard truths that squarely apply to him. And, rather than acting upon what he has heard in a positive way (repenting and turning from his sins), he finds such preaching to be disturbing. So he assuages his conscience by labeling the truth as “harsh” and the proclaimer as “unloving.” Was that not the reaction to the preaching of Stephen: “When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth...Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him...” (Acts 7:54, 57-58)

On the day of Pentecost when the apostles were preaching to those who had murdered the Son of God, was it “harsh” and “unloving” when the speaker declared for all to hear, “You, by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay...”? (Acts 2:23) “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

Those who were honest “were cut to the heart”, convicted of their sins “and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37) More importantly, they were moved

to act upon that which was preached and received salvation: “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them...And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.” (Acts 2:41, 47)

Today, God’s truth is received no differently. Honest hearts listen and obey; hardened and stubborn hearts do not. But the obligation still remains with the preacher to “preach the whole council of God” (Acts 20:27), “preach the word in season and out of season.” (2 Timothy 4:2)

If the preacher’s purpose is pure, his attitude is humble and his message is that of God’s truth, then he can know for assurance that he is truly preaching the truth in love.

“I DON’T MAKE THIS STUFF UP”

David Tant

Egyptians File Lawsuit

Awhile back, a group of Egyptians filed a class action lawsuit against the Jews seeking to reclaim the gold the Jews “stole” when they left Egypt some 3, 500 years ago. This is interesting in that (1) the Jews did not steal the treasures of Egypt. They were given freely to persuade the Jews to go ahead and leave. (2) This class action suit by Egyptian Muslims inadvertently shows their acceptance of the Biblical record.

The Court Has Ruled...

in Rome, NY that a “time out” in school for an unruly 2nd grader is “false imprisonment.” The child was misbehaving. Since spanking is now verboten, and Dr. Spock has helped raise a generation on the philosophy that telling a child “No” might warp his creative personality, where do we go from here? Are we allowed to look cross-eyed at a misbehaving child? No wonder our prisons are overflowing with those who have never learned self-control or respect for authority.

Attendance Boosters

St Francis Episcopal Church in Stamford, CN has introduced a new monthly program—Holy Communion for pets. Mary Wilkinson “carried her 17-year-old tiger cat to the altar, waiting in line behind three panting dogs to receive the host and a special benediction performed for her cat, Purr Box, Jr.” She is now attending after a 10-year absence

Some Researchers In Australia...

have determined that the baby Jesus must have suffered hypothermia. They concluded this from the many pictures of the baby with so few clothes on.

(Adapted from article in “Focus Magazine,” February—March, 20012)

Don’t Forget—Our Gospel Meeting Begins March 27