

Preaching the Gospel

A monthly magazine for preachers and those who want to preach.

Paul K. Williams, editor

P.O. Box 324, Eshowe 3815, South Africa, 035-474-2656

E-mail: bible@netactive.co.za; Web page: www.knowyourbible.co.za

Vol. 2, No. 8—December 2006

A COLD BAPTISM!

T. B. Larimore wrote, probably in the last few years of the 1800's, "Last night, when we got to the water, we found that no one had cut the ice. There seemed to be a misunderstanding all 'round. Notwithstanding men could walk on the ice, the ground had thawed on top, it had rained a little, was very dark and very muddy, the sloppy mud resting on a firm foundation of frozen earth. Finally, after we had stood there from twenty to thirty minutes, 'they' succeeded in beating, with a long, heavy piece of timber, room through the ice for the baptizing. The lady who was to be baptized had on old, thin, leaky shoes; hence, of course, her feet were wet from walking and standing in the deep sloppy mud—mud almost as wet as water, nearly as cold as ice. Some one went after a rake, returned and reported 'no rake.' Finally, however, a rake was secured. The broken ice was raked to right and left, till it was possible for the baptizing to be done.

"In the meantime, the little woman who was to be baptized was not the least bit nervous; but she was afraid 'they' would insist on postponing the baptism. She said, 'The water doesn't seem to be very cold.' As we went down into the water, I said, 'I'll take good care of you.' She said, 'The Lord will take care of me.' I said, 'Yes, he'll take care of us both.' It was not the slightest trouble to get her into proper position and depth of water. As I lowered her into the cold grave, the broken ice naturally closed over her, so that she was literally covered over—the grave filled—with ice. The mass of broken ice over her must have been many inches thick. As I raised her up, she said, 'O! I'm so glad!' Talking and praising God in a low, soft, sweet voice, she 'came up out of the water,' pushing great blocks of ice out of her way. When she reached the bank, loved ones hastened to wrap her up as quickly and completely as possible; but when they betrayed some anxiety about her, she said: 'I'm not cold at all.' She never complained of the least unpleasant sensation. She had to be up nearly all night with her baby boy and little girl, hence, slept scarcely any; but she is bright, cheerful and happy to-day, hasn't had a pain or an ache, and, though her 'throat trouble' seemed to be chronic—had lasted so long that she and loved ones feared so, at least—she declares her throat is perfectly well. She says: 'Dark as last night was, it was the brightest night of my life.' Hers was certainly as disagreeable and as delightful a baptism as I have ever witnessed."

--Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, Vol. 2, pp. 59-60.

HOW THE PREACHER SPEAKS TO OTHERS

“Paul, B ____ is a great preacher in the pulpit, but he is a disaster in how he handles people. If someone would deliver him to the church building in an armored car just in time for the sermon and would take him away immediately afterward, he could do a lot of good. But he makes a mess of things by the insensitive way he speaks to people at other times.”

The preacher who told me that was exaggerating for emphasis, but I understood what he meant. And I repeat it to make an important point: the preacher’s work is more than preparing and preaching sermons.

Preaching the Gospel Magazine is published the middle of each month. It is free by e-mail. Those who receive it are encouraged to print it for others.

This file is formatted for printing on both sides of the paper, with room to punch holes on the left for inserting in a notebook.

You will find back copies on www.knowyourbible.co.za.

I am sure all of our readers are keenly aware that the preacher must “*in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*” (2 Tim. 4:12) But in this article I am speaking specifically about the manner in which we must try to answer people, speak to people, plead with people, and rebuke people. There is specific instruction concerning this.

“*Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.*” (1 Tim. 5:1) Each person is to be treated with dignity and respect. Our brethren, in particular, must be shown our great love. We are often tempted to be impatient with the ignorant, especially when we think they don’t read their Bible like they should. But we must not ridicule them.

In Bible class the teacher must be careful to treat each student with loving care. I make a habit of asking questions directly to the students in my classes. I try very hard to fit the questions to the students and to handle the answers, even when they are very wrong answers, so that the student is not embarrassed. A teacher must not use questions in such a way as to make the student feel ridiculous.

But the preacher must never be apologetic about the truth! “*Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*” (2 Tim. 1:8). We must speak with respect for others, but we must speak the truth whether the one hearing it wants it or not. Remember, “*I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.*” (Acts 20:26-27) And we will find that no matter how carefully we speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), those who do not love the truth will find fault with us. They hated Jesus and misrepresented Him. We can expect the same. “*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you*” (John 15:18-19)

“*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*” (Col. 4:5-6) “*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*” (Eph. 4:29)

Since “*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*” (Matt. 12:34), we should be working very hard to have great love for God, for the truth, and for our fellow-man. We must spend time in prayer. Then, out of that heart of love will come the words which will build up our hearers.

But don't be discouraged. Perfection rarely comes! When you realize that you have made a big mistake in what you have said or how you have handled a person, pray to God for forgiveness--but don't give up. God works through imperfect beings. Keep on keeping on!

COMMENDING OUR BRETHREN

From Albert Barnes: *There is no impropriety in speaking of the good qualities of Christians in their presence; or even of commending and praising them when they deserve it. The apostle Paul was as far as possible from always dwelling on the faults of Christians. When it was necessary to reprove them, he did it, but did it with tenderness and tears. When he could commend, he preferred it; and never hesitated to give them credit to the utmost extent to which it could be rendered. He did not flatter, but he told the truth; he did not commend to excite pride and vanity, but to encourage, and to prompt to still more active efforts. The minister who always censures and condemns, whose ministry is made up of complaints and lamentations, who never speaks of Christians but in a strain of fault-finding, is unlike the example of the Saviour and of Paul, and may expect little success in his work. Comp. Ro 1:8; 16:19; 1Co 1:6; 2Co 8:7; 9:2; Php 1:8-7; Heb 6:9; 2Pe 1:12.*

STAYING ON COURSE

One reason why the preacher should have a **purpose statement** at the top of his outline is to keep him on course. If you have a clear aim you are not so likely to wander onto other subjects without real purpose.

As you construct your sermon, look at your outline to make sure each step is in the direction of your goal. If necessary, rearrange the main divisions so that each division is another step toward proving your point and moving your audience to action. Then write a strong conclusion which you can see comes as a logical result of your sermon.

With a clear aim and a carefully constructed outline, you will be well on your way to preaching in such a way as to accomplish something good!

TO BE PUT ON THE E-MAIL LIST

Request it from: bible@netactive.co.za.

Share the magazine with others. We want it to be as useful as possible. PKW

Be sure to look at my new website dealing with the head coverings of 1 Corinthians 11. Its address is: www.headcoverings.org. (Remember to type “org” at the end.)

[A WEBSITE TO REMEMBER](#)

The Cedar Park, Texas church has put all 20 years of *Plain Talk* by Robert Turner on their website. Furthermore, they make it easy to go from one article to another or to find articles.

Robert Turner has written the clearest about the church, its work, its organization, and what it really is, of anyone I know. The articles in *Plain Talk* are short and pithy, and his articles "Stuff about Things" are nostalgic and amusing. Be sure to browse this site:

<http://www.cedarparkchurchofchrist.org/ptalk/index.html>

[BOOK ON THE HOLY SPIRIT](#)

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption by Franklin Camp (published by Guardian of Truth Foundation) is worth careful study. I know of no other book like it.

Camp examines nearly every passage in the Bible on the Holy Spirit. He takes the strong position that there is no personal, non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He shows (at least to my satisfaction) that most of the verses used to "prove" the position that the Holy Spirit dwells in a person separate and apart from the word do not refer to that at all. Those verses are usually speaking of the miraculous work of the Spirit which was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

Of great value is the scripture index in the back of the book which lists every verse he comments on and the page where the comments can be found. About 600 passages are listed! His comments are logical and careful. You will profit from studying this book.

A READER'S COMMENTS: Thanks for your most recent "Preaching the Gospel Magazine." I appreciate especially your article on preaching the old sermons. I am a little frustrated that elders or "leaders" seem always to want to give me a theme for meetings--never old fashioned "1st principle" sermons. When I suggest such lessons for a meeting, they usually indicate they prefer something else. I remember one younger preacher who was asked to do such sermons in a meeting and apparently did not know how. He wound up preaching the same motivational sermons he always preaches. Well, anyway, enough of an old preacher complaining about the younger ones.

PERSONAL: My grandson, Joel, and I plan to leave for a six-week preaching trip in Nigeria on January 12, to return on February 23. I may or may not send out a PTG Magazine in January, and certainly will not be sending one in February.

Joel and I ask for your prayers. Helen and I and three of our sons visited Nigeria for two weeks in 1972. This will be my first trip there since that time. One of the young preachers I met at that time, Sunday Ayandare, will be one of our hosts. He is now an elder in a church in Ibadan. Manny Ebong, who is the son of another preacher I met, will be our host in Lagos.
