

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

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SO YOU WANT TO BE A PREACHER?

Jefferson David Tant, jdtant3@juno.com

Preachers sometimes get fired

Many years ago I was the recipient of the proverbial “pink slip.” During my five years and two months with the congregation, we had built a new meeting place, a new preacher’s home, had increased in membership from 48 to 150, and that year had baptized 22 souls. Then out of the blue, without warning, I was told my services would be no longer required at the end a few weeks. I was given no reason, except that the elders (appointed a few months previously) felt there was a need for a change. Upon hearing about the matter, my father said, “Every preacher needs to be fired at least once.” Comforting words!

After the congregation was told what was taking place, several were quite upset and wanted to pull out and start a new group somewhere nearby. In a meeting with the men of the congregation, I said something to the effect that I had labored over five years to build that church up, and I would have no part in any divisive efforts. That was the end of any efforts to divide the church.

In time, I determined to move about 20 miles away and start from “scratch.” This had been in the back of my mind for some time, to go where the gospel had not gone before. The elders gave their approval, and invited any members to participate in this venture. In the ensuing years I have had a good relationship with this church, and have preached there on occasion. (I learned that a certain gossipy woman in the church had persuaded the elders that they would lose many members if they didn’t get rid of me. In later years she caused major problems in the church and was withdrawn from. The elders later apologized to me, as they realized they had been deceived.)

All that, to say this: The Lord’s work is worth far more than any man. I question the wisdom of preachers who must think they are so important and mighty that when they are asked to move, they will divide the church before humbly accepting the wishes of the congregation or the elders.

Yes, I know at times a stand must be taken over some doctrinal issue, and division may result. But someone has observed that 90% of the divisions are over personality, and then some “doctrinal” matter is dug up to justify the division. I guess it helps the ego of preachers if they have a loyal band of followers who are willing to divide the church in order to follow them.

Paul rebuked the Corinthian brethren for their divisive attitudes: “*for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?*” (I Cor. 3:3). Before his crucifixion, Christ prayed earnestly for his followers. “*I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as*

You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21)

When the world sees churches divided and brethren squabbling, why in the world would they want to get involved in that? Our unity should be one of the signs to the world that we belong to Christ. At least, that’s what Christ prayed for.

God holds us accountable if we cause division over ego or pride, or just because we don’t want to move. It’s not as if there is nowhere else to preach. There are far more places to preach than there are preachers to go around. If you are fired, accept it in the spirit of Christ. If you see warning signs, why not go ahead and graciously resign and leave in peace, with brethren respecting you and bidding you Godspeed? I have also been in such a situation, and all worked out for the good, with continued invitations to preach for the church, along with lasting friendships. The kingdom will be blessed, and you may prevent souls from being lost. –*Jefferson David Tant*

[The Love of Money](#)

28 February 2008--My grandson, Joel, and I have just returned from our second preaching and teaching trip to churches in Nigeria. We spent three weeks with brethren in a number of different cities. It was a wonderful experience, and we believe good was done.

However, we heard about something which occurred on our first trip which I think is important enough to write about. In preparation for the classes which we were to teach where a certain preacher preached, he phoned a number of other preachers to invite them to the classes. The response from several: “What is in it for us?” They wanted to know whether we were coming with money!

We were teaching that the organization of World Bible School is not authorized by the Scriptures. But over and over we were told by our students, “How can it be bad? They give us correspondence courses and other things.” We found that “the other things” included positions with pay and titles.

Nigeria is a poor country. The attraction of money is very great. And it is corrupting!

Paul wrote to Timothy about some “*who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.*” (1 Timothy 6:5) Our world is full of such people. But we who are followers of Christ must be free from the love of money. Therefore Paul continued: “*But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*” (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

Preacher, why are you preaching? If you see preaching as a profession whereby you can make a comfortable living and get honour from men, you will “*pierce yourself with many griefs.*” You will also cause men to lose their souls! We must be “*men of God,*” serving Him for the reward of eternal life. The reward of a preacher is not money, but souls. Be sure to read 1 Corinthians 3:5-15 and ask yourself, “*What will be my reward?*”

In Matthew 6:16 Jesus said that the hypocrites who like to be noticed by men “*have their reward in full.*” The man who preaches in order to get money also “*receives his reward IN FULL!*” That is a chilling thought. That is not the reward I want to receive! How about you?

Are You Reading Your Bible Daily?

If you are a good reader, you should be able to read the entire Bible in one year.

If you are a slow reader, it will take you longer.

But every Christian, and especially every preacher, should have a daily reading schedule.

Keep close to God by listening to Him every day!

SPEAK UP

Every man who speaks to the congregation, whether he is preaching, announcing songs, making announcements or praying, should speak so that all can hear. This takes conscious effort and practice.

When you stand in front, look to the very back of the auditorium. Imagine that the man sitting at the back is a little bit deaf. Then speak so that he can understand perfectly! Take a deep breath and let the sound come out. Don't be afraid of your voice!

Perhaps if you practice when the auditorium is empty it will help you speak up. But remember, when the building is empty and quiet, your voice will be heard even when you speak softly. You must imagine that there are babies crying and feet shuffling. Speak so that you can be heard over the usual noises of the assembly.

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Breathing is important in singing and speaking. Learn to breathe deeply. Feel it in your stomach! Don't just breathe in the top of your chest. Then open your mouth and feel the power pushing the sound to the back of the hall.

If you use a microphone, learn to use it properly. Find out how to hold it, or how close to the microphone you should stand, for the best sound. Many speakers hold the microphone too close to their mouths. When that happens, the sound is distorted. But even when you use a microphone, speak out. Don't expect the sound system to do all the work.

If people cannot hear you, you might as well not be speaking. So speak up, preacher!

From

Preaching: Principles and Practice Vol. 1

Thomas H. Holland (1978)

Kerussein—“to be a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald; always with the suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed.” (Thayer)

Barclay stated three outstanding characteristics of the herald: (1) The herald had in his voice a note of certainty. (2) He had in his voice the note of authority because he was speaking for the king, announcing the king’s commands, and the king’s decision. (3) The herald’s message came from a source beyond himself; it came from the king.

Euangelizo—“almost always used of the good news concerning the Son of God as proclaimed in the gospel.” (Vine)

Warren noted the distinction in *kerusso* and *euangelizo*: the former “said nothing about the message”, but the latter emphasizes the message. The “gospel preacher has a good message (that of salvation through Christ) to make known—in fact, it is the one and only good message relative to salvation from sin.”

Biblical preaching is the declaration of a message from the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaimed by a herald of the Lord, designed to save men from sin and for an abundant life now and eternal life with God in heaven.

How could one with the Biblical ideal of preaching ever be content with mediocrity in his service to Christ? How could one with the herald concept of preaching ever become discouraged, to the point of despair, by mundane and annoying trifles which so often originate with people who have a false view of preaching? How could one approach a study of preaching, based on a three-fold foundation of God’s man, declaring God’s message in order to lead men to God, with anything but keen interest and enthusiasm?

Because Joel and I were teaching and preaching in Nigeria for most of February, this issue is late. We thank all of you for your prayers. God kept us safe. (We were stopped and detained for an hour by “irregular” local government employees who tried to extort money.) Joel and I both came down with colds toward the end of our trip, but we were able to continue our schedule. Brethren everywhere treated us with great kindness and respect. We are glad we went.

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