

# 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](mailto:bible@netactive.co.za); Web page: [www.knowyourbible.co.za](http://www.knowyourbible.co.za)

Vol. 3, No. 3—July 2007

From The Preceptor, October 1983

## *"...Do The Work Of An Evangelist..." Pt. 2*

Keith Storment

### **Introduction:**

In our last article we began a discussion of 'the work of an evangelist; considering the work in a general way and especially looking at what is not the 'work of an evangelist.' Now, I'd like for us to began looking at just what "...doing the work of an evangelist" does involve. This time, let's discuss:

### **The Work Of An Evangelist Concerning The Gospel**

**1. Obviously, his primary duty, his number one 'job' is to 'preach the Word.'** Only the gospel is God's saving power (Rom. 1:16); only the gospel has the power to truly transform individuals and society (Rom. 12:1,2); the 'man of God' must preach it!

He must preach the gospel, first of all, with absolute conviction of the truth of what he says. He must speak with such authority ringing in his voice that none can disregard him. (Tit. 2:15) A preacher, as with other Christians, may have doubtings; may have questions he cannot answer; but the pulpit is no place to air them. The evangelist can, and should, use tact and wisdom in proclaiming the gospel; but he should never make apologies for the truth of God's Word. The true 'man of God' must take a firm stand upon the solid rock of "Thus saith the Lord." He must 'speak confidently' that those who hear may have the immovable foundation of the will of the Lord on which to build their lives. (Titus 3:8; Matt. 7:24-27) If a man does not have the faith, the conviction, to do this; he has no business preaching!

Secondly, the preacher must preach God's Word 'with much contention.' (1 Thess. 2:2 KJV) Some today want a soft-spoken, easy-going fellow who will 'just preach the gospel and leave everybody alone.' The faithful man of God just can't do that! He has been charged of his Lord to 'contend earnestly for the faith.' (Jude 3) People need to realize that Christians are in constant warfare with the forces of evil. (Eph. 6:12) In this warfare we have been given but one weapon: the "Sword of the Spirit", the Word of God. (Eph. 15:17) Now a sword is a weapon of aggression—not an emblem of peace! Yes, God's Word brings peace; but only when the spiritual forces of evil in a person's life are subdued. The evangelist must 'reprove and rebuke' as well as 'exhort.' (2 Tim. 4:2)

But the gospel must also be preached with gentleness. In our aggressiveness against Satan, we must never lose sight of the souls we seek to save. We must preach the truth, all of the truth, and nothing but the truth; but it must be 'the truth in love.' (Eph. 4:15) Even though Paul was with the Thessalonians in 'much contention' he yet proved to be 'gentle among (them), as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.' (1 Thess. 2:7) The 'man of God' must be able to balance the aggressiveness of a soldier with the tenderness of a loving parent. Both the mealy-mouthed 'stand for nothing' attitude and the ugly, vindictive, 'out to get 'em' spirit are out of place in the faithful evangelist.

**2. The evangelist's second duty is to 'guard the gospel.'** In both 1 Tim. 6:20 and 2 Tim. 1:14 Paul urged Timothy to 'guard...the treasure which has been entrusted to you.' Obviously

the inspired apostle regarded this as a paramount duty or work of an evangelist. He himself said that he was 'set for the defense of the gospel.' (Phil. 1:16) We see the importance of guard duty in secular things: The military man who sleeps on guard duty is subject to court martial; if the offence occurs in wartime, he is likely to be shot! As those who are in constant warfare with Satan, God's men must not go to sleep on the Lord.

At least three dangers are prevalent today; they demand a vigilant guarding of the gospel.

a) The gospel must be guarded against the destructive danger of false teachers and false teaching. This demands constant vigilance because of the nature of false teachers:

***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](http://www.knowyourbible.co.za).***

They are a crafty and sneaky lot; seldom if ever do they sail under their true colors. Paul said certain 'false brethren' had 'sneaked in' to cause trouble. (Gal. 2:4) He warned the Romans against those who, by 'smooth and flattering speech, deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.' (Rom. 16:18) And Peter stated that false teachers would 'secretly introduce destructive heresies.' (2 Pet. 2:1) Such individuals pose a real danger to the gospel because of the effects of their actions: Give such men a place and they will 'cause division' by 'draw(ing) away disciples after themselves.' (Rom. 16:17; Acts 20:30) So the faithful man must constantly be on the lookout for such evil workers and to such do "not yield in subjection...for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel may remain" with God's people. (Gal. 2:5)

b) A second danger that the gospel faces is that of factionalism—the causing of division. The evangelist must be on guard against any who cause division and bring about factions over matters of personal opinion. This seems to be a growing danger today, (or perhaps it is just that this young man is

becoming more knowledgeable of what's going on!) Besides the old 'issues' of 'carnal warfare' and 'the covering'; we now have: the "Lord's Supper on Sunday night" controversy; the "which translation" question; the "church dress-code (pant-suits for women; coat and tie for men?)" problem and I've lost track of how many others. The result is a field ripe for a good crop of factionalism. But the teaching of God's Word is plain on such matters. Paul lays down two simple principles in Rom. 14 that, if heeded, would cure division over such items of personal opinion. (And please note: I did say matters of personal opinion. Matters which affect the collective work of the church [i.e. instrumental music, church support of human institutions, etc.] are not under consideration in Rom. 14). The first principle is simple: Accept those who differ on matters of opinion (vss. 1-4). The second is equally simple: Keep your personal opinions to yourself and God and don't try to bind them on others (vs. 22). (NOTE from PKW: I do not believe that the questions of carnal warfare, the covering, or the Lord's Supper on Sunday night are issues of personal opinion which should be kept to oneself. They do not fit under the category of the things spoken of in Romans 14. For a discussion of fellowship concerning these questions read the chapter "Fellowship" in my book, *The Head Coverings of 1 Corinthians 11*, [www.headcoverings.org](http://www.headcoverings.org)) Today's preacher must guard against factionalism on two fronts: He must constantly be sure he himself is not involved in such; that what he preaches and urges others to practice is indeed the Word of the Lord and not his own opinions and ideas. Second of all, he must stand ready to, after a first and second warning (Tit. 3:10), reject anyone who seeks to make his or her opinions tests of fellowship.

c) And yet a third threat that faces the gospel and its proclalmers today is that of self-willed individuals. Those, who like Diotrephes, love 'to be first among (the brethren).' (3 John 9,10) To such men (and, too often, I've found, women!) there is no such thing as compromise on matters of expediency. Their thoughts and opinions must carry the

day. It is the Bible class material they want or none; the color carpet they want or none; the preacher they want or none; the...but you get the picture. One or two such individuals can reduce the simple task of the church to preach the gospel to an endless hassle and hassle over methods. (Luckily, none of the apostles were of this disposition or they would still be in Jerusalem debating over whether to 'go' by horse or foot!) And sooner or later, if it isn't stopped, such wrangling will 'split the church' over such trivialities as whether to paint the building blue or white. Such is no more than another brand of factionalism, and individuals like this should be accorded the treatment prescribed in Tit. 3:10. The gospel preacher must stand against such senseless egotists and 'do nothing by partiality.' (1 Tm. 5:21)

**3. And the 'work of an evangelist involves being faithful to the gospel.** The Lord told Jeremiah that false prophets could tell their dreams "but let him who has My Word speak My Word in truth." (Jer. 23:28) Paul encouraged Timothy to "keep the commandment without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 6:14) The faithful preacher must not add to, take from, or alter in any way, the Word of his Lord. (Rev. 22:18,19; Gal. 1:6-8) Two forces are often exerted to tempt men from being faithful in their proclamation of the gospel. We need to be aware of these and avoid them,

- a) One is the tendency to be ashamed of the gospel in its divinely pure form. Since following God's way does not make one socially acceptable with the 'upper crust' of society some feel compelled to change or delete 'unpleasant' aspects of the gospel. And since the divine plan seems out of harmony with modern ways of 'getting the job done' some feel compelled to 'preach a modern gospel for a modern age,' But the old, first century, Jerusalem gospel is still the only divine power to save and the preacher who would be true to his God must not be ashamed to 'tell it like it is!' (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:8)
- b) The second force that often is allowed to compel men to be unfaithful to the gospel is the powerful one of fear. Since a faithful telling of the Word often brings hardship (witness Jesus, Paul, Jeremiah, among many others—Heb. 11:32ff) a fear of the hardship sometimes forces men to 'water down' the gospel; to 'make it easier to swallow.' Paul had to make his first defense without human aid or companionship because all his friends had deserted him. (2 Tim. 4:16) But faithfulness to God demands enduring hardship if it comes. (2 Tim. 2:3; Rev. 2:10) We must, in love but honestly, preach the truth and let the chips fall where they may. The Lord will stand with us so we need not fear what men may do to us. (2 Tim. 4:17; Heb. 13:6) After all, the Final Audit and Balancing of the Books does not come in this life; but in the world to come. (2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 4:8,18)

Thus we sum up the evangelist's work concerning the gospel: He is to preach the Word with conviction and contention against the evil works of Satan; balancing this with a gentleness and love for the souls of the lost. He must guard the gospel against the foes of false teaching, factionalism, and egotism. And he must faithfully proclaim the Word of the Lord without fear or shame.

---

### **TO BE PUT ON THE E-MAIL LIST**

Request *Preaching the Gospel Magazine* from: [bible@netactive.co.za](mailto:bible@netactive.co.za).  
Share the magazine with others. We want it to be as useful as possible. PKW



## [How To Get A Preacher To Stop On Time!](#)

This sign is on the back wall of the auditorium of a church of Christ in Uyo, Nigeria. The first section lights up when the preacher starts, then the second at the appropriate time, then the THIRD! I didn't like the sign! Some churches without this sign have a man hold up a board with the appropriate messages. I didn't like that, either.

---

## [When You Have More Material Than Time](#)

Perhaps the problem which caused the church in Uyo to put the lighted sign on the wall was caused by preachers who have too much material for the time of the sermon.

Most churches are comfortable with a sermon of about 30 minutes in length. On occasion that can be stretched to 45 minutes without complaint. We preachers just have to accept this limitation.

Denominational preachers in colonial America (in the 1600s and 1700s) would read a two-hour sermon in the morning, and after the congregation had eaten lunch would read the rest of the sermon for two hours in the afternoon. Ushers with long sticks would keep the audience awake. On one end of the stick was a feather for tickling the noses of nodding ladies, and on the other was a nob to konk the heads of dozy men.

We may wish for a return of something like that! But we preachers have to live with the situation that in this age of endless television, etc., people are not geared to concentrating for very long at a time. We have to keep our sermons to a reasonable length.

But what must we do when, after we have studied a subject carefully, we have much more material than can be presented in 30 minutes?

We must cut out much of our precious material! We must present enough to prove our points, but we will have to leave out a lot of our supporting scriptures, etc. If we do this properly, we will actually increase the impact of the sermon. By presenting fewer points and making them clear, we will do more good than trying to get everything we have studied crammed into the sermon.

You may wish to give printed material to the members of the audience. They can then study this at home as they wish. (But I would be surprised if many of them read it!) But if you do your work properly, you will get across the message very well when you prune away the excess and present your lesson with vigor and brevity.

---