

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“The Kind Of Preaching God Wants” #2

By Brian Meade

As we continue our study of the kind and class of preaching that should be done in every pulpit, in every place— let us look to God’s word to help us understand the preaching needed in every age.

IV. Preaching That Convicts & Converts Sinners To Jesus.

God’s word has the power to convict and cut to the heart those practicing sin, but we must fully rely on it to convert men and women to Jesus! We must avoid the trend among men today to rely on fads and innovations to draw people to Jesus and stay with the simple New Testament plan of preaching “*the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27 NKJB).



Paul told the Corinthians, “*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*” (I Corinthians 1:18)

The message of the cross has great power and effectiveness because it emphatically shows how bad our sins are to God! When we preach to men the need to repent and be converted (Acts 3:19), they need to see sin as it really is— the enemy and ruin of men! (Matthew 7:13)

That’s why when “milk toast-preachers” preach sermons that fail to convict anyone because they are scared they will offend those practicing sin with the serious need to repent! Some have even gone to the extreme, like Joel Osteen of the Lakewood Church, and dare never speak of anything controversial or negative from the pulpit. They are afraid to get anyone to see the need to change!

What will convict and cause men to see their desperate need to repent and obey God’s will for their life is preaching the goodness and the severity of God! Paul said in Romans 11:22, “*Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*”

There is often an emphasis of God’s goodness and kindness toward man, but many forget the severity by which God will punish sin (Jude 14-15). Some have left off preaching about hell in favor of only speaking of heaven, but both must be preached! If men are to come out of sin, they need to fully and fearfully see the consequences that sin leads them to.

It used to be that preachers weren’t afraid to preach “fire and brimstone sermons.” We still need those kind of lessons to convict and convert the lost out of sin and into a holy life before God. Preachers need to preach that hell is truly an awful place of torment, agony, and future misery for sin’s sake!

Jesus, who had a heart of love for sinners, preached the need to avoid hell at all cost. Jesus said in Mark 9:42-47, “*But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck*

it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’

Jesus did not shrink back from telling men the consequences for sin’s pleasures and neither should we! Jesus spoke more on hell than any other writer of the New Testament. That fact should not surprise us when we consider that Jesus fully knows what is waiting for the ungodly and sinner (Matthew 25:41 and 46). Jesus will also be the final Judge of sin and sinners on that Day (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

So when we consider what is at stake by our disobedience— an eternity of punishment in hell fire— shouldn’t we want someone to tell us and get us to rationally think about our sinful actions? That’s what preaching that convicts sinners will do! Let us not be afraid of offending sinners, but fully convict sin.

It is when we leave off strong preaching against sin and its consequences that men are not confronted with the need to obey the gospel and be saved.

V. Preaching That Shows Love For The Lost.

After the previous point, one might tend to think that true gospel preaching that convicts doesn’t love lost sinners, but nothing could be farther from the truth! Because love for the lost means that tough love must be demonstrated by Christians toward lost souls. It is actually the greatest kind of love— a love that doesn’t let sinners ruin and destroy themselves in sin!

But many do not see it this way. They have a wrong concept of Jesus’ love and His follower’s love as well. To them, love should be all toleration, all accepting, and all overlooking of unrepentant sin. But that isn’t real love at all!

The apostle Paul is speaking by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:1-4), as he defines love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”*

When this kind of love is shown to the lost— they may not see the kindness, the humility, or the unselfish nature of our love for them because of the blindness and deception of sin’s power over them— but it still there! Truly, those who have been converted from a life of sin will look back on their experience with someone who taught the truth to them and say, *“They loved me too much to let me stay where I was then.”* Afterward, they thank the person who helped them.

Incidentally, you may have watched shows like “Intervention” on television where there are family members and friends who intervene when someone has a drug problem that is ruining their life. That’s when those who care enough about the person enslaved to addiction to confront and help them get rid of the source of great problems in their life. The ones doing the intervention are motivated by their love for that person. They don’t hate the one entrapped in drugs, but only want them to be free from that kind of bondage. They show true, tough love. No one would accuse them of being unloving— because to do nothing would be the unloving thing to do!

The same is true of Christians who are trying to intervene, by way of the gospel, to help lives torn apart and destroyed by sin. Our motivation is to try to help them to see the error of following the devil. Genuine love for them is why we will endure the barrage of attacks that comes when men fight for their “right to sin.” And because of these attacks, Christians have to be patient in their love and be long-suffering in teaching them the truth.

Paul told young Timothy, *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”* (2 Timothy 4:2). Yes, rebukes with the motivation of love do us good. The wise man said in Proverbs 27:5, *“Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed.”* David said of such loving rebukes, *“Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it.”* (Psalm 141:5) Jesus Himself said in Revelation 3:19, *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”*

So why do people think it so unloving to rebuke sinful conduct and expose the awfulness of such behavior in gospel preaching? It is the favorite tactic of those who don’t want to let go of their sin that brings them pleasure to paint preachers as unloving because they preached on their favorite sin(s). Instead of squarely fixing the problem they have with sin, they choose to walk away accusing the preacher of not preaching like Jesus— which is false!

The Greek word for love (agape) means *“wish well to, regard the welfare of.”* Sinners don’t realize the love we have for them in teaching and preaching the truth to them for their salvation. We only want them to turn from sin in repentance and obey the gospel for their greatest good! We want them to go to heaven when Jesus comes, and not have to face Jesus as their Judge and hear Him say, *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”* (Matthew 25:41)

That’s why Christians speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt. Martha Cottrell (Dan's Mom)

North Jackson Street Church of Christ is having a Gospel Meeting beginning October 21 thru the 25th with John Isaac Edwards. Monday-Friday 7:00 PM Nightly.

Southside Houston Church of Christ also have a Gospel Meeting starting the 20th-25th with Jim Deason the speaker for the week.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Russell Briggs
Preaching: Adam Harris
Sermon #1: "A Study Of Luke 14-15"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service: Paul Johnson
The Book of Romans (Kyle Pope)
Page 12 Question #1

Announcements: Paul Busby
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Sam Johnson
Psalm 104:31-33
Song Leader: Adam Harris
Lord's Supper: Paul Johnson
Assisting: Adam Harris & Dan Cottrell
Singing Service: *Men of the Congregation in Singing*
Invitation: Fred Johnson
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

October 23rd:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Johnson
The Book of Job (Mike Willis)
Page 57, Question #30
Invitation: Dan Cottrell
Song Leader: Chris Callahan
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade