

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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“Preaching Is Not A One-Man-Show”

By Jefferson David Tant



What is a preacher? He is a servant, not the master. He is not the ringmaster of the show. He is not the "be all, end all." He is just a humble servant, a sinner saved by the grace of God. Even the apostle Paul, as great as we think he was, did not have too high an opinion of himself. *"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all"* (1 Timothy 1:15).

If there is one thing I have been careful of in my life of preaching, it is that I did not want the church to be "my church." I am aware that there have been a few through the years who made such an accusation when things didn't go their way, but their assertions were disabused by the vast majority of the Christians who were part of the body.

Obviously, there are situations in smaller congregations where the preacher must play many roles. There have been occasions where I have led singing, served the Lord's Table, preached and prayed. Yet even in those situations, I did not set out to make arbitrary decisions.

In beginning the work where I have been the past three-plus decades, we had about 12 members at the start. Besides myself, as I recall, there were four men—three young and one elderly. None had any experience in leadership roles, and in fact some were fairly new converts. But in making decisions about the work, we discussed things together.

In the absence of elders, the temptation may be stronger for the preacher to make arbitrary decisions. But this will never help men to develop leadership qualities, and lends itself to the "pastor" system that we see in so many denominations.

The large mega-churches that are growing are often cult-like in their focus on a charismatic preacher. These preachers get so full of themselves that they are setting themselves up for a huge fall. We have seen the headlines through the years—sexual immorality, financial shenanigans, dictator-style rule.

I consider myself an important part in the work of the congregation, but I am just one of many parts. In addition to being a preacher, I have also served as one of the elders. But I was not the "head elder." When we had congregational meetings to present plans to the church, or discuss certain matters of mutual interest, I generally let one of the other elders make the presentation. When we had a meeting of the elders and deacons, I was usually not the "chairman." Nor did I feel I was the only one capable of making announcements.

On occasion, we have a young man sharing the responsibilities of preaching and teaching. I don't have to preach most of the time. In fact, we share equally when I am in town. But in addition to that, we work to develop the talents of others. Every third Sunday one of our young men preaches. The youngest has been 12 years old, and he did a very good job. Including all males who have the ability to preach, we have perhaps 20, out of a total membership of about 130.

We cannot depend on the schools to train our preachers. We must depend on local congregations, and that may mean that the local preacher must step aside from the pulpit from time to time to prepare our young men to fulfill this stewardship. This will also involve some study time with these young men to instill both knowledge and skills. A doctor must spend much time in preparing his knowledge and skills for his important role. And although it may not take six years to prepare a man to preach, it should be obvious that time is needed. And who better to do this teaching than one who is already experienced?

“The blind Spies”

By Kent Heaton

Twelve men walked the length of Canaan for forty days spying the cities, the land, and the people. They witnessed a place of great beauty and produce. One cluster of grapes had to be carried on a pole between two men. The land impressed them as a land that *“flows with milk and honey”* (Numbers 13:27).

What troubled the hearts of most of the spies were the people that lived in this place of bounty. Of the twelve men sent to spy the land, ten feared the strength of the cities and the people. The cities seemed impregnable. The descendants of Anak (giants) filled the land. The ten spies reported they felt like grasshoppers in the sight of the people. By their words they discouraged the people of Israel (Numbers 13:28-29, 31-33). Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who believed the land could be conquered. They begged the people to reject the counsel of the ten spies and go at once to take possession of the land (Numbers 13:30). With God's power they did not need to fear the people because the Lord would fight for them. The seeds of doubt had settled in the hearts of the people, and they refused to listen (Numbers 14:1-4). For their rebellion Jehovah God caused the people of Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 14:34).

Why did ten men see fear and two men see victory? The ten spies did not see what Joshua and Caleb saw. Their hearts were blinded by what they saw with their eyes rather than what they could see with God's power. Moses had instructed the twelve to see how strong the people were and how difficult the cities would be to conquer (Numbers 13:17-20).

The twelve spies were leaders among the people yet ten were blinded to the things that they had witnessed in the past few months. Had they forgotten the power of God in Egypt when the Lord brought the plagues upon Pharaoh? How could anyone fail to remember the crossing at the Red Sea? If the Lord was victorious over the nation of Egypt how difficult would it be to conquer this new land? Joshua and Caleb saw the same giants and fortified cities the ten spies saw but they viewed them as weak because they knew what God could do.

“If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them” (Numbers 14:8-9).

We can be like the ten spies when we fail to see how God can work in our lives. The giants of doubt and fear will stand before us and we shrink back with worry and fear not believing that we can overcome.

Paul reminds us that nothing is impossible for us if we trust in God.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Philippians 4:13; Romans 8:31-39).



Memory Verse of the Week:

John 14:23 (NKJB) *“Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”*

News and Notes:

Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Fred Johnson, Mary Ann Holley, Robert Howard, Billy Grisham, Paul and Debbie Johnson had flu last week, Danny Sheffield recovered from his sickness, Sherry Johnson was feeling sick Wednesday night, and Karen Kennemur. Nathan Cox will have surgery Monday (tomorrow).

If I have left anyone out, it was unintentional. We have had a lot of sickness lately.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Russell Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "How The Early Church Grew"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Fred Johnson
Author: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
Starting Page & Question: Herschel Patton
Page 25, Question #7

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Doug George
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Dan Cottrell
Scripture Reading: Luke 13:24-27
Song Leader: Lee Busby
Lord's Supper: Jerry Kennemur
Assisting: —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: "What One Can Do And Still Be Lost"
Closing Prayer: Lee Busby

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

January 10, 2024

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
Workbook: Preparing To Teach Our Neighbors
Author: Max Tice
Starting Page & Question: Page #88, True Or False #1
Invitation: Paul Johnson
Song Leader: Adam Harris
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade

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“How The Early Church Grew”

Lesson Text: **Acts 11:19-24.**

I. The Growth Of The Early Church.

- The Church Started Out Small.... **Matthew 13:31-32.**
- About 3,000 Added The First Day- **Acts 2:41.**
- Grew To 5,000 Men- **Acts 4:4.**
- Multitudes Added To The Lord- **Acts 5:14.**
- They Maintained The Proper Environment For Growth.
- The Example Of What Plants Need To Grow:
 - Sunlight.
 - Proper Food.
 - Good Soil.
 - Weed Elimination.
 - Care And Attention.

II. The Early Church Was Fully Devoted In Love.

- They Had A Strong Love for God- **Revelation 12:11.**
- They Worshipped God Regularly- **Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.**
- They Were Fully Devoted To The Work- **Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 16:15.**
- They Were Devoted To One Another In Love- **1 Thess. 4:9; Rom. 12:10; Col. 3:14.**

III. The Early Church Was Committed To God’s Word.

- They Were People Of The Book- **Acts 6:2; Acts 17:11.**
- Unified In The Doctrine Of Christ- **1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 John 10.**
- God’s Word Was Their Way To Growth- **Acts 20:32.**
- Today, Many Attempt To Substitute It With:
 - Doctrines And Commandments of Men.
 - Motivational Type Speaking That Leaves Out Necessary Teaching.
 - Sweet, Sugary, No Substance Lessons That Don’t Edify.

IV. The Early Church Was Patient In Hardships.

- They Endured Persecution and Trials- **Hebrews 10:32; Matthew 24:13.**
- The Persecution Helped To Spread The Word- **Acts 8:1-4.**
- They Endured Church Problems Faithfully- **1 Cor. 5:1-10; 2 Cor. 7:11.**
- They Endured False Teachers- **2 Timothy 3:11-14.**

V. What Can I Do To Help This Church Grow In 2024?

- Make It Our Goal In Life To Be Like The Early Church! — See Points 2—4.
- Don’t Just Want Growth A Little Bit— But A Lot!
- We May Feel They Had Advantages We Don’t Have Today.
- But We Have Many Advantages:
 - The Complete Written Word.
 - Modern Ways Of Transportation.
 - Modern Ways Of Communication.

“What One Can Do And Still Be Lost”

Lesson Text: Luke 13:24-27.

Premise Of Our Lesson: How Not Taking Things Far Enough Will Condemn Us!

I. One May Hear Gospel, And Still Be Lost.

- We Want Everyone We Can To Hear God’s Message Of Salvation **Romans 10:17.**
- But Just Hearing The Gospel Alone Doesn’t Save— Its Requires Our Response.
- **Romans 10:13-21; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.**
- Felix Heard Paul, But Failed To Obey The Gospel- **Acts 24:24-25.**
- One May Know Fully About:
 - Jesus, God, The Holy Spirit, Heaven, Hell, Sin, And Righteousness....
 - One Must Hear and Obey- **James 1:22; Hebrews 5:8-9.**

II. One Can Be Almost Persuaded, And Still Be Lost.

- **Acts 26:24-29.** King Agrippa Was Almost Persuaded, But Didn’t Obey.
- Many Have Followed That Same Level Of Persuasion— But Lost!
- But To Be Almost A Christian Doesn’t Change Our Standing Before God.
 - What If One Almost Repents, Almost Confesses, And Almost Baptized?
 - It’s Like Almost Getting Married To Someone!
 - Paul Wanted Them To Be Like Him- **vs. 29.** How? **Acts 22:16.**

III. One Can Be Religious, And Still Be Lost.

- The Athenians Were Very Religious- **Acts 17:22-23.**
- The Scribes & Pharisees Were The Ultra-Religious- **Matthew 5:20.**
- It Was Religious People Who Wanted To Kill Jesus- **Matthew 16:21; Luke 24:7.**
- It Was Religious People Who Have Zeal For God- **Romans 10:1-3.**
- It Was Religious People Who Perverted The Gospel- **Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 1:6-7.**

IV. One Can Be A Disciple Of Jesus, And Still Be Lost.

- True Of Some Disciples Who Turned Back- **John 6:66-67.**
- One Can Even Call Jesus Lord- **Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23.**
- Judas Was A Disciple Of Jesus, Yet Lost- **John 17:12.**
 - Judas Was One Of The Twelve- **Luke 9:1.**
 - Yet, He Fell By His Transgression- **Acts 1:15-26.**

V. One Can Obey The Gospel, And Still Be Lost.

- Good That One Obeys The Gospel, But One Must Remain Faithful- **Rev. 2:10.**
- One Can Still Leave Christ— Our Choice:
 - By Forsaking Him- **2 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 2:17.**
 - By Falling Away- **Hebrews 6:4-6.**
 - Departing From The Faith- **1 Timothy 4:1.**
 - Turning From The Holy Commandment- **Ezekiel 18:24; Peter 2:19-22.**
 - By Being Led Away- **2 Peter 3:17.**