

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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March 5, 2023

### ***“Distinctive Preaching”***

By W. Curtis Porter



I cannot conceive of there having ever been a time in all of the history of the church that distinctive preaching was not needed. Perhaps there have been periods of that history in which such preaching was more sorely needed than at other times; but if so, the failure of some to preach a distinctive gospel was responsible for the increase of the need for it. And it may be that there was never a time when the need for distinctive preaching was more imperative than now. We have entirely too much preaching that means nothing, and the need of the hour is for men who have the courage to preach a distinctive message.

To me it is no compliment to a speaker for the audience to be unable to place him. I have heard it said of preachers: "He has preached in our community for two weeks, but people could not tell by his preaching to what church he belonged; he was an orthodox preacher." While such things have been said by way of compliment, to me they shout their criticism and are not complimentary words at all. Whenever a man is so vague, indefinite, or general in his preaching that his auditors cannot place him, or identify him, there is something seriously wrong. A preacher is certainly not filling his mission as a preacher when his pulpit proclamations are characterized by such vagueness. I am talking, of course, about a preacher who stands identified with the church of the Lord. I am not so much concerned about how other preachers preach. If they are preaching the doctrines of men, there is nothing vital to the soul lost if they never become definite about it.

And yet if I were a member of some human church, I would want my preacher to preach the things for which the church stands. If I were the member of the Baptist Church, I would want my preacher to preach a Baptist doctrine; and if I belonged to the Methodist Church, I would want my preacher to preach a doctrine that would be distinctively Methodist; and the same goes for any other denomination. In any case I would expect my preacher to preach definitely the doctrines of that denomination. Then since I am a member of the church of Christ, should I expect less of the preachers of that institution? The world will lose nothing of importance if denominationalism is not distinctively preached; but if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached in a distinctive manner, a great loss is incurred.

#### **Who Preaches What?**

There is a vast difference between the truth of the gospel and the theories of denominationalism, and that difference ought to be held up to the people who hear. Jesus said: "*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*" (Matt. 15:13). Why, then, make any compromise with such plants? Or why fail to show that human institutions are not growths from a heavenly planting? I am just certain of the fact that it often becomes necessary to tell who preaches what. This would not be so necessary if denominational preachers would preach the doctrines of their churches, but they are like some of my brethren would be if they listened to the clamor of the audience for "soft preaching." They have no distinctive message to proclaim. Consequently the average member of denominations does not know the doctrines of his church. You may preach ever so strongly upon some point of error, but he does not know you are talking about his doctrine, for his preacher has not preached it; such things have been kept from him. To this there are some exceptions, but the condition is very general.

In order for a member of the Baptist Church to know that you are contrasting the truth with Baptist error it becomes necessary to state that the error is taught by the Baptist Church. Otherwise he may not discover that you have taken his doctrine apart. The need of this was very forcibly impressed upon me as a result of one of my own sermons. I was engaged in a mission meeting near where I was laboring for the church. At one service I preached on the subject, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" I contrasted truth with error and showed plainly what the Bible teaches about that subject. When the service had been concluded, a stranger came to me, took me by the hand, and complimented very highly that sermon, stating that he believed every bit of it. Upon later inquiry I found that he was the main leader of the Baptist Church of that community. And yet I had been preaching things that were in direct conflict with the doctrines of the church to which he belonged! The next day a conversation was heard over the telephone in which one lady told another that she should have been at the meeting last night, for she would have heard one of the best Baptist sermons that she ever heard. And yet I had not failed to preach the truth! However, they did not know the teaching of the Baptist Church; and if I had told who preaches what, they would have seen the difference. At least, they would not have accused me of preaching Baptist doctrine!

I know that harm can be done by mentioning denominations in the spirit of sarcasm. There is a difference between exposing error and abusing the adherent of the error. We may show kindness to the man and yet expose the error which he holds. Therefore, I do not hesitate, when I feel that conditions demand, to call denominations by name and show the error of the denominations. This is exactly what Jesus did while he was on earth, and, judging from what he did then, it is exactly what he would do now!

### **Make People Know They Are Lost**

Preaching that is not distinctive enough to make the lost realize they are lost is not the kind of preaching it takes to save men. Whenever an unfaithful brother, one guilty of sins against the high heaven, or with an ungodly attitude toward the work of the Lord can sit under a man's preaching without feeling any discomfort or alarm, there is probably something wrong with the preaching. The man needs to be blasted with the gospel dynamite till he can see his lost condition. As long as your preaching allows him to feel secure in his sins he will not likely be redeemed from his sinful state. Just so it is with the member of the sectarian churches. If my preaching allows them to feel safe in denominationalism, there is not much chance to rescue them from it meshes. My preaching must be distinctive enough to make them see the sinfulness of denominationalism, then I can have some hope of saving them.

Just remember that in order to save a man you must make him know that he is lost. By your following some other method he might decide to "change churches" because he likes the preacher, or that he might be with some other friends he especially likes, or something of that kind; but "changing churches" for any such reason is not conversion. What we want to do is to convert the man that his change may be the result of conviction.

Jesus Christ and the apostles did not hesitate to let men know they were lost. Paul called Elymas a "*child of the devil*," and "*enemy of all righteousness*" (Acts 13:10). There was no reason for Elymas to think that Paul considered him in a safe condition. Peter plainly told Simon to repent and pray that God might forgive him (Acts 8:20-23). He let him know that he stood condemned. And Jesus said the Pharisees were children of hell (Matt. 23:15). With such worthy examples before us, why should we fail to preach so that men in sin and sectarianism can see they need to be saved?

[*Guardian of Truth*, November 20, 1980]

# **GOSPEL MEETING**

Speaker: **Billy Randolph**

Location: **Meeks Street Church of Christ**

Date: **April 16th -- 19th** (Sunday To Wednesday)

Starting Time: **7:00 PM Nightly** (Except Sunday)

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, and Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Brandon Briggs, Jimmy Briggs, Chad Harris, Randy Ferrell (Brandi's brother in law), Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Wayne Bivens (recovering from double by-pass) Ricky Doles, and Jamie Jones.

Danny Cottrell has an upcoming surgery in March.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Danny Sheffield  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** *"Those Who Should Have Belonged To The Kingdom"*

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Jerry Kennemur  
Philippians  
**Author:** Paul R. Blake  
**Starting Page & Question:** *Page #75, Question #3*

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Russell Briggs  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Fred Johnson  
**Scripture Reading:** *John 15:12-15*  
**Song Leader:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Lord's Supper:** Brian Meade  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** *"How Close A Friend Are You To Jesus?"*  
**Closing Prayer:** Doug George

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**March 8th:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Johnson  
**Workbook:** The Miracles Of Jesus  
**Author:** Mike Willis  
**Starting Page & Question:** *Page #90, Question #1*  
**Invitation:** Russell Briggs  
**Song Leader:** Lee Busby  
**Closing Prayer:** Blake Briggs

# ***“Those Who Should Have Belonged To The Kingdom”***

Lesson Text: **Matthew 8:10-12** (Phillip’s Translation).

## **I. Those Of The Jewish Nation.**

- Christ Came To Seek The Lost Of Israel- **Matthew 10:5-15.**
- **Matt. 15:21-24.**
- **Matthew 21:31.**
- Jesus’ Remarks About One Scribe- **Mark 12:28-34.**
- **Matthew 27:25.**

## **II. Those Who Just Attend The Services Of The Church.**

- God’s Word Teaches Us The Importance Of Assembling With The People Of God.
- **Psalms 122:1-4; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.**
- It Is Required To Assemble To Worship God On The 1st Day Of The Week.
- But We Can Actually Be Just A Spectator— Than A Full Participant!
- **James 1:22-25.** If We Do Not Belong To The Kingdom, Then We Are Hearers Only.
- Why Not Give Full Obedience And Be Saved?

## **III. Those Who Were Reared In Godly Homes.**

- The Bible Teaches Us To *“Bring Up Our Children In The Lord.”*
  - **Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4.**
- Timothy Was Taught To Have Genuine Faith, And It Is Evident He Truly Believed!
  - **2 Timothy 1:3-5; Philippians 2:19-20; 1 Timothy 4:12.**
- But What About The Children Who Have All The Advantages Of Godly Parents Who Care For Their Salvation— But Never Obey The Gospel?
- God Has No Grandchildren! Because Our Parents Are Christians Doesn’t Make Us One Too. We Must Be Faithful To God For Ourselves- **Ezekiel 18:1-4; 19-20.**
- **2 Corinthians 5:10.** We Are All Individually Accountable For Our Own Actions.

## **IV. Those Who Have Bibles In Their Homes.**

- God’s Word Can Truly Make Us Wise Unto Salvation- **2 Timothy 3:15; Acts 20:32.**
- It Is Good That We Are Blessed To Have A Copy Of God’s Word!
  - But More Is Required Than Just Owning A Copy:
    - **2 Timothy 2:15-18.** Must Know Truth & Obey It- **Acts 17:11; Hebrews 5:9.**

## **V. Those Who Have Left False Religion.**

- False Religion Is based On Lies, Error, And Is A Sham!
- Some Have Seen Through The False Ways:
  - It’s Abuse And Corruption. **1 Timothy 4:1-3.**
  - It’s Lies And Very Wrong Teaching.
  - Disillusioned By False Teachers. **Matthew 7:15.**
- Instead Of Going On To Find The Truth In Religion, They Give Up! **Amos 5:19.**
- Those In The Truth Who Have A Bad Experience With Brethren Can Do The Same.

# ***“How Close A Friend Are You To Jesus?”***

Lesson Text: **John 15:12-15.**

## **I. The Friends Of Jesus Have A Close Relationship To Him.**

- Jesus Desires To Have A Close Relationship With You.
  - Not Just The 12 Disciples, But With All Of Us! **Matthew 11:28-30.**
  - It Is A Devoted Friendship- **Mark 8:34.**
  - It Is A Loyal Friendship- **Matthew 6:24; James 4:4.**
  - It Is A Rewarding Friendship- **Luke 18:29-30.**
  - It Is Through God’s Word, Prayer, And Worship That We Stay Close:
    - **John 6:44-45; Matthew 14:23; John 4:23-24.**

## **II. The Friends Of Jesus Keep His Commandments.**

- **John 15:14.**
- Our Relationship To Jesus Is Based On Love And Obedience:
  - **John 15:9-11; John 14:15; John 14:22-24.**
- Are You Close To Jesus By Obeying Him?

## **III. The Friends Of Jesus Are Not Ashamed Of Him.**

- **Mark 8:38.** We Cannot Be Ashamed Of Jesus!
- Why Would We Ever Be Ashamed Of Him?
  - Fear Of Persecution, Desiring Friendships of the World... **Mark 8:35-37.**
- If We Are A Close Friend Of Jesus, We Will Tell Others About Him.
  - **2 Timothy 1:7-12; Acts 8:4-5; vs12??**

## **IV. The Friends Of Jesus Don’t Forsake Him.**

- **Proverbs 27:10; Proverbs 17:17.**
- Jesus Is Faithful To Us- **Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5; Proverbs 18:24.**
  - Despite The Fact That Others Have Forsaken Him **John 6:66; 2 Timothy 4:10.**
- We Can Forsake Him By Disobedience:
  - **1 Timothy 4:1; 2 John 9-11; 2 Peter 2:15.**
- We Can Forsake Him By Neglecting To Be Where He Is:
  - **Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:25.**
- The Close Friends Of Jesus Will Be There With Him- **Hebrews 10:19-23.**

## **V. The Friends Of Jesus Look Forward To Being With Him.**

- **John 21:4-7.**
- **1 John 3:2; Titus 2:11-14.**
- Do You Look Forward To Christ’s Return?
- Would Jesus Consider You His Close Friend, And Why?