

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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June 30, 2024

“Tent Making Preachers”

By Andy Socor

God’s design is that those who dedicate their lives to preaching the gospel receive full support for that work. Paul told the church in Corinth, *“So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel”* (1 Corinthians 9:14).

However, one who preaches may not always (or ever) enjoy the blessing of such support. Perhaps the brethren cannot financially support a preacher. It could be that brethren could support a preacher, but will not because they do not value the work of preaching as highly as they should. Or, as in the case of Paul, a preacher may forgo receiving support because circumstances are such that it may actually hinder the cause of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:12).

When a preacher receives only partial support – or even no support – for preaching the gospel, what is he to do?

Keep Preaching

When Paul gave instructions about the Lord’s desire for preachers to “get their living from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14), he was not writing to a fellow preacher; he was writing to a congregation. Local churches – as well as individual saints (Galatians 6:6) – should see to it that they do what they can to support those who have devoted their lives to proclaiming the word.

Those who preach should simply “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). While there may be nothing wrong with a man actively seeking support for his work in preaching, he ought to continue to preach even if he cannot devote himself “completely to the word” due to a lack of support (Acts 18:4-5).

Though preachers today are not divinely called to preach as the apostle Paul was, they should have the same willingness to “offer the gospel without charge” (1 Corinthians 9:18).

Work to Support Himself

When Paul was first in Corinth, Luke recorded, *“He was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks”* (Acts 18:4). During the rest of the week, he was busy working as a tent-maker while he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3). It was necessary for Paul to work to support himself because he did not receive support from Corinth – even after the congregation was established (1 Corinthians 9:12; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 12:13). So he worked to support himself until he received support “from Macedonia” that allowed him to devote himself “completely to the word” (Acts 18:5; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:8-9).

This was not the only time Paul worked to support himself. We know he did this in Ephesus (Acts 20:33-34) and Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). He told the Thessalonians that his work was to provide an example to them as he gave them this instruction: *“If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either”* (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10). Preachers are not exempt from this rule. If full support is not there, a preacher is still responsible to provide for himself, even if it means “working night and day” (2 Thessalonians 3:8).

Make the Most of His Time

Paul told the Ephesians, *“[Make] the most of your time, because the days are evil”* (Ephesians 5:16). This admonition is certainly applicable to all Christians. But it is particularly important for those who must juggle the work of preaching with secular employment. There is simply no room for laziness, procrastination, or fruitless endeavors by one who must work to support his preaching efforts.

Manage His Other Responsibilities

It is not always easy for one to balance his responsibilities as a preacher – preparing to teach (1 Timothy 4:13, 15; 2 Timothy 2:15) and teaching itself (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:1, 15; Acts 20:20) – with his responsibilities at home (Ephesians 5:23, 25, 28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:3; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8).

It becomes more difficult when the responsibilities of secular work are added on top of these (Colossians 3:23; Ecclesiastes 9:10). Yet the responsibilities remain. Therefore, a “tent-making preacher” must be diligent to do the best that he can in his circumstances and fulfill the responsibilities he has.

Recognize His Limitations

In the parable of the talents, the man who was given five talents and the man given two talents both doubled their master’s money (Matthew 25:14-17). The man who obtained five talents was not praised more highly than the second man (Matthew 25:20-21). The man who obtained two talents was not criticized for not gaining as much as the first man (Matthew 25:22-23). Both were told, “*Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master*” (Matthew 25:21, 23). Both were judged according to what they did with what they had.

This principle was stated by Paul in his second letter to Corinth: “*For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have*” (2 Corinthians 8:12). In other words, God will judge us based upon what we are capable of doing. Each one of us only has so much time in the day. When one has to work, sleep, and take care of family responsibilities, the time he has to devote to his work in preaching is limited.

Certainly, diligence is necessary; but a “tent-making preacher” should not try to do everything that a fully-supported preacher is able to do. It is simply not possible; if he attempts to do it, he will eventually burnout and become ineffective – or at least less effective – in his work in the gospel.

Avoid Jealousy and Bitterness

It is common for men and women to be jealous of others or bitter toward them because of some unfairness (real or perceived) that has resulted in the lives of others seeming to be better than their own. Yet Christians are to avoid this attitude. Jealously is listed as one of the “deeds of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-20).

The Hebrew writer warned Christians not to allow any “root of bitterness” to spring up and cause trouble among them (Hebrews 12:15). We are to be content in all of our circumstances (Philippians 4:11-12). We are to “rejoice with those who rejoice” (Romans 12:15), not become bitter against them because we are jealous of their lives.

While it is true that secular employment makes for an unfortunate distraction to a preacher’s primary work of teaching the word, a “tent-making preacher” must be diligent in his efforts in the kingdom to the degree he is able so that his “progress will be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15).

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Fulfill His Ministry

In his final admonition to Timothy, Paul said, “*But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*” (2 Timothy 4:5). This came immediately after Paul’s warning to Timothy that in the future, some would “not endure sound doctrine” and would “accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Those who would preach a message that people wanted to hear would be rewarded by the people (often in the form of financial support). If Timothy was to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2) when it was not popular, he would naturally have a difficult time acquiring the support that he should have (1 Corinthians 9:14). But regardless of this, he was to “fulfill [his] ministry” anyway (2 Timothy 4:5).

Preachers must recognize the great responsibility they have to “preach the word... in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). Even if the message is unpopular and unsupported, it needs to be preached anyway.

Though circumstances may be different, “tent-making preachers” share the same responsibility as fully-supported preachers: “*Be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*” (2 Timothy 4:5).

Those Who Need Our Prayers & Encouragement:

Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, & Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Jamie Jones, Mary Ann Holley, LuAnne Parrish, Billy Grisham, Burt Ward, Wesley Trimble, Anita Harris, Fred Johnson, & Bill Hall.

Carla & George Hutto. George is the preacher at Isabell, Al. who is fighting cancer. His wife had a heart graft done and is recovering from her surgery.

Nathan Cox will be going into Hospice.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer: Doug George
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *“Bible Parents Who Had Troubling Children”*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am: Fred Johnson
Workbook: Hebrews
Author: Daniel H. King, Sr
Starting Page & Question: Page — Question —

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:
Announcements: Blake Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Dan Cottrell
Scripture Reading: *Proverbs 30:30*
Song Leader: Lee Busby
Lord’s Supper: Danny Sheffield
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *“When Two Lions Met”*
Closing Prayer: Russell Briggs

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

July 3, 2024

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
Workbook: The Minor Prophets
Author: By Marc Gibson
Starting Page & Question: *Page #25, Question #1*
Invitation: Jerry Kennemur
Song Leader: Brian Meade
Closing Prayer: Connor Whitemore

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“Bible Parents With Troubling Children”

Misconception: That If Godly Parents Have Children, Then Those Children Are Always Perfectly Behaving Children.

- This Lesson Will Examine The Children Of Some People Of Faith Who Had Children That Acted In Troubling Ways. This Doesn't Excuse Any Sin....

I. Adam And Eve Had Trouble With Cain.

- Cain Murders His Brother Abel: **Genesis 4:8.**
- This Is The World In Which The Brothers Were Born Into: **Genesis 2:16-17—3:1-24.**
- Cain Made The Wrong Choice: **Genesis 4:5-7; James 1:14-15.**

II. Issac & Rebekah Had Trouble With Jacob.

- Jacob & Esau Were Twins Who Had A Rivalry: **Genesis 25:22-28.**
- Jacob Took The Birthright From His Brother By Deceit: **Genesis 27.**
- Favoritism Toward Their Favorite Son Did Not Help The Situation....

III. Jacob Had Trouble With His Sons.

- Jacob Showed Favoritism Toward Joseph By Giving Him A Multi-Colored Tunic.
- **Genesis 37:3-4;** Led To What Happened In **Genesis 37:13-28.**

IV. Eli Had Trouble With His Sons.

- Hophni & Phinehas, Were Behaving Wickedly: **1 Samuel 2:12-17.**
- Eli Confronts Them- **1 Samuel 2:22-25.** The Lord Does Punish Them: **4:11.**
- Eli Had Not Restrained Them- **1 Samuel 3:13. Proverbs 19:18.**

V. Samuel Had Trouble With His Sons.

- Samuel Had Two Sons, Joel & Abijah, But They Did Not Follow In Samuel's Ways.
- **1 Samuel 8:1-3.** This Is Why Israel Wanted A King: **1 Samuel 8:4-5.**

VI. Shelomith Had Trouble With Her Son.

- Her Son Was Unruly & Blasphemed God: **Leviticus 24:10-16.**
- Moses' Law Forbade Profaning God's Name: **Exodus 20:7.**

VII. The Israelites Had Trouble With Their Sons.

- After Joshua And His Generation Had Died, Their Children Became Unfaithful.
- **Joshua 2:7-14.** This Shows How Important It Is To Pass Our Faith On To Our Children.

VIII. Aaron Had Trouble With Two Of His Sons.

- Aaron Had Four Sons (**Numbers 3:2-4**).
- **Leviticus 10:1-3,** Nadab & Abihu Did Not Sanctify God When Offering “*Profane Fire.*”
- Parents Need To Teach Their Children To Respect God By Following His Instructions!

“When Two Lions Met”

Lesson Text: **Proverbs 30:30**. The Lion Is The King Of The Beasts.

I. The Two Lions.

Lion #1: Satan- 1 Peter 5:8.

- From The Beginning He Has Been Maiming & Killing- **Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44.**
- He Is Still Very Active Today!

Lion #2: Christ- Revelation 5:5.

- **Genesis 49:8-10.**
- **Psalm 24:8.**
- **2 Corinthians 10:4.**

II. The Importance Of The Outcome.

- This Contest Was Planned & Predicted By God- **Ephesians 3:11; Genesis 3:15.**
- The Salvation Of The World Hung On The Outcome Of The Battle- **1 Timothy 1:15.**
- Both Lions Would Fight For Different Reasons: Your Salvation Or Your Destruction!

III. When The Two Lions Met.

- They Met In Bethlehem Of Judaea.
 - Where The Lion Of Judah Was Born- **Matthew 2:1 (Micah 5:2).**
 - The Old Lion Pounced To Destroy The Young Lion: **Matthew 2:13-16.**
 - The Young Lion Was Victorious! **1 Corinthians 15:57.**
- They Met In A Wilderness.
 - The Two Lions Were In A Forty-Day Battle: **Matthew 4:1-10.**
 - The Lion Of Judah Won The Victory: **Matthew 4:11; James 4:7.**
- They Met During Jesus’ Personal Ministry.
 - Jesus’ Character Was Attacked In **Luke 7:34.**
 - The Authority Of Jesus Was Attacked In **Matthew 21:23.**
 - Jesus Won Each Battle!
- They Met In The Garden Of Gethsemane.
 - Where Jesus Was Betrayed & Arrested- **Matthew 26:36-57.**
 - The Lion Of Judah Was Condemned To Death By False Witness- **Mark 14:55-59.**
- They Met At The Resurrection.
 - In The Resurrection, Jesus Won In What Seemed Like Defeat! **Hebrews 2:14-15.**
 - Jesus Proved To Be God’s Son In This Victory! **Romans 1:4.**
- They Will Meet Again At The End Of Time.
 - The Lion Of Judah Will Have Eternal Victory Over Satan! **Revelation 20:10.**
 - **Matthew 25:41.**