

The Old Paths

Volume 12, Issue 22

July 31, 2005

“Give Me That Non-Specific Preaching”

Marc Gibson, Lakeland, FL

The Bible is one of the plainest books you will ever read. It teaches in a precise and concise manner. That is probably why many do not want to read it, or hear it expounded in sermons. God’s word has a way of cutting to the heart of a matter, convicting the soul of truth and clearly condemning error (Heb. 4:12). Someone who is only interested in religious window-dressing will speak of Bible ideas, but will avoid getting specific with what the Bible teaches and its application to issues and problems of the day. The preaching/teaching demanded by many today is made up of general proclamations of what the Bible says, while avoiding a careful exegesis of the text for greater understanding. An even greater cry is heard for non-specific preaching/teaching wherein no specific applications will be made to issues, questions, and problems of the day. Preaching in generalities, which will avoid the boring and uncomfortable challenge of careful study and application of Bible truth, is desired by the ears of those that long to be itched by eloquence of smooth and comforting words. Consider some examples:

Denominationalism

It is not popular to speak specifically about certain religious groups and to examine

their teachings and practices. Non-specific preaching will condemn only the idea of denominationalism without giving specific examples of such error today. That way no one feels threatened and embarrassed. If someone is searching for positive-only preaching, no condemnation of error will be tolerated. Many preachers in the Bible, including Jesus, would have been severely castigated for their approach. Specific groups and errors were identified and rebuked (Rev. 2:15; II Tim. 2:17-18; II Jn. 7). Only in this way can error be identified, and those in error be convicted of sin and led to the truth. Today, though, we are too nice to specify the error.

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

This can be a very uncomfortable topic for many, even Christians, due to the prevalence of divorce and remarriage in our society. One might get away with a general condemnation of divorce, but the trend is more toward avoiding the subject altogether (usually with the excuse: “I am still studying the issue.”). This conveniently allows diverse teachings and unscriptural marriages to coexist peacefully. Plain and direct Bible preaching could anger, disturb, and run people off. It is more popular to try to make people feel good than it is to openly condemn the sin of unscriptural divorce. It would be easy to extend a fellowship policy of “don’t ask, don’t tell” on

marriage matters. Pews would be filled, but souls would not be saved.

Fellowship

When issues of truth and error are raised and discussed openly, difficult decisions about fellowship may follow. There may be a member of a congregation living in sin that must be taught, rebuked, and eventually withdrawn from if there is no change. Many will find this uncomfortable, especially when it involves friends, co-workers, and preachers who are not standing for the truth. While some have regretted that the false teaching of someone has raised the issue of fellowship, their reaction has often been to fuss at and condemn those who are trying to stand for the truth in opposition to the false teaching. We discuss passages on fellowship all day long and agree on principles, but when specific applications are made, the discussion or sermon is deemed inappropriate and wrong. Why? Is it because the specific applications of truth make us uncomfortable? Strange and inconsistent, isn’t it? Know the Bible cover to cover, but if you are unwilling to apply it, even when it hurts, then it is useless and unprofitable.

Editor’s Note:

I printed this article because I whole-heartedly agree with what brother Gibson has said. Not only in the areas he has mentioned, but in all areas of life, we need to hear specific preaching! To hear non-specific generalities being preached is to hold back part of the gospel. Any place we see a congregation being fed a steady diet of non-specific preaching, we are going to see a group of people who are

weak spiritually! Let us not merely tolerate, but DEMAND that specific preaching be taught in our hearing. Let us not be satisfied with anything less! Jesus, the apostles, and early preachers and teachers of the word were not afraid to present the gospel in its purity and simplicity to a world who hated them. Let us not fear, either! Let us stand strong that we might save many souls!

“Pouters”

Larry Ray Hafley, Baytown, TX

Remember what king Ahab did when Naboth refused to sell his vineyard to him? “So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased....And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food” (1Kgs. 21:4).

Yes, bless his heart, Ahab was pouting. Occasionally, we have members of the church who act like that when they do not get their way. They walk around with their face exhibiting their attitude. Perhaps they do it to attract attention. Some folks are happiest, it seems, when they have are pouting. They are selfish. They seek their own benefit and not that of others (Cf. Rom. 15:1-3).

We all get our feelings hurt from time to time. We may feel “slighted” by another. What is the solution? Quit and pout? No, mature Christians do not act that way. Consider Jesus. When he was reviled, when he heard bitter, contemptuous words against himself, he did not reply in kind (1 Pet. 2:23). When Paul’s

preaching plans were frustrated and thwarted by ungodly men, did he retreat and sulk and pout? No, and neither should we.

Do not allow a pouter to transform you into one! It can happen to us if we are not careful. When a brother suddenly ignores you, or turns against you (for whatever reason), he is pouting. Do not allow his ungodly attitude to cause you to do the same. Pray for him. Maintain your spiritual poise. You are not the only one against whom he is pouting. Even though it may be unknown to you, he is treating others the same way. That is the nature of petulant pouters.

Such childishness should be pitied, not petted and pampered. Give the pouter no sympathy. Serve the Lord and let him stew in his own juice. Elders, deacons, preachers, and saints need to be busy tending to God’s work and not trying to humiliate a chronic crank who sulks like Ahab.

Suggestions For Our Bible Class Teachers

Jarrod Jacobs

Our Bible class teachers have a special responsibility! They are responsible for imparting Bible

truths to our children on a weekly basis. Their work is not a substitute, but a complement for Bible teaching done in the home. In light of this great work, I found the following questions that would be good for all teachers, from the small children, to the adults to ask before entering into their Bible study. Let us consider these questions carefully, and keep in mind just Who it is that is the author of our “curriculum,” as well as keep in mind just who it is that we are teaching. Before teaching your class, ask yourself....

- 1) What do I want my pupils to know?
- 2) Why do I want them to know it?
- 3) How can I get them to see it?
- 4) How can I get them to believe it?
- 5) How will I get them to act on this faith?
- 6) What will it benefit them if they do?
- 7) How will it hurt them if they do not?

Teaching in the Bible class is a serious matter. Let us thank our teachers for the hard work that they do. Teachers, you have precious souls in your hands on a weekly basis. Don’t take this privilege for granted!!

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I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

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Our address is: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303.

MEETING TIMES:

Sunday Morning Bible Study _____ **9:30 am**
Sunday Morning Worship _____ **10:20 am**
Sunday Evening Worship _____ **6:00 pm**
Wednesday Evening Bible Study _____ **7:00 pm**

Our call-in radio program is on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

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