

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 5, Issue 10

March 2009

What Shall We Do Now? (Part 2)

Luke 3:10; II Timothy 3:14

Last month we considered the first answer to our question, “What Shall We Do Now?” That answer is **Keep Preaching**. As we came to the close of that issue, we were looking at the definition of the word preach. In that definition, we saw that a preacher is compared to a herald. We concluded with parallel 3—“He was to have a strong voice and proclaim his message with vigor without lingering to discuss it.” As I said, preaching by its very nature is to be loud. It is sad that we have seen our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches transformed into teaching sessions. We have followed the same path of the Southern Baptists and other mainline denominations. It is now a badge of honor to be considered a “pastor-teacher.” They make much of the passage in Ephesians 4:11 where the office of pastor and teacher is conjoined, almost to the exclusion of all other passages that describe the passion and fervency of preaching. Now let me be clear—all preaching will involve teaching. I do not like hearing someone who may be passionate, but does not have any meat to their message. That is as unscriptural as someone who is dead and passionless in their preaching. What is wrong with our churches and schools that keep turning out either “dead, dried-up teachers” or “passionate, fiery fools”? Some seem to be dead and excited about nothing while having good material, while others seem to be excited and fired up, but have no substance to their message. Why can we not turn out Biblical preachers who have the knowledge of the Word of God, and are excited and fired up about it?

For a long time I wondered if I was making a big deal out of nothing. I wondered if maybe I was wrong. Then I read R. L. Hymers’ book *Preaching to a Dying Nation*. In it he talks about the same issue that I have been mentioning. He says that we have

-2-

replaced preaching with teaching. He says it has killed our churches and destroyed our nation. We must return to true Biblical preaching. What is true Biblical preaching? It is declaring the Word of God with passion and earnestness. It is giving people something to take home with them. Good preaching should not be the exception—it should be the normal thing. When people leave the church, they should know that they have heard from the Lord. Too many times I have left church wondering why I bothered to come. The preaching was lousy. I am sure that many other people say the same thing. May God help us to return to the preaching of our forefathers—preaching that is full of the Word of God and is set on fire by the Holy Ghost. It is what our churches need, and it is what our nation needs.

Now, some will say that we live in a different time, and we must adapt to what people like. I had a church planter tell me that back in 1995 when I was in Utah helping him with his new church. I had preached for him on a Sunday, and he said, “People do not like that kind of preaching anymore.” He said, “Watch me on Wednesday, and I will show you how we need to preach now.” I did, and it did not impress me. It was a teaching session—the kind that I have come to loathe. That is not what people want nor need. Isaiah 58:1 is still true today—“*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*” That verse is clear. It should be obeyed by every preacher. We are clearly told to “cry aloud.” We should not be quiet in the pulpit. Our voice is also compared to a trumpet. Who has ever heard of a quiet trumpet? There may be some quiet instruments, but a trumpet is loud. It is used to announce important events. That is what preaching should do.

There is much more that I could say, but I close this portion with this analogy. If a house was on fire, would you walk into it, and quietly and calmly encourage the people to leave? Or would you run into it, and shout, and earnestly do everything possible to get the people out? I believe that everyone, no matter what their normal temperament, would shout and earnestly strive to get everyone out.

As devastating as a building on fire can be, the reality of eternity in hell is even more so. True preaching must be fiery, earnest, fervent, and yes, loud. Biblically and historically, it has been so. It must continue that way even now.

In that third parallel, the herald is said to proclaim his message “without lingering to discuss it.” The preaching time is not to be a discussion time. Preaching is not a time when everyone discusses what they think a particular Scripture means. It is the time when the man of God reads a portion of Scripture, and then explains and applies it as the Holy Ghost has directed him. In 2007, my family and I were helping in a tent meeting in South Dakota. After the preacher had preached and concluded the service, a man who attended the service spoke to this preacher and some of the other ones who were in attendance. He said, “You are doing this all wrong.” He said, “You need to have an open discussion and let everyone get involved.” The preacher who owned the tent kindly explained that this meeting was a place where one man preached as he was led by the Holy Ghost. It was not intended to be a place for open discussion. Why did we conduct such a meeting? Because that is the Biblical definition of preaching and how services are to be conducted. The herald simply told the people what the king said and did not discuss it. That is what we as preachers should do—tell the people what King Jesus has said and not begin a discussion. The people had to either accept or reject the king’s commands. When a message is preached today, people must do the same thing—they must either accept it or reject it. It is not open to discussion.

There is a fourth parallel between the herald and the preacher. “The herald’s most important qualification was that he faithfully represent or report the word of the one by whom he had been sent.” This is the definition of true preaching. Preaching is not man’s thoughts or man’s opinions. If it is true preaching, it will be God’s thoughts. That is why true preaching must come from the Bible. It does not come from newspapers, magazines, radio, or TV. It is not a homily about current events or political happenings. True

preaching is what God says. To be what God says, it must come from the Bible. The sermon may be on a topic from many passages; it may be a textual sermon from 3 or 4 passages; or it may be an expository sermon from one passage. But if it is true preaching, it will be from the Bible.

The final parallel between the herald and the preacher is that the herald was not to be ‘original’ but his message was to be that of another. This is similar to the previous thought, but it needs to be pondered. Too many preachers want to be original. They want to have the best outline or the best sermon and be thought of in a good sense. Now there is nothing wrong with having a good outline, but if that is the only desire that you have, then your priorities are displaced. The outline should not be the end result. It should help the preacher organize his thoughts and help the preacher give his message, but the desire should be for a better understanding of God’s Word. The people should remember Scripture. The outline may help them do that and if so, then that is wonderful. But the Scripture should be our focus. We should not be trying to find something that no one else has found. Let us be realistic. The complete Bible has been preached for 2000 years. We will not preach something that no one else has ever preached. That should not be our desire anyway. We must strive to declare the proven Word of God. That is what Paul told Timothy to do, and that is what we are to do today.

We are commanded to Keep Preaching. I have tried to explain what preaching is, but now we must ask ourselves, “What are we to preach?” The obvious answer is the Word of God, but I want to narrow that thought down. I believe that we can divide the message of the Bible into three categories: 1) The Splendor of the Sovereign, 2) The Salvation to the Sinner, and 3) The Separation of the Saints.

What are we to preach? First, we must preach The Splendor of the Sovereign. There are many verses that we could turn to, but the Lord directed my attention to Isaiah 57:15—“*For thus saith the high*

and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Too many times in our preaching we minimize how great, marvelous, and wonderful God is. We live in a day when people are despondent, and they think that God is no longer as great as He was in the past. They hear and know the truth of Scripture, but when it comes to living it out, the living does not match the truth. We need to preach the splendor of the Sovereign. People need to be reminded of how wonderful and great God is. The night may be dark to us, but it is not dark to Him. The times may be wicked, but they are not too wicked for Him.

Notice what God says about Himself. He mentions *His Immensity*. God is a big God. There is nothing too hard for Him. God calls Himself “high and lofty.” Remember that we are creatures of the earth. We are low and limited. He is above us. Our problems may seem big, but they are not too big for Him. We may be limited by our feebleness, but He is above all limitations. Remember dear friends, we serve a big God. He has no limits. We will continue next month.