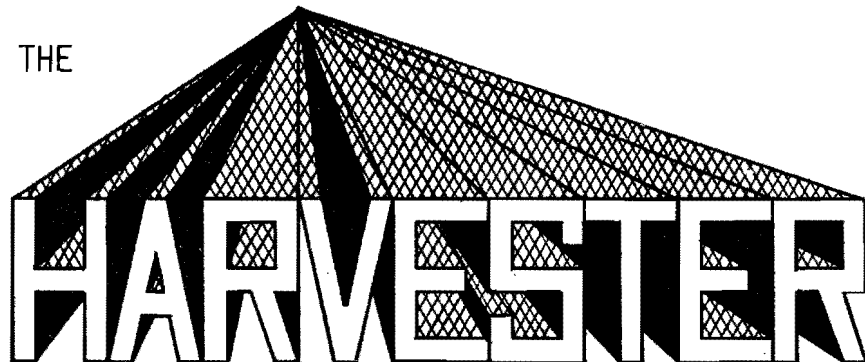


THE



"Therefore said he unto them. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

June 1989

No. 042

PREACHING NEW IDEAS

The most successful sermon ever preached, as far as is known, occurred in Acts 2. There, Peter, along with the eleven apostles, stood up and began his powerful discourse. First, he quoted Joel's prophecy and he spoke about the foreordained plan of God. Then, the apostle pointed to the predictions made by David and how they were also fulfilled. In concluding, Peter left no doubt as to the true identity of Jesus: He was both Lord and Christ! The audience was so moved by this speech that *"they were pricked in their heart."* You just don't hear sermons like that anymore!

Most sermons today appear to consist mostly of "new, impressionable ideas" while lacking the "Thus saith the Lord." We are being introduced

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through our pulpits to false doctrines, "other gospels", vain philosophies, worldly wisdom, secular traditions, witty sayings, captivating stories, and cute anecdotes. In fact, nowadays people rarely open their Bibles in church because most lessons only contain a verse or two of scripture. Are we ashamed to preach the simple words of Truth? It was the apostle Paul who wrote: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"*(Rom. 1:16). Must we preach on all sorts of speculations so that we can keep up with the changing world? Have we truly exhausted every breath out of each scripture to the point that we must now preach on "theories"? I shall hope not!

What ever happened to the sermons based on the FACTS of the gospel--the death, burial, and resurrection of God's only begotten Son? The early disciples preached nothing *"save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"*(1 Cor. 2:2). When Philip began to guide the eunuch, he *"preached unto him Jesus"*(Acts 8:35). So, what happened to the lessons about the love of God, the sin of man, heaven, and hell? When was the last time we heard a sermon entitled, "What Must I Do To Be Saved" (Acts 16:30)?

Theories--that seems to be all we are really feeding the people in this time of spiritual hunger. John said about those who advance such conjectures of the mind, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son"*(2 John 9). Speakers are no longer content to preach the Good News but seemingly, to tickle the ears and the fancy of audiences. *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I*

should not be the servant of Christ"(Gal. 1: 10). However, Paul clarifies in the next two verses: *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of men is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

In their efforts to promote 'pet-peeves', Bible students are no longer searching *"the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* in order to learn more about God's will. No, they are trying to find verses to support their "theories" with which they hope to revolutionize the thinking of the Lord's church, to make a "name" for themselves, and to make them remembered long after they are gone. Nearly all members of the church of Christ, including myself, are guilty of betraying our Lord in this fashion.

This being the case, our PLEA is for a return to teachings founded on the Bible alone, not on our own thoughts and opinions. God's word is sacred and we must treat it as such. *"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"*(Gal. 1:9). It can only lead to damnation when we stray away from God's holy precepts.

Slowly we are digressing back to the days of darkness when everyone taught a different doctrine and confusion reigned. Slowly we are falling away from the Old Paths that mark the way to God (Psa. 25:4). I fear we are a people ripe for the devil's picking and so unprepared for the Lord's harvest. Let us return to God, *"being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"*(1 Pet. 1:23).

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. What group of people in the council at Jerusalem said that they could find no fault in the apostle Paul?
2. When a tax collector asked Peter if Jesus paid taxes, what was his answer?
3. When Paul was struck by the light from heaven as he went to Damascus, did those with him see the light?
4. According to Isaiah 57, what do those who walk uprightly find as they lie in death?
5. Next to Isaiah, what Old Testament book is quoted the most in the New Testament?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. How long did Moses' mother have him before she hid him in the bulrushes? THREE MONTHS (Exo. 2:2)
2. What did God have Jeremiah hide in the rocks at Euphrates? A LINEN BELT (Jer. 13:4)
3. What were some people perverting in the churches of Galatia? THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (Gal. 1:7)
4. The Psalmist asked God to open his lips so that his mouth would do what? DECLARE PRAISE (Psa. 51:15)

5. What book of the Bible never mentions the name of God? THE BOOK OF ESTHER

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS (A Series to Promoté Church Attendance)

The question is often raised as to whether members of a congregation are "required" to attend all services of the church. Many people seem to be of the opinion that only the Sunday morning service is important, and that it is the only one that we must attend. I will admit there is no precedent of any regular worship service mentioned in the scriptures, except for the one mentioned in Acts 20:7, which was *"upon the first day of the week."* Some will argue from this, that no other service can be considered as mandatory since it was never explicitly commanded that we observe such. Although I am sure many sincere people may take this point of view, most often people ascribe to this view because of laziness or indifference. It would require too much time and effort to attend the other services. But please notice the effort that the early disciples put forth; they met daily. (Acts 2:46)

We should not have to quibble over this issue when God's word supplies a very simple and complete answer. *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* (Hebrews 10:25) I believe the full meaning and intent of this verse is often missed. Many people take this verse to mean that we should not forsake the 'assembly' where the Lord's supper is served; and it does mean exactly that. But too often people don't look any farther. Can we get anything else from this verse? Does it

have any other applications? Let us look closely at the wording of this verse. "*Not forsaking the ASSEMBLING of ourselves together.*" There is a great difference in the words 'assembly' and 'assembling'. We are commanded to not forsake the assembling of the church. What constitutes an assembling? When the church comes together at a predetermined time and place for the expressed purpose of worshipping the Lord. The elders or leaders of each congregation have the authority to establish specific times when the church is to assemble for the purpose of worshipping God. And according to this verse we should make every effort to be present when the church gathers together for this purpose.

We also notice the word "*forsaking*" in this verse, and I believe it would now be appropriate to discuss the meaning and implications of this word. The word translated as forsaking is 'egkataleipo', which Thayer defines as "to abandon, desert." Other translations give the following words: 'give up' (NIV); 'stay away' (Jerusalem Bible). I think that from this we can clearly see that to forsake the assembling is to fail to attend without just cause. Obviously there may arise occasions on which we are simply unable to be there. The Lord knows and understands this. But I think the inescapable conclusion of this verse is that we **MUST** put forth every effort to attend each service.

The author of Hebrews was trying to show us the need we have of fellowship as Christians. In this often cold and cruel world, we have a great need of the love, comfort and encouragement of those who share our 'like precious faith.' Often we feel a little ill, or tired, or discouraged, and consequently don't feel like going. But are we so weak in faith, and so thankless for all that the Lord has done for

us, that we are unwilling to bear with our physical infirmities long enough to enjoy the fellowship of the brethren and to worship the Lord?

What kind of signal are we sending God when we freely choose to be elsewhere when the church assembles? Far too often people make plans all the time realizing this will cause them to miss a service. Do you consider yourself a Christian and a disciple of Christ? Christ said *"unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* (Matthew 16:24) Yes, Christ actually expects us to give up things we might enjoy in order to be His disciple. Are you willing to do this? Are you willing to bear your own cross, no matter how heavy it gets?

God expects us to put him first in our lives and first in our hearts. If we do miss a service, it shouldn't be because we decided something was more important, but that it just wasn't possible for us to be there. Gathering together to worship the Lord and to fellowship should always be a priority in our lives. It will not always be possible to be there in body, but we should always be there in spirit.

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\$	LOVE cannot be wasted. It makes no	\$
	difference where it is bestowed, it	
\$	always brings in big returns.	\$

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
June 4-9	Holdenville, OK	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)
June 4-9	Taylor's Crossroads Roanoke, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 4-10 (Su-Sa)	Thomaston, GA 7:30 pm EST -Series on Revelation-	Harry Cobb (Birmingham, AL)
June 10-17	Rich Hill Church Casey Co., KY	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 11-16	Godby Road Church Atlanta, GA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 11-17 (Su-Sa)	Pleasant Grove Church near Alex City, AL 7:00 evenings	Bruce Kessler (Atlanta, GA)
June 18-23 (Su-F)	Claud Church between Claud & Tallassee, AL	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
June 19-23 (M-F)	Ashlock, KY camp meeting on the Restoration Theme	Speakers from various states
June 25-30	Colquitt, GA 7:00 pm EST	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)
June 25-30	Mt. Carmel Church Woodland, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 25-30	Jigger, LA	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 30 -July 2 (F-Su)	Moffat Road Church Mobile, AL 7:30 each evening	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
July 5-7	Freefield Church State Line, MS	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 8-14 (Sa-F)	Brushy Creek Church Lucedale, MS 7:30 each evening	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)