

## FALSE HUMILITY

**"These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body - not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." - Col. 2:23.**

I may not know all that the Spirit had in mind by "false humility", but I can know this - there is such a thing as false humility and that it is dangerous. I may not know all the ways that it might manifest itself - but I believe I know one way that it can be seen. It is seen so often in the those who can not bring themselves to do their duty in dealing with sinful brethren.

How often have I heard, "I feel so weak and inadequate that I don't feel that I have the right to criticize another"? Or "I do not feel that I am qualified to make the judgment concerning another's spiritual condition?" Or "Since there is so much that I need to learn and have so many weaknesses of my own, I just don't believe that I should point a finger at another?" Or, "Since I admit that I do not know all there is to know, how can I say that another is wrong?" There is usually a strong implication that since he feels this way I should feel that way too. Thus, by expressing what he does not feel he has a right to do, he is telling me that I should not be making any judgments either.

What Christian does not feel a sense of unworthiness? Paul did. He said he was not worthy to be called an apostle (1 Cor. 15:9). He even said, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27). But did that feeling of unworthiness and weakness keep him from fulfilling his duty to reprove, rebuke and even turn over to Satan brethren who persisted in a life of sin? No, a thousand times, no. In fact, some of his most pointed rebukes and judgments against sinful brethren are expressed right in the same book of 1 Corinthians.

No matter how much one may be deceived into thinking that genuine humility demands that he overlook the sinful lives of his brethren, since he himself is weak and apt to sin, it is a false humility. Genuine humility, while having a sense of unworthiness, still will not step away from duty, no matter how unpleasant that duty may be. While we should say, "We are

unprofitable servants", we still must be able to say "We have done what was our duty to do". (Luke 17:10).

Sometimes duty demands our rightly and righteously judging (cf. John 7:24). No matter how unpleasant it may be. No matter what the reaction of the guilty might be. No matter what the opinions of sympathizers might be. A judgment must be made. In fact, to fail to do so, and excuse ourselves by appealing to our own sense of unworthiness would be a sign of arrogance and pride rather than humility. How do I know all of this? Paul, by the Spirit of God, said so in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13! The Corinthian brethren had a fornicator in their midst. Paul rebuked them for having not humbled themselves ("mourned") enough so "that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you". In fact, he uses the fact that they had not made the proper judgment in the matter as proof that they were "puffed up" (verse 5). He latter said, "Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore 'put away from yourselves that wicked person'" (verses 12, 13).

Such judgment against brethren, especially against those whom we love dearly, is not the most pleasant thing in the world to do. It would be much easier, were it not for our commitment to obey the Lord in all things, to look at our own weaknesses and excuse ourselves from this duty by telling ourselves that we are not qualified to make such judgments. But such a course would neither please the Lord nor be in the best interest of brethren.

There is a calculated risk any time one confronts a brother about his sin - especially if it leads to no fellowship with him. He might be driven farther away - even though our motive is to save his soul (1 Cor. 5:5). We may lose his approval of us and destroy any friendship that might be between us - such a loss is painful to us. It is not something that we would choose. On the other hand, it might have the desired effect. He might be made ashamed and come to himself and be saved! (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thess. 3:14). What a gain that would be! But, leave him comfortable and thinking that he might be right with God, when all evidence points in the other direction, is not doing him any favors. He may go into eternity unprepared to meet God, because we

tacitly approved his position by our silence or did not express our disapproval in actions strongly enough to make him understand how serious we considered his condition to be - because we did not want to risk alienating him from us by refusing to fellowship him while he remained in his sin.

Brethren, the hour is late. Churches are being corrupted. Souls of brethren are being lost. Why? Because brethren have allowed themselves to be convinced that they have no right to make any judgments at all against brethren - but simply accept all for what they claim to be (in spite, of how strong the evidence may be to the contrary). By refusing to make such judgments as is demanded by such passages as 1 Corinthians 5, they have placed themselves among those who are "puffed up", no matter how humble they may think themselves to be. It is a "false humility" born of "self-imposed religion" rather than doing one's duty imposed upon him by the Father of our spirits.

Self-righteous arrogance is condemned by our Lord. A Christian must not fall into it. But, self-righteous arrogance sometimes disguises itself as deep humility. When one resorts to constantly reminding others of how humble, thankful, and even unworthy he feels as a Christian - it can be just another way of saying, "Look what a great job of I am doing at being, acting and feeling like what I believe a really **super Christian** should!"

When one uses his humility or his feeling of unworthiness as a crutch to avoid doing what God has imposed upon him as a Christian toward those who are in danger of being lost - it is not genuine humility no matter how sincere one may be or how much he may believe himself to be truly humble. It is nothing more than back-handed pride disguised as humility. One can be deceived as to what real humility is - just as much as he can be deceived about what constitutes genuine worship and service to God.

Let us be careful brethren, lest Satan get us through the back door. -- Editor.

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### WELCOME TO ALLEN HARGETT

Brother Allen Hargett began his work with us for the summer months on June 17, by bringing us a very fine lesson on that Sunday evening. Allen will work with us for the next 13 weeks in the work of preaching the gospel. He will preach once each Lord's day and work with me during the week in classes and other aspects of doing the work of an evangelist. We are looking forward to the summer's work with him. - Editor.

# THEY COULD NOT BLUSH

By Robert Turner

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The fat is in the sun -- and, we might add "in the fire" for all who question the various stages of undress seen in the stores and on the streets these days. The more angular and misshapen the woman, or the more knobby-kneed the man, the less propriety and modesty is shown it seems, **And no one blushes.**

Jeremiah prophesied against Jerusalem saying, "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush..." (Jer. 6:15a).

**They could not blush.** It is a terrible thing when a people can no longer blush. It means there is no sense of shame -- the conscience is seared. They have so lowered their standards that "abominations" appear acceptable. Self-respect has been destroyed -- and there is no personal pride to urge them to better, higher, more noble attainments. Their moral "slip shows" and they "couldn't care less."

Further, they frequently compound their degradation by a blaze of smugness, as though their calloused hearts were marks of high honor. He who blushes, (should one remain) is a "square," or maybe a "cube" -- like me.

Once my wife and I visited a woman whose attire was almost non-existent. We were so embarrassed **for her** that we sought to excuse ourselves; but apparently, until her three-year-old, wearing training panties, walked into the living room. Then she rushed the child away with a "spat!" saying, "You know better than to come in here undressed like that!" I suppose psychology has some explanation for it.

Paul commends "shamefacedness" -- a word meaning "bound or controlled by a sense of shame -- modesty." As a bedfast person is bound to the bed by physical disability, so a "shamefast" person has a built in sense of right or propriety that "binds" and forbids appearing in public carelessly or improperly clothed (1 Tim. 2:8-10).

When a friend of mine commented on the gross immodesty that prevailed in a western resort town, he was told: "After a while, you will get used to it." My friend replied, "I hope not."

Getting used to something that degrades character and lowers moral standards is no inducement to one who can still blush, and is proud of it.

--From STUFF ABOUT THINGS, August, 1964.

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## "POSITIVE PREACHING"

By Dub McClish

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More and more over the past few years the cry for "positive" preaching has been heard. Surely, preachers need to preach positively in the sense that we offer something that is solid and concrete when we get up to preach. Any fool can raise questions and broadcast his own uncertainties. However, we have a certified gospel (2 Pet. 1:19). The gospel of Christ is "in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13). The task of gospel preachers is to preach this sure and certain truth and to be positive about it! In the gospel, we have something to offer the world that it cannot get anywhere else, and we must unashamedly offer it. True gospel preaching will always accentuate the "pluses" of gospel obedience and Christian living which ends in eternal life.

However, I have found that most folks who insist on "positive" preaching have something else in mind. They usually mean: "**Don't** preach on specific sins"; "**Don't** preach on the absolute necessity of baptism"; "**Don't** expose religious error and call it by name"; etc. (Isn't it strange how negative these folks are who demand "positive" preaching?) To this growing element within the church "positive" preaching not only excludes such things as the above but it focuses almost entirely on **grace**, **love**, **mercy** and **joy** as **they** understand them.

Surely, **none** can deny that, properly conceived, these are important themes of the gospel, and they dare not be neglected. But I deny that these are the **only** important subjects of the gospel. "Godly sorrow" for example is necessary to produce salvation (2 Cor. 7:10).

The "positive" approach represents the encroachment of the false philosophy that all guilt feelings are harmful. Those thus persuaded will not long tolerate preaching that makes them feel guilty. Many in the church now want to do their drinking and dancing, go on living in their adulterous marriages, wear immodest clothing in public, forsake the assembly at will, etc. and never be called in question. If the preacher doesn't send them from the assembly "feeling good" he has wasted their time! To such, one who dares to continue preaching the whole counsel of God is "negative" and "offensive." Straightforward preaching that identifies sin and error is "arrogant" preaching and constitutes "an unbalanced gospel" to them.

I challenge such brethren to apply their standards of "positive" preaching to our Lord. He repeatedly rebuked the sins and sinners of his day in scathing words (Matt. 6: 1-18; 11:16-24; 12:34,39; 15:1-20; 23:1-29, etc.). This often involved calling the name of their party and naming their sins. Our Lord had more to say about the judgment, eternal condemnation and the wrath of God than he did about some of the more "positive" themes craved by some brethren. By their standards, our Lord was an "unloving," "offensive," "negative," even "unbalanced" preacher! Judging by the shameful way some brethren treat faithful preachers, Jesus had his apostles would be chased from numerous pulpits, were they on earth today.

Some get far more excited about how "dynamic" a speaker may be than how scriptural his sermon is. They want a preacher who can draw crowds, often with little concern for what he draws them with. Such people have either never learned, or have chosen to ignore, the characteristics of New Testament preachers and their message. Gospel preaching was decisive and demanded a decision of its listeners. It was distinctive preaching that drew plain lines between the kingdoms of darkness and light, between righteousness and worldliness, between truth and error. It was bold preaching that openly challenged the morally and spiritually bankrupt philosophies of the time. But that kind of distinctive, plain, yet loving preaching that swept the first century world and swept our young nation 150 years ago is unappreciated by many today.

A non-convicting type of preaching provides only superficial healing for the deep needs of the soul. I am interested in saving souls. Can I do this by withholding part of the Word from them, by making them "feel good" when they need to be convicted of sin, by being so careful not

to offend that they never see a distinction between truth and error through such preaching? R. N. Hogan was right: "There has been so much sweet-talk preaching that a lot of the saints have spiritual sugar diabetes." A generation raised on this kind of super-sweet, entertainment-oriented preaching has left many a church spiritually malnourished and unfamiliar with the meat of the gospel. This is why scores of congregations are on the brink of losing their identity and of lapsing into full-scale denominationalism.

The numerical and spiritual strength of the church today has not been gained through a compromising, non-disturbing message but through fearless preaching of the distinctive gospel. It is no mere coincidence that our rapid growth rate in the first half of the century began to decline about the same time that the cry for "positive," "non-offensive" preaching began to be raised. Today's soft, promotional type of preaching is destroying the generation that has grown up on it. Unless there is an awakening to what is happening, those of us who are determined to preach and follow the truth may soon find ourselves starting all over again in homes and rented halls as the apostasy of a century ago required. It is already occurring in some communities.

With Micaiah of old, let us preachers have the wisdom and courage to say, even to those in "high places" who seek to silence us, "**As Jehovah liveth, what my God saith, that will I speak**" (2 Chron. 18:13). And let us have godly men and women who will support faithful preaching by asking for "**the old paths, where is the good way**" (Jer. 6:16). In such a restoration alone is the solution to the problems of false doctrine and immorality that are so prevalent in the churches!

--Via THE MARTINEZ MESSENGER

**(EDITOR'S NOTE:** Dub McClish and I would likely differ on some things, but he hit the nail on the head with this fine article. It calls attention to some things that need to be shouted from housetops.

But," you ask, "Why run an article on preaching in a paper that goes mostly to folks who are not preachers?" Because preaching is central to the life of the church. Preaching is the means God chose to save souls - 1 Cor. 1:21. Strong churches are the result of strong preaching. One can listen to a preacher a few times and pretty much tell how strong the church is where he has preached regularly for any extended period of time. The responsibility for the right kind of preaching does not rest solely upon those who stand in pulpits. Each Christian is responsible for the kind of preaching that he will endure and encourage (2 Tim. 4:3-4). What ever fruit is produced by preachers that we support abounds to our account (Phil. 4: 16,17). So, it is of the

greatest importance that we demand the right kind of preaching from those with whom we have fellowship. We need preachers who will preach the whole counsel of God, even when brethren won't endure it and encourage it. We need brethren who will demand that the whole counsel of God be preached, even when preachers are too timid to preach it.

By strong preaching, I am not talking about sermonic temper tantrums, religious railings, or pulpit-protected pot shots. I am talking about plain, hard to be misunderstood preaching that is right on target to the real needs of sinful men and growing brethren that roots out error and plants truth. That not only consoles but convicts. That not only tells of the love of God but warns of his wrath. That not only speaks of what God has done for us, but what God expects us to do for him. That not only tells of heaven's glory but warns of hell's horror. That not only makes one feel good when he does right, but makes him feel horrible when he does wrong. That does not cry "peace, peace, when there is no peace".)

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## A GOOD MEETING

We had a good meeting earlier this month with brother H. E. Phillips doing the preaching. It was a pleasure to have brother and sister Phillips in our midst again. This was their third time to be with us. Brother Phillips did the kind of preaching that we expected that he would. The church here is better as a result of his having been here.

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