

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XX

December 1999

Number 5

“Do You Understand Preaching?” A Past And Present Analysis

By
Brian Kenyon

On Friday, November 12, the “master copy” of Florida School of Preaching’s seventh hard cover lectureship book was sent to the publisher, ready to be bound. Setting deadlines for a lectureship book is kind of like a space shuttle launch (there are all kinds of little things that cause delays), but through the strength of the Lord, and with the help of many Christians, the manuscripts were received, processed, proofread, formatted, organized, and sent on paper exactly as they will appear in the book. The book will be 691 pages, and it will consist of fifty-nine chapters, thirty-one of which are the manuscripts of the lessons preached, and twenty-eight of which are appendix articles dealing with the theme.

Whether one considers the year 2000 as the last year of the twentieth century, or as the first year of the twenty-first century, one truth stands clear: this year’s lectureship theme, “Do You Understand Preaching?,” is extremely relevant. In many ways, there is not a better theme that would summarize the goal on which the Florida School of Preaching has been focused since its inception in 1969. It is God who chose the “foolishness of preaching” to save those who believe (1 Cor. 1:18-21). It is the responsibility of the church of Christ to ascertain from the Bible God’s will for preaching, and then to put that will into practice. Despite the “tolerance philosophy” of this age, which seems to characterize “orthodox Christian religion” as old, traditional systems in need of modernization, it is only through the distinct proclamation and practice of the New Testament that the church of Christ can maintain its distinctiveness among the many religions that are found in contemporary society.

In accordance with the theme, “Do You Understand Preaching?,” the thirty-seven writers made note of some voices of the past as well as their own current analysis. The following excerpts are a sampling of what can be expected from this book.

Voices From The Past

The great preachers of the past, though “being dead yet speaketh,” shed light on many aspects of preaching. Concerning both the hardships endured and the results which can occur from preaching the Gospel, the following excerpt is taken from a (Nashville) *Tennessean* article (reprinted with permission) about Marshall Keeble:

Because most of his meetings draw many white people he has long been the target of the Ku Klux Klan, he says.

“They came at us first in Jacksonville, Fla., I guess about 1920 and again later at Summit, Ga. They walked through our meeting wearing those high hats. They told me I had to leave and I told them I certainly would — just as soon as I finished preaching God’s word. I stayed all week. Later, I recognized one Klansman by his eyeglasses. He was sitting in the group praying with us. He told me I was to let him know if I had any more trouble.

“Right here in Tennessee a man came up to me one night and hit me on the head with brass knuckles. I kept on preaching. Later, the judge wanted me to sign a complaint against the man but I wouldn’t do it...”

He has gone into Texas dance halls alive with jazz and rock ’n roll to ask the band leader if he could preach a little during the break.

many couples didn't want to "turn Brother Keeble off." The dance finally wound up as a church meeting. The people there later started a church which now has 200 members.

Concerning the education an effective preacher needs, an article written by B. J. Clarke, "Preachers And Public Opinion: Preachers And The Scholars," quotes the biographer of Benjamin Franklin (the preacher, not the inventor):

"...That the cause of Christ can not wait for preachers to be made by the slow process of training men five or six years in college, as must be the case in every instance, if every preacher must be a scholar. The cause would certainly die, if we were to wait for this." On the other hand, he did not want men to be illiterate or uneducated in the things that would add to the power and effectiveness of the minister. If a man mastered the following pre-requisites that Franklin laid down for a preacher he would by no means be ignorant: "But to be anything like effective and powerful men, the preachers should have the following:

1. A good understanding and use of the English language.
2. A thorough understanding and use of the Scriptures.
3. A thorough knowledge of history — ancient and modern.
4. A clear understanding of the reformatory movements of Luther, Calvin, Wesley and Roger Williams.
5. A clear understanding of the reformatory movement of the nineteenth century, its principles, aims, and objects."

Concerning motivation for preaching, J. W. McGarvey had this to say in an article that we have reprinted with permission:

Perhaps some one will say, "I expect to make preaching my life work and I want to be at it." Why do you expect to make preaching your life work? What is that for? Is it in order that you may have an easy time in life? If that is the case then you are a lazy fellow. And as soon as you get into the work and the people find out that you are in that work just to have an easy time they will not ask you to come and preach for them any more. You say your purpose is to have an easy time in life. An easy time in what way? Not to have to plow corn and dig potatoes? To ride about in a carriage driven by the best people in the community, and wherever you go to have chicken pie for dinner? If that is your purpose, as soon as the people find out they will not kill anymore chickens for you. They will set you down to corn bread and bacon and beans.

Present Analysis

There are great preachers still living who also provide keen insight and analysis of preaching and the work of preachers. B. C. Carr, in his article "Looking Back Over Fifty-Five Years Of Preaching," says, concerning what should and should not cause a man to preach,

One does not desire to preach by accident. There must be motivation. Usually there will be more than one source of motivation. Some want to preach for the wrong reasons. There are those that think this is a job that pays well for little or no work. Some fellow said he wanted to preach because he had observed that the preacher spoke for about thirty minutes on Sunday morning and it took four men to collect the money for him. There are those who like the spot light which shines upon preachers. They want to be praised before the public. There are many wrong motives for preaching. One should search his heart diligently before making this decision. Some one has said, "One ought not preach if he can keep from it." This may be an overstatement of the case. What I think we mean by this statement is that we must have the right motivation. One must love the word of God. The psalmist said, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). Again one must know and respect the word of God. The same writer said, "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Ps. 119:15-16). This love for the word should begin early in life. I remember my early childhood when godly parents took me to church where I memorized many passages of scripture, but they also taught me at home (Eph. 6:1-4).

Concerning the service that preachers and elders are to render for God, V. P. Black, in his article "Changes I See In Preaching," states,

I have seen a change from servanthood to professionalism on the part of some preachers. This leads to rendering a

The Harvesters
Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803
(863) 683-4043
Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman
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“Do You Understand Preaching?”

25th Annual Lectureship — January 17-20, 2000

Jackie M. Stearsman, Director



Nate Stewart



Chris Steele



Jackie Stearsman



Samuel Roney



Stephen Rogers



Plomer Hunter

Monday

9:00 The Need to Train Preachers	Emanuel Daugherty
9:40 Jesus the Master Teacher	V.P. Black
10:20 BREAK	
10:50 Preachers as Peacemakers	J. Brooks Boyd, Jr.
11:30 LUNCH	

Preachers and Their Influence

1:30 Areas of Influence	Chris Steele
2:00 Destroying Influence	Emanuel Daugherty
2:30 Improving Influence	Stephen Rogers
3:00 BREAK	
3:30 Forum: Preachers and Their Influence	
4:30 DINNER	
6:30 Congregational Singing	
7:00 Preachers Must Love People	Samuel Roney
7:45 Looking Back Over Fifty Years of Preaching	B.C. Carr

Tuesday

9:00 Preaching for Small Congregations	Plomer Hunter
9:40 What Does It Mean to Preach Jesus?	V.P. Black
10:20 BREAK	
10:50 From House to House	Stephen Rogers
11:30 LUNCH (faculty and alumni photos)	

Preachers and Expediency

1:30 Who Determines Expediency?	Gene Stilwell
2:00 Decisions in a Congregation	Billy Davidson
2:30 Are There Abuses in Expediency?	Bob Bauer
3:00 BREAK	
3:30 Forum: Preachers and Expediency	
4:30 DINNER	
6:30 Congregational Singing	
7:00 John the Baptist as a Preacher	Bobby L. Foster
7:45 Mistakes Made in Study	Jimmy Clark

Wednesday

9:00 Preachers and Longevity	Frank Higginbotham
9:40 Changes I See in Preaching	V.P. Black
10:20 BREAK	
10:50 Preachers Need to Study	Jimmy Clark
11:30 LUNCH	

Preachers and Public Opinion

1:30 Avoiding Fads	Demar Elam
2:00 Understanding Tradition	Frank Higginbotham
2:30 Preachers and the Scholars	B.J. Clarke
3:00 BREAK	
3:30 Forum: Preachers and Public Opinion	
4:30 DINNER	
6:30 Congregational Singing	
7:00 Jesus as a Preacher	Greg Harmon
7:45 Elders-Preacher Understanding	Roy Dicks

Thursday

9:00 Preaching in a Foreign Country	Ted Wheeler
9:40 Preachers Need to Grow	Tom Holland
10:20 BREAK	
10:50 Preachers Need Support	B.J. Clarke
11:30 LUNCH	

Mistakes Made by Preachers

1:30 Questionable Associates	Mike Dykes
2:00 Doctrinal	Jackie Stearsman
2:30 Indolence	Gene Burgett
3:00 BREAK	
3:30 Forum: Mistakes Made by Preachers	
4:30 DINNER	
6:30 Congregational Singing	
7:00 Demas as a Preacher	Nate Stewart
7:45 Preacher, Encourage Us!	Tom Holland

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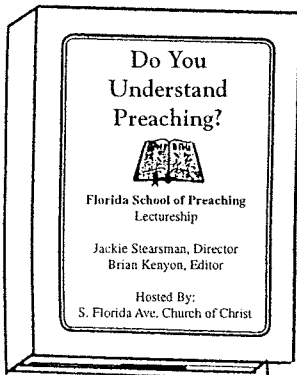
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service to the people at the expense of serving God. I am not a servant of man. I am a servant of God...(Gal. 1:10).

We need elders who concern themselves with matters of a spiritual, doctrinal nature, as opposed to serving as a board of directors over a corporation.

Professionalism leads to overlooking the real needs of the people such as salvation from sin, holy living, and such matters. It leads to spending much time and energy in telling people what they want to hear instead of telling them what they need to hear. When Paul stood before Governor Felix, he told him what he needed to hear (Acts 24:25)...

This professionalism in our pulpits leads from self-extending to self-serving. This, likewise, comes from humanistic influences, where "self" becomes the first and foremost concern, both individually and collectively...This professionalism leads from a strong clear identity as being God's exclusive family to a more tolerant, compromising view toward denominationalism and sin in general. Pluralism is rapidly becoming the accepted mentality as opposed to the unity taught in the New Testament

(Jn. 17:20-21; Mt. 12:25; Eph. 4:1-4).

Concerning the importance of preachers growing in their own knowledge of the Bible, Tom Holland, in his article "Preachers Need To Grow," writes,

So, like any Christian, it is important for preachers to grow. But, in addition to that, if preachers are going to lead others in spiritual development, then preachers must be personally growing. Furthermore, since preaching demands an active involvement of the mind, the mind must be active and alert.

Growth for preachers is very important because growth extends the time of service for the Lord. Perhaps you have heard it said about some preacher, "The brethren put brother X out to pasture." Not really. Any number of brother Xs have put themselves out to pasture because they stopped studying and reaching out in service to others.

Order Today

Space in this issue of the *Harvester* is limited. Many more good excerpts could be given, but these provide a sampling of this "must have" Florida School of Preaching lectureship book. Every person will benefit from this book, especially those who are concerned and interested in preaching. You may order your copy from the office today — "Do You Understand Preaching?"

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