



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“THOU HAST A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST, AND ART DEAD.”

These words are very sobering. They come from the Lord, and the Lord has no vision problems (Rev. 3:1). He sees reality, and He states only the truth. Does he not teach us that it is possible to have a name that should signify spiritual life, but in reality we may be spiritually dead? It is possible to be alive spiritually, and it is possible to be dead spiritually. It is possible to know when we are alive or dead spiritually by consulting His evaluation, commendation, and criticism. Since this is possible, each individual, every congregation, should do some serious soul searching.

Israel's Example

The name “Israel” should signify that which is spiritually alive under the direction of her God. However, the Apostle Paul, an Israelite himself, writes that “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6). The Christ knows the attitudes and actions of all. Jesus states through the Apostle John in the Revelation, “and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9, see also 3:9).

“Abraham's Children”

To have ties in the flesh with Abraham was to some all that was required to have spiritual life. However, the Lord showed them that this was far from the truth.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not (John 8:31-45).

Today, faithful Christians are the true children of Abraham, heirs according to promise. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor

female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

Churches

It is possible for a congregation of the Lord's church to have a name and yet the name reflects past zeal and loyalty that have long since ceased to be true to the Lord. Some have reached the state of departure that is evident to all—having removed the name of Christ from their buildings and publications. Can you name congregations that were at one time known for a great positive influence, but have long since ceased to have a fervent dedication to their Lord? I can name several, but will not because all I wish to accomplish in these thoughts is for each congregation, each individual, to take a personal inventory of their spiritual health.

If we find a spiritual deficiency, let us do as the Lord admonished the brethren in Sardis: *"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."* (Rev. 3:2-3).

Colleges

Brotherhood Institutions

Some of the schools that were begun by faithful, dedicated, and sacrificial

brethren took the name of their loyal founders. While the name may still be worn by such institutions, some have long since left the original purposes of their founders. There is a "sacred cow" mentality associated with some of these institutions that cause the uninformed to think that any criticism of departures by these institutes means that you are opposed to the idea of Christian education or benevolence. **THINK**, is it possible for an institution to have a name that indicates loyalty, but in practice promotes disloyalty to the cause of the Lord?

Publications

Is it possible for a publication to have a history and name that signified loyalty and dedication to the truth? I have known of brethren traveling looking for publications that would indicate the visiting a congregation made possible reliable doctrinal materials for the visiting public. The name(s) of the publication indicated trustworthiness. However, it is also possible for publications to depart from the original dedication. The name we wear, the name that represents us is very important. However, the name alone will not guarantee a publication is always trustworthy.

Family Name

It is possible to be a member of a prominent family, a family whose name for the most part signifies faithfulness and trustworthiness to God, and yet all who share that name are not of equal loyalty (cf., Israel above).

In the Book of Ezekiel,

God has Ezekiel show His chosen people that being faithful to him required more than having a family tie (name). In Chapter 18 we are shown that it is possible to have a good father but that father may have an unfaithful son (18:10-13). Likewise, we are shown that one may have an unfaithful parent, yet the son be faithful (18:14-18). We are assured that good and evil may not be transferred from parent to child or from child to parent. All are personally responsible to God. A family name may be a means of opening a door of opportunity, but only faithfulness and loyalty to God will result in permanent trust and confidence (18:19-20; Hab. 2:4).

Conclusion

Fill in the blanks: "Not every one that saith unto me, _____, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the _____ of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:2).

"And why call ye me, _____, and _____ the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)

What is your name? Are you dead or alive spiritually?

The Harvesters

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“Do You Understand Restoration?”

31st Annual Lectureship **Jan. 16-19, 2006** Jackie M. Stearsman, Director



Earl Edwards



Mike Elledge



Justin Gerhardt



Marcus Grayson



Bill Greer



Tom Holland

MONDAY

9:00 Restoring Authority Maurice Davis, I
 9:40 Bible Examples of Restoration Ryan Tuten
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Essential Components of Restoration Justin Gerhardt
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Restoration and Perfection
 1:30 Grow in Service Nathan Kidwell
 2:00 Grow in Knowledge Uleysses Richardson
 2:30 Grow in Wisdom James E. Rogers
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Restoring Membership (Sonship) Marcus Grayson
 7:45 Restoring Sacrificial Giving Jackie M. Stearsman

WEDNESDAY

9:00 Restoring Brotherly Love Earl Edwards
 9:40 Restoration Insights from John the Baptist Jimmy Clark
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Factions in Restoration Bruce Daugherty
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Restoration Insights
 1:30 From Martin Luther Brian R. Kenyon
 2:00 From John Calvin Gene Burgett
 2:30 From Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone Steve Atnip
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Restoring Leadership Bill Greer
 7:45 Restoring Preacher Training Earl Edwards

TUESDAY

9:00 Restoring Sacrificial Living Timothy Kidwell
 9:40 Who Is a “Campbellite”? James E. Rogers
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 When Is Restoration Required? J. H. Blackman, Jr.
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Hindering Restoration
 1:30 Institutions Steve Atnip
 2:00 “Core Gospel” J. Brooks Boyd, Jr.
 2:30 Movement Mania Freddie Clayton
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Restoring Worship Alfred Woodard
 7:45 Restoring Broken Fellowship Jimmy Clark

THURSDAY

9:00 Restoring Personal Growth J. Brooks Boyd, Jr.
 9:40 Restoration World Evangelism Bruce Daugherty
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Restoring Church Identity Freddie Clayton
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Restoring Values
 1:30 Role of the Home Timothy Kidwell
 2:00 Role of the State Mike Elledge
 2:30 Role of the Church Bill Greer
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Restoring Singing Tom Holland
 7:45 Restoring Improvement in Singing Tom Holland

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Gene Burgett Report

The past month has been a bit aggravating as illness limited the number of visits I was able to make on behalf of the school. The church of Christ in Lake City was holding a meeting in the month of October. Attending two nights of the meeting provided me with an opportunity to visit with the faithful elders and preacher of that congregation. I have lived in the north Florida area for seventeen years and Bud Parker and Harold Herndon have ably shepherded the flock in Lake City the entire time. When need arises they have been willing to support student preachers. Brother Ryan Tuten, the preacher for the Lake City congregation, will be on our 2006 lectureship. I saw blessed signs of growth during my visit.

October 16 I preached for the Parkway church of Christ in Savannah, Georgia. The Parkway church is without a preacher. Every third Sunday someone from the Florida School of preaching presents a gospel message during their morning worship assembly. Usually the speaker sent is one of our students. These situations provide valuable opportunities for our students to gain pulpit experience while also meeting the need of a local congregation. We appreciate the opportunities provided by the brethren at Parkway.

I was thrilled to hear from another congregation expressing an interest in supporting the work of the Florida School of Preaching. Those who read the Harvester on a regular basis have probably noticed an increase in our appeals for financial support over the past year. For years we have made it our habit to not make large numbers of appeals for financial aid. Over the years I have noted that many organizations make constant calls for financial support, even though their financial needs are being amply met. I am convinced the reason behind such is a desire to grow an organization rather than focus on the need they are designed to meet. At the Florida School of Preaching our purpose is to train men to preach the Word. We are not trying to grow an organization; we are training preachers. We are satisfied with having the funds necessary to fulfill our purpose. After years of refraining from making financial appeals we now find it necessary to solicit support from faithful brethren and congregations. Our requests are being heard and some long-time supporters have increased their support. Interest is now being expressed by some who have not previously heard of our work. Our needs, however, are still great. We need your help. Please contact us and a representative of the school will gladly meet with you.

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