

The Harvester

Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



Volume 33

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Number 10

Completing Their Studies With Us

On May 12, three students will receive their certificates of completion. This occasion provides the opportunity to THANK YOU for your support of the school. Though our numbers may seem small compared to some, let us not "despise the day of small things" (Zec. 4:10). Like the remnant that returned to the promised land, God can do great things, even through a small number. The Lord needs more preachers and prepared souls to serve Him. These three will make a difference for good wherever they serve—thanks to your generosity! May the Lord bless them as they "Go... into all the world." May the Lord bless us with more students to prepare. If you know of faithful men who want to preach, please let us know. If you would like to know more about the school and ways you can help, please contact us.



Creston M. Frizzell came to us from the Stuart church of Christ, for whom his dad, Terry, is the preacher. Before enrolling in the school of preaching, he served in the United States Army Military Police Corps. For much of his time as a student here, he preached for the Lake Placid church of Christ. He plans on preaching full-time, and he is currently looking for a congregation with whom to work. In the near future, he also plans to marry Dina Nima, a faithful Christian lady he first met while on a mission trip to Peru. Her family and the Frizzells have been friends for years.



Bryant L. Johnson, Sr. came to us from the Mulberry church of Christ, where he has been a member for twelve years. He served in the United States Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves from 1978 to 1992, including service during Desert Storm. Prior to enrolling in the school of preaching, he worked as a sanitation superintendent for Plant City, Florida. His plans following school are to stay with the Mulberry congregation and serve as an associate minister and possibly in a future eldership. He and his wife, Patricia, have four children and eighteen grandchildren.



Darrin S. Morehouse came to us from the Venice church of Christ, having become a Christian in 2009. He served in the United States Army and Army Reserves from 1987 to 1993. Prior to enrolling in the school of preaching, he worked in professional audio/video installation and design, and helped his wife's business in internet retail. He also has experience in catering, evidenced by our last appreciation banquet, where he organized and prepared food. His plans are to preach full-time and is now looking for a congregation. He and his wife, Kristy, have four sons and one granddaughter.

Remaining True To The Ministry

By Brian R. Kenyon

With the announcement of preaching students completing their two years with us, the work of preaching is perhaps more on our minds now than at other times. It is well known, for those of us who have been around any length of time, that all preachers do not stay true to their calling. Some become discouraged and quit the work of preaching, while others lose their moorings of what preaching involves. The most tragic are those, like Demas, who allow the “love of this present world” to lead them astray (2 Tim. 4:10). The example and teaching of the apostle Paul, who was perhaps the greatest preacher besides the Lord, can help preachers stay true to their ministry. Let us consider two ways to remain true to the ministry of preaching according to some of Paul’s instruction found in Second Corinthians. Within the overall section where he describes his ministry (2 Cor. 2:14-7:4), Paul particularly points out how he and his coworkers minister in the open light of the Gospel (2 Cor. 4:1-6). It is from this latter section we want to draw two points that will help keep preachers true to their ministry.

Refuse to Be Discouraged

Paul begins this section, “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not” (2 Cor. 4:1). Paul’s ministry is a result of receiving God’s mercy (2 Cor. 4:1a). This “mercy” about which Paul writes directly ties into the “grace” he often uses to describe his

privilege to preach the Gospel. He writes,

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of

God which was with me. (1 Cor. 15:9-10).

Again, Paul writes,

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy... ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. ¹⁶Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy.... (1 Tim. 1:12-16).

Paul’s awareness of God’s role and purpose for his ministry kept him from becoming discouraged (2 Cor. 4:1b). The word translated “faint [lose heart, NKJ]” means to become discouraged, to tire of (2 Cor. 4:16; Gal. 6:9; Eph. 3:13; 2 Thes. 3:13). “Faint not” became a Christian technical term for “the unflagging pursuit of the goal of service,” as well as the “tautness of the determined heart that does not let up or lose courage” (Rogers and Rogers 399).

Preachers, let us not become discouraged! Be assured, things will not always go our way—we will be under appreciated by some, people will not always put our sermons to practice, and/or brethren will disappoint us. None of these (nor other) things, however, will be unique to us alone (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). Our Lord and faithful preachers of all ages have faced these same things, yet have overcome the temptations to become discouraged to the point of quitting the “work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Imitate Paul’s Ministry

Not only must preachers refuse to become discouraged, they must also imitate Paul’s example of handling himself and the word he preached. He continues,

But [we] have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. (2 Cor. 4:2)

First, Paul renounced hidden things that caused shame (2 Cor. 4:2a). The word from which “renounced” is translated means to disown. The aorist tense, as used here, is “timeless and does not mean that he had previously practiced what he says that he has renounced” (Rogers and Rogers 399). “Dishonesty [shame, NKJ; disgraceful, underhanded, ESV]” is from a word that means shame, disgrace, or shameful deed (Lk. 14:19; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 12:2; Jude 13; Rev. 3:18). Whether these shameful things were

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(863) 683-4043

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unashamedly done in the open or concealed by those who practiced them is the subject of much discussion. Paul's point, however, is clear: his motives were pure and he had nothing to hide, unlike some "preachers" of his day, especially his opponents. Preachers today should also live in such a way so as to have nothing to hide (cf. Mt. 5:16)!

Second, Paul did not deceive nor distort the word of God, neither by his preaching nor by his practice (2 Cor. 4:2b). The word translated "craftiness [cunning, ESV]" refers to trickery, deceit, or cunning (2 Cor. 11:3, "subtily;" 1 Cor. 3:19; Eph. 4:14). "Deceitfully [adulterating, NAS; tamper with, ESV]" is from a Greek word that means to use deceit, to use bait, to ensnare, to corrupt with error, to falsify (Rogers and Rogers 399). The Greek word occurs only here in New Testament, but it is used in non-inspired writings of the time in reference to the dilution of wine, which suggests that "Paul had in mind the corruption of the word of God by mingling it with alien ideas" (cf. 2 Cor. 2:17; Col. 2:8, 18) (Kruse 102). By tampering with God's word, false teachers concoct a different Jesus (2 Cor. 11:4) and a different Gospel (Gal. 1:6-7)! Some times, preachers may be tempted to "dilute" God's word in order to please others, but to be true to the ministry, we must not deceive nor distort the doctrine of Christ!

Third, Paul openly commended the message he preached to his hearers' own consciences (2 Cor. 4:2c). The word "manifestation" means to bring to light, to dis-

close (1 Cor. 12:7). It is an "open statement" (ESV). The word "commend" means to give approval (2 Cor. 6:4; 7:11; 10:18; 12:11; Rom. 3:5). There is a sense here that Paul did commend himself and his coworkers, but this commending was not as his opponents unwisely did of themselves (cf. 2 Cor. 20:12). To the contrary, Paul appealed to his hearers' "conscience." Paul did not have to dilute his message nor deceitfully handle it to trick his listeners. His message came from God (cf. Gal. 1:11-12), and his reputation to those "tuned in" to the Lord stood on the fruits of his labor! He conducted his ministry "in the sight of God"—quite the opposite of having to be "hidden" (2 Cor. 4:2a)!

Conclusion

Remaining true to the ministry is important to the Lord's cause and to the purpose for which the Florida School of Preaching stands. Preachers, let us refuse to be discouraged, and let us follow the example of Paul's handling of himself and the message he preached!

Works Cited

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*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month's financial statement.

Florida School of Preaching

1807 South Florida Avenue

Lakeland, FL 33803

www.fsop.net email: fsop@fsop.net

Phone: (863) 683-4043; (800) 320-9780

Fax: (863) 683-0750

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The Local Church's Role In Training Preachers

Recently, I was asked to preach on this subject at a congregation in Alabama. Below are the main points I used with a brief synopsis of the content of each point. One of the best known young evangelists in the New Testament is Timothy. The record of Paul's meeting him is found in Acts 16:1-2, when Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, on his second missionary trip, "behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. ²He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium" (NKJ). Note that Timothy was from a religiously mixed home, but that did not stop him from learning the Scriptures from his mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14), nor did it stop the brethren from highly recommending him. Encouragement to preach should begin in the home, even if only one parent is a Christian, and that encouragement must continue in the local church. Consider those who are not brought up in a Christian home, but obeyed the Gospel later in life. Who is going to encourage them to preach if not the local congregation? Does the local church of Christ of which you are a member look for men, young or old, to encourage to preach the Gospel? The local church must supply the demand of preachers for which this sinful world calls. Please help us find men to preach and souls to prepare! —*Brian*

KNOW

Be a church that knows
the importance of God's
word (2 Tim. 3:14-4:5)!

FOLLOW

Be a church that truly
follows God (Acts
11:26; 13:1-4)!

LOOK

Be a church that looks for
and recommends potential
preachers (Acts 16:1-2)!

SUPPORT

Be a church that
supports preachers
(Phil. 4:10-20)!