



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1.8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

January 24, 2016

When Brethren Reject the Truth #4

Bryan Garlock

Truth is rejected when men oppose that which is truthful. Biblical truth is rejected when men oppose righteousness by their ungodliness. The world has rejected the truth. Paul testified of this in his letter to the Romans when he showed that when one does not glorify or acknowledge God, is unthankful to Him and exchanges truth for a lie, etc. his suppression of truth has led to rejection (Romans 1.18-32). Unfortunately, even some brethren reject the truth. In this series of articles, we want to examine many ways in which Christians have rejected and thereby hinder God's truth.

Consider the following easy-to-understand passage: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28.19-20).

Before Jesus was to ascend into heaven, He commanded His apostles to "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16.15). It is unfortunate that some brethren hold the view that since Jesus was speaking to the apostles in the context of Matthew 28 that this command is only for them. Though this view may be rare, the fact that it is even espoused should cause one to stop and consider the consequences of binding Jesus' words to his apostles only. Simply put, if that were the case no one would or could be a disciple today! The command to make disciples and to teach those disciples all that Jesus commanded *includes* the command to make disciples and to teach them to keep His commandments. Therefore Jesus' instructions are for all Christians because it is a never-ending chain of disciples making disciples!

Interestingly enough, Bible students who are quick to acknowledge that Jesus teaches all to spread the gospel are seemingly slow to act. This teaching truly falls into the realm of James' admonishments to "... be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1.22). To believe something and yet not act is fake religion at best! May we be like Paul who wrote, "Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe, and so we also speak..." (2 Cor. 4.13).

For our purposes to be accomplished in this article, we must ask ourselves the following questions: "When was the last time I spoke about Jesus to my co-worker?" "When was the last time I gave a friend a tract or brochure about the Bible?" "When was the last time I invited someone to have a Bible study?" "How much time do I devote to the spreading of the gospel?" "How many people with the exception of my children have I led to Christ?" "Am I willing to talk to neighbors, co-workers, family and friends about the gospel?" "Do I have the Bible knowledge to lead someone to Christ?"

The above questions are vital to understanding the problems the church faces today and to determining our attitude concerning evangelism. In many ways it would seem rather insignificant.

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: Exodus 26-30
Tues: Exodus 31-35
Wed: Exodus 36-40
Thurs: Lev. 1-5
Fri: Lev. 6-10

Take for instance some of our denominational friends who tirelessly spread soul-damning error while we enjoy shopping, attend sports events or relax in the comfort of our homes. When they knock on the door some of us run and hide. When they approach us in public some of us thank them and turn aside. The eyebrow-raising question is, "Which one is trying to teach his neighbor?"

One of the main reasons that religious error is so prevalent and that denominations flourish is because those with the truth keep the truth to themselves. We often speak of the world suppressing the truth, but are we not practicing a form of suppression? We believe wholeheartedly that we must go to church and partake of the Lord's Supper but one will not find us knocking on doors, talking to friends and co-workers, etc. Why is that? This writer believes it is a heart problem. When one's heart is not in love with God (for to know God is to know love) his heart will not be mindful of his fellow men and their spiritual conditions.

Many reject the truth in that they shift their responsibilities to the preacher. These folks have the mindset that says, "We have a paid preacher for that!" While none would wish to be caught saying such (though some have been), actions speak louder than words. This is similar to the mindset that says, "When we get elders everything will be better!" It seems we typically like to shift our responsibilities to others. Surely we have not conditioned ourselves to believe that if we have elders and a preacher that our work is now fulfilled vicariously through them. Are we to interpret every passage in the New Testament that teaches one to spread the gospel, visit the sick, and see to the erring, etc. as referring only to preachers? Only a deceived heart or a slothful person would argue such (cf. Rom. 12.11).

The preacher is not the only one who should visit the sick and spiritual sick, keep up with every visitor, go house-to-house teaching, pass out tracts and materials to the lost, etc. Every person who calls upon the name of the Lord is bound to do all the above and more. We would all do well to understand that the preacher does not preach because he is a preacher. Nor does he spread the gospel because he is a preacher. He preaches and evangelizes because he is a Christian. The only difference in one who carries the title "preacher" or "evangelist" is that he is typically supported for his work so that he can devote himself fully to the gospel. Yet one's support to this preacher does not negate one's spiritual obligations to the lost. Jesus calls all disciples to make disciples. If one who does not do this claims to be a disciple of Jesus, His Savior responds, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6.46).

There are four great hindrances to spreading the gospel: some Christians do not feel an obligation, some are not ready, some are ashamed and some are just too busy. If one falls into any of these categories (and more often than not it would seem many of us fall into each category), it would do him well to be reminded of his redemption from sins, his duty to grow spiritually, the power within the gospel and his responsibility to seek first the kingdom. These four reminders will eliminate the aforementioned hindrances.

Finally, this writer was recently watching a video from a world-renowned comedian and atheist who received a Bible from a fan. The atheist was touched in many ways because someone *cared* enough to give him a Bible. His words ought to attack the very nervous system of every professed Christian: "How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?"

Have we rejected the truth about personal evangelism? All too often we shout, "Make disciples" and yet instead of "bringing in the sheaves" ourselves, we shift our responsibilities to others and we allow ourselves to be hindered by our failure to grow in knowledge of the Scriptures. This writer's prayer is that we will not succumb to the devil's attempts to thwart our abilities and opportunities to evangelize. Instead we will seek every opportunity to mention Jesus to someone. BG