

It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.
Vol. 3 September 5, 2021 No. 36*

We Believe, And, Therefore, Speak

By Bill Hall

The preaching of the apostles proceeded from hearts full of conviction. They had observed the miracles of Jesus; they had heard His teaching; three of them had been with Him in the mount, and had heard those words spoken from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in who I am well pleased. Hear Him"; they had seen His composure as He was arrested in the garden; they had carefully examined evidences of His resurrection, and had talked with Him, eaten with Him, felt of Him; they had watched as He ascended until a cloud received Him out of their sight. They believed! And so full were they of faith that their faith overflowed in words. They could not hold back that message which burned in their hearts.

They preached it everywhere: in the synagogues and in the temple; in the streets and from house to house; in governor's mansions and in prisons; in market places and from Mars Hill; on ships and in chariots; in upper rooms and on riverbanks.

They preached it to the rich and to the poor; to worshipers of God and to worshipers of idols; to the humble and to the proud; to the lowly and to the mighty; to the educated and to the uneducated; to the good and to the bad; to the moral and to the immoral.

They preached it to drunkards, to adulterers, to homosexuals, to idolaters, to sorcerers, to kings, to governmental officials, to army officers, to jailers, to ship captains, to beggars. They preached it, and preached it, and preached it!

Because they preached it, they were imprisoned, beaten, scourged, mocked, ridiculed, threatened; they were victims of lies, deceit, conspiracy, uproars, mob violence, shipwreck, ambush; they lived in poverty, often hungering, and with "no certain dwelling place"; but nothing could stop them from preaching as long as they had breath. They believed, and their faith forced them to preach regardless of the consequences. They believed, and, therefore, spoke (II Corinthians 4:13).

What did they preach? They preached that message revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, God's divine message (I Corinthians 2:6-13). They had no time for politics; nor was their faith centered upon such things. The message that burned in their hearts was a message concerning the Christ and salvation through Him. They believed in Christ, in the efficacy of His blood, and in the power of His gospel. They believed, and, therefore, spoke that message, and that message only.

Faith! In that one word may lie the most important element of effective evangelism. When we come to believe as did those apostles; when we become so full of faith that we can hardly restrain ourselves; when the message of salvation burns within us as it did in them, we will be teaching others and we will be doing so effectively. Until then, our words may contain an unmistakable emptiness that will render them powerless in changing the hearts of men.

The Home Wrecker

By Dan S. Shipley

Though seldom identified, the sin of selfishness is the culprit responsible for most every problem, heartache, misery, and division occurring in the home. One of the marks of the "grievous times" of

which Paul prophesied was that men would be lovers of self (2 Tim. 3:1,2). And grievous it is when husbands and wives will subordinate family needs to personal preferences; when they think in terms of self: What I want, what I like, my rights, my interests, and my happiness. Such thinking is practically the guarantee of hard times at home. But too few see selfishness as being a personal problem.

As H.W. Beecher has said, "Selfishness is that detestable vice which no one will forgive in others, and no one is without in himself." It is our inclination to see ourselves as the victims of selfishness rather than the guilty. As the unhappy wife I recently read about was heard to say, "My husband doesn't show any interest in what I do. All he cares about is whatever it is that he does at that place -- wherever it is -- that he works!" (Bits & Pieces, Aug. 83) Such an attitude may describe us more than we care to admit. As God's people we are not ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11), the deceitfulness of sin, nor its blinding power. Therefore, however remote and unlikely it may seem, we must see the possibility of selfishness in our own lives! Like the prodigal son, we must come to self to overcome self (Lk. 15:17). As Paul says, "Examine yourselves..." (2 Cor. 13:5), test your motives with absolute honesty for none can begin to deal with a problem he won't admit.

Self-denial is one of the first lessons to be learned by the follower of Christ (Matt. 16:24). Nothing is more fundamental to obedience and righteousness. Without it, no man can truly love his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25). As Christ's love sacrificed self for the church, so must be the husband's for his wife. It is an unselfish and giving love. Without it, wives cannot be in subjection to their husbands, as unto the Lord (v. 22). The very spirit that prompts submission to the Lord should prompt it between husband and wife. Being what the Lord wants me to be means being what I need to be to my mate. Selfishness, then, is a sin against man and God -- and, oftentimes, against children.

Accordingly, bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4) involves denying self. For instance, rearing children for heaven takes time. Selfishness robs many children of that precious time -- under an alias, to be sure. Too busy, too tired, to talk and answer questions, to read the Bible, to pray with them, to take them to worship. But worse, perhaps, are those children who suffer because selfish parents divide the home rather than deny self. It is almost unthinkable that some would trade a good family for a selfish indulgence: for a bottle, for a lover, for "good times." Yet, it continues to happen, even among some claiming to be Christians. In these, and even in more subtle and respectable ways, selfishness is the great home wrecker: May God helps us to want it purged from our lives.

It Just Slipped Out ... Of What?

By Bryan Matthew Dockens

When excusing themselves for uttering profanities or curses, the kind of words which should never escape our mouths (Ephesians 4:29), many will say, "I'm sorry; it just slipped out." But what did those corrupt words slip out of, exactly? Jesus explained, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35). That is to say, bad words don't "slip out" of good hearts; they come from bad hearts. Therefore, "Purify your hearts!" (James 4:8).