

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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VOLUME 9 NO. 40

December 2, 2012

"I Alone am Left"

By Andy Sochor

After contending with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and proving to the people the power of God, Elijah was forced to flee from the wrath of Jezebel. He then spoke to the Lord at Horeb about what was troubling him.

"Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He said, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away'" (1 Kings 19:9-10).

Elijah had just been a part of a decisive victory for the Lord over Baal on Mount Carmel. But despite this, he was in such a depressed state that he wished the Lord would take his life (1 Kings 19:4). He was

focusing on the challenges, hardships, and persecution before him, while being convinced that there was no one else who was of like-mind, striving to serve the Lord.

As Christians, we may also feel isolated from others and, as a result, face what seems to be a daunting task of enduring the hardships that will come for servants of God (2 Timothy 3:12) without aid, comfort, or encouragement from others. We may feel as though we are alone in standing for the truth while everyone around us seems to be compromising, apostatizing, or wholly apathetic about contending for the faith. During such times, it is important to remember a few points.

God is with us – Elijah knew that God was with him, from the answer by fire on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:36-38) to the food and water that was miraculously provided him while he fled from Jezebel (1 Kings 19:5-6). We can be encouraged knowing that

the Lord is with us as well and will not forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). Even if God is the only one with us, we do not need to despair. Paul said, *“If God is for us, who is against us?”*

(Romans 8:31).

We may become more of a target – Being alone (or appearing to be alone) made Elijah an obvious target as his enemies sought his life. We know that *“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”* (2 Timothy 3:12). But one who is (or appears to be) alone makes an especially attractive target for the enemies of Christ. The wise man spoke of the strength of numbers and, by implication, the vulnerability of isolation: *“And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart”* (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

There are others who are faithful – The Lord told Elijah that there were *“7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal”* (**1 Kings 19:18**). The fact that Elijah was unaware of such faithful individuals did not mean they did not exist. Just because we may not be aware of such faithful brethren, that does not mean that there are not

others who are striving to serve the Lord, live holy lives, contend for the faith, and follow the pattern found in the New Testament.

We can (and must) remain faithful – Elijah was faithful when he was alone against the prophets of Baal (**1 Kings 18:22**). He was still *“zealous for the Lord”* (**1 Kings 19:9**), even though he was isolated from other like-minded brethren. Isolation may make our lives more difficult, but it does not make our service to God impossible. God’s commandments for us are *“not burdensome”* (**1 John 5:3**). He expects us to remain faithful to Him, despite difficult circumstances (**Revelation 2:10**).

Whether we have plenty of like-minded brethren around to provide encouragement, or we are (or feel like we are) alone to face the challenges before us, we are able to handle whatever might come. Remember what Paul wrote:

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will

provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We know that God is faithful. Therefore, we know that we can handle every challenge, difficulty, or temptation that might otherwise lead us give up our faith in God. Rather than falling in the face of life's trials, we can (and must) endure and become complete (**James 1:2-4**). Do not lose heart! Continue to serve God in faith and you will be rewarded by Him in the end (**Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:7-8**).

ABOUT GOSPEL PREACHING

. . . **-Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.-**

According to 2 Timothy 4:2 (NKJV), gospel preaching consists of convincing (convicting), rebuking, and exhorting (encouraging) those who hear it. We do not need to forget the tool for all three of these things is "the word (of God)," not our word or the word of the latest self-help guru. All are to be done with long-suffering and doctrine (teaching). All this means we are to take "the word" and teach it – using it

as the basic for our efforts to convict, rebuke and encourage our hearers.

I hear well delivered sermons where the purpose of the speaker is evidently is to convict the hearer, or to rebuke sin, or to encourage brethren or all three. Yet, as I listen, I hear little if any Bible other than an occasional passing reference.

It seems to me that the concept of preaching outlined by Paul is 2 Timothy 4:2-4 is that of taking "THE WORD" (the scripture text) and show how it convicts. How it rebukes the sin we are targeting. How it encourages those who need encouraging. So, a really good preacher is more than just a good speaker. He is one that can take the text, teaching and using IT to "convince, rebuke, and exhort."

The Church

Author Unknown

The church is not a refrigerator for the preserving of perishable piety...it is a dynamo for charging human wills with power.

The object of the church is not to tell men how to dodge

difficulties...but to furnish strength and courage to meet them.

The business of the church isn't to furnish hammocks for the lazy...it is rather to offer well-fitting yokes for drawing life's loads.

“Grandmother’s Bible

VIA Minute Messages Volume I

A mother was trying to get her young daughter to study her Bible class lesson. The mother took her Bible from the shelf, dusted it off, and told the daughter to read her Bible lesson before she could go out and play. “All right, Mother” the little girl said, “but let’s study out of Grandmother’s Bible. It’s more interesting than yours.”

“Why, what makes you say that Sweetie? My Bible is exactly like Grandmothers.” “Oh no, Mother,” the observant little lady insisted. “I’m sure Grandmother’s Bible must be more interesting than yours because she reads hers so much more often than you do!”

Friends, it is hard to teach what we do not practice. Our children will learn from what we do much more than what we “say”. What are you “saying” to your children by your actions?

Our Next Gospel Meeting

March 3-8, 2013

David Lanius

Invite Night – Dec. 16th “Is Christ More Than Christmas?”