

Light and Life

Sermon or Storytime?

"It is not wrong to quote human authors. Paul did it at Athens, though it was a brief and passing comment. There is a place for humor and pathos. Illustrations from the speaker's own experience have their place. But strong churches are not built by eloquence of expression, by snappy one-liners, endless stories about dogs, mothers, war heroes, or voyages into psychology. You know I speak the truth when I say that much preaching today is pure psychobabble. Like Grapenuts, it is neither grapes nor nuts. It is heavy on [insert uninspired theologian name here], but light on [Scripture].... Young people in many places, considered the cream of the crop, have very little basic knowledge of the Bible. They have grown up with spiritual pep talks, have come home excited from Bible Camps, yet they know little of basic truth." - Connie Adams

Sadly, this has become the popular preaching style even in many 'sound' churches. Just read a few verses, tell a few jokes and fill up the time with illustrations and entertaining anecdotes and you can make it big! This is the style many preachers my age aspire to excel in. More emotion, less substance. More experiencing, less equipping. More pathos, less logos. More of whatever the 'new thing' is, less Scripture.

Let's dispose of the theatrics and get back to that which can make us "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Ti. 3:17)! We need more preachers like Ezra, who "read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8). We need more congregations who desire this kind of preaching, as Ezra's audience did when he preached from morning until midday from "the book" before "all who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law" (vss 1-3). May God restore the hearts of His people to love His word and seek after Him! And may they seek after Him without distraction!

- Sam Bunyard

Another Perspective

Belief Alone

Many passages in the gospel of John (like 3:16 and 8:24) describe belief, or faith, as being the point at which a person is saved. But 'belief only' cannot possibly be what John had in mind when he wrote that belief saves.

I know this because he's the same author who wrote John 12:42, which provides an example of people who believed and yet weren't saved: "*Among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue*".

I know this because Acts 2:37 shows me a group of people who believed, but neither enjoyed the indwelling Spirit nor the forgiveness of sins as a result: "*When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'*"

I know this because Saul believed when he was 'laid hold of' on the road to Damascus, and yet his account in Acts 22:16 shows him to be **still in his sins** after three days of prayer and fasting.

So, John wasn't lying when he said belief saves; he was quoting the Jewish Messiah who needed His brethren to recognize Him. Belief was 'the thing' for them – and it's still the most important step one must make toward God today. It becomes synecdoche – a **part** of the expected human response representing the **entirety** of the response. Without it, either no one will want to do anything else or anything else that's done will be meaningless.

Just as belief without repentance, confession, and baptism is incomplete and therefore worthless, so baptism without belief is meaningless. It's just getting wet. A belief that saves, as taught in places like John 3:16 and 8:24, is the one that has a desire to please God **and** to do anything He wills.

- Keith Davis

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

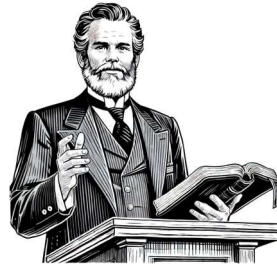
Evening Bible Class 6:30

Pray “for kings and
all who are in high
positions, that we
may lead a peaceful
and quiet life”

1Ti 2:1-2

Downtown Church of Christ

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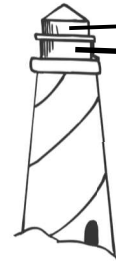
What some lukewarm
Christians call legalism
Jesus calls obedience.

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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A Heart to Confess

“When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” - Ps 32:3-5

The Psalmist contrasts two different approaches to sin. On the one hand, we can just ‘keep silent’ about it. We can pretend it doesn’t exist, make excuses for it, or just ‘sweep it under the rug’ and put on a façade of piety. This is the common approach.

Or we can ‘acknowledge’ our sin. We can muster the courage to own up to it, and admit our failures, and

confess them before God (1 Jn 1:9) and before others (Ja 5:16). This is the approach less taken.

The first approach does not really deal with the sin. Like the proverbial ostrich, it leaves the problem intact. Guilt and eternal damnation are just some of the consequences.

The second approach requires tremendous courage and humility. No wonder it is the approach less taken. But it is the only method of dealing with sin that provides for forgiveness and the easing of guilt – which in the end, makes it the **only** way of **truly** dealing with sin. May God give us the heart to confess! - *WKing*

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, KHeiligenthal, JTerrell

Shut-ins: Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, Virgil Carter

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

WELCOME! We welcome Athena Dudgeon (niece of Michelle Weston) to the family at Downtown! Let’s make her feel at home!

SINGING – Tonight is our first-of-the-month singing. Let’s all come ready to “teach and admonish one another” in the songs we sing!