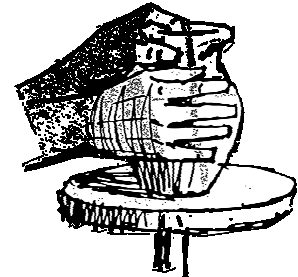


His Workmanship: Westside

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

—Ephesians 2:10



Vol. XXIV

June 14, 2015

No. 24

Isaiah 64:8

The Importance and Unimportance of a Preacher, by Berry Kercheville

Paul's letters to Corinth reveal preachers supported by the Corinthians who were "peddling God's word" and boasting in fleshly accomplishments, 1 Cor 9:12; 2 Cor 2:17. The Corinthian preachers sought preeminence in the church, presenting themselves as "super-apostles," 2 Cor 12:11. They saw Paul and his fellow workers as a threat to the wages they received by impressing the church with their speeches of worldly wisdom, 1 Cor 2:1.

The Professional Preacher. As the worldly preachers at Corinth, there are also professional preachers today. Denominations showcase the "pastor," who is the face of the church. Many denominational "pastors" plant their own churches to organize and direct it to their liking. Their "church" strongly reflects their personality and grows or shrinks based on their abilities in the pulpit. The "pastor" is the focus; he is the one who is primarily responsible for the growth of the church. Without him, the church would struggle, or in some cases, close down altogether.

In contrast to the Corinthian preachers with their fleshly boasting, and the professional preachers of today, Paul described how he and true servants of Christ sacrifice and even suffer in order to share the gospel with others. For

example he states, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair...always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies... So death is at work in us, but life in you," 2 Cor 4:8, 10, 12. From a worldly point of view, there was nothing impressive about Paul. He boasted of dying like Jesus and laying down his life that others may live, and then he called upon all disciples to "be imitators of me," 1 Cor 4:16. In other words, Paul boasted of the unimportance of a preacher: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth," 1 Cor 3:6-7.

The Unintended Importance of Present-day Preachers. Does our perception of a preacher reflect Paul's description? Has preaching become a professional position where a preacher appears to be at the center of the church? Too often the expectations of the preacher's work have gone beyond Paul's directives in the letters to Timothy and Titus. Preacher "importance" is evident when churches feel panicked if they go very long without a preacher. Have we reached a point of being excessively dependent on a man delivering sermons every week? Even shepherds, who should be able to teach and

adequately fill the pulpit, feel pressure to "hire" the next preacher lest they begin to lose members or allow the zeal of the church to wane. This does not suggest or minimize the need for experience and quality preaching. The concern is that the preacher can become the focal point of the work so that his abilities are unique. Is it only the preacher who is qualified to preach, counsel a troubled teen or rocky marriage, comfort the suffering, or strengthen the weak? Making the preacher too important is largely unintentional. The following explanations are not true of every preacher, especially young preachers, but they are often true:

- From a negative perspective, there is a subtle influence from the denominational "pastor" system along with the traditions we have developed that have pushed preachers into being more than just a member of the body. Since he has been "hired," he is too often expected to have both time and talents that far exceed what is reasonably healthy for a church.

- The preacher has spent years building his knowledge of scripture and his ability to communicate the word effectively. Most shepherds and saints do not have that luxury because of their

continued on p. 2

“How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach unless they are sent?” -Rm 10:14

need for a secular job. Thus the evangelist seems to have the most Bible knowledge and can fill many needs in the kingdom.

- The preacher should be able to motivate and equip a church to action rather than just give an informational lesson.
- The experienced preacher may have a vision of where the church needs to go and how to correct the “things that are lacking,” Tit 1:5.

The Need for an “Unimportant”

Preacher. “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,” 1 Cor 4:1. When a preacher becomes the “face of the church,” the effectiveness of the local church is diminished because the talents of individual members are left undeveloped. Just as in a welfare state, Christians can become dependent on the preacher (and even his wife) to do an inordinate share of the work. These expectations diminish the primary work of an evangelist to equip saints and reach the lost. A preacher does not have the time or talent to equip, save souls, and provide for needs in the body that can be filled by other members. Like John the Baptist, the preacher must point to Christ and away from himself, Jn 3:30. “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God Who commanded light to shine out of darkness, Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us,” 2 Cor 4:5-7; cf. 1 Thes 2:6-12.

The following are four ways we can make the preacher more unimportant:

1. Make a determined effort to equip young men to be shepherds who are able to teach and preach. It is no wonder there are so many elders who feel

completely inadequate to motivate and lead the church through occasional sermons. How could they? They were not trained or given opportunities to develop their skills when they were younger. This can be solved by preacher-directed “training programs” that regularly give younger men the opportunity to preach. This is not simply letting a young man give a “talk,” but directed training in sermon preparation and delivery—and teaching him the basics of caring for souls by pointing him to shepherding opportunities.



2. Develop a culture in the church that recognizes Jesus’s principle: “Leave the ninety-nine and go search for the one that went astray,” Mt 18:12-14. Too many churches are inwardly focused, concerned about whether the preacher has given due attention to them rather than whether the lost are being pursued. In Acts 2, there were 3000 Christians. By Acts 5, the number very likely exceeded 20,000. How many complained that not one of the apostles spoke to them on Sunday or visited them during the week? Mostly, they were pleased with the outward focus of the apostles, Ax 6:5, and when they scattered from Jerusalem, they “went everywhere preaching the word,” Ax 8:4. One person who is lost requires more direct attention than the rest of us.

3. Differentiate between the work of an evangelist and the work of a Christian. For example, all Christians are urged to “practice hospitality,” Rm12:13; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9. As a Christian, the preacher will also practice hospitality as he is able. But hospitality is not a special work of a preacher so that he ought to do more than what any other saint is expected to do. The same is true with visiting and encouraging fellow Christians or comforting the sick, Mt 25:34-46; Heb 13:3; Jas 1:27; 2:15-16; 1 Jn 3:17. An evangelist (and an elder) will do his part as a Christian, but for him to be devoted to such works will mean failing to give himself to the “ministry of the word,” Ax 6:4.

4. Recognize that evangelists and shepherds are charged to equip and move the church to maturity so that God is glorified in the world. They, and the church, cannot be content merely that worship and Bible classes run smoothly. There must also be a definitive goal and a plan to reach that goal.

Preachers are fallible, imperfect people, often struggling with their lives and their faith just like every other Christian. Preachers communicate God’s word in every place they are given an opportunity. They spend countless hours helping one person come to Christ. They train and equip Christians to use their talents to build up the body and be able to speak the truth in love. In other words, the charge is to teach, teach, and teach some more. Is there something else? The work is important, but the preacher himself is unimportant. Let’s emphasize the work of every member imitating Christ, “From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love,” Eph 4:16. *****

Answers to Bible book quiz p. 3: 1. Acts 2. Esther 3. Mark 4. Exodus 5. Psalms 6. Hebrews 7. Job 8. Lamentations



God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

Disconnected from Application
by Matt Wallin

Francis Chan, author of *Crazy Love*, says to imagine if you told your child, "Go clean your room." Your child walked away and returned and said, "I memorized what you said... I can say it in Greek! In fact, some of my friends are going to come over tonight and do a study on what it would look like for me to clean my room!"

That scenario is absurd! Yet are we guilty of doing that in our quiet times? Is there a disconnection between our quiet time and our application of God's word in real life? See Jas 1:22-25.

"When I encounter someone who is battling discouragement or depression, I often ask two questions: 'Are you singing praises to the Lord?' and 'Are you memorizing Scripture?' These two exercises are not some magical formula to make all our problems go away, but they do have incredible power to change our perspective and attitude toward the issues we are facing." ~Nancy DeMoss

Identify the Bible book by its first line.

1. *The former treatise I have made, O, Theophilus...*
2. *Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus...*
3. *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...*
4. *Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came...*
5. *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...*
6. *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past...*
7. *There was a man in the land of Uz...*
8. *How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow is she...*

Answers on p. 2.

Discipleship Here At Home

Military Celebrates Gay Pride, from p. 4

As General Boykin pointed out, "The military's job isn't to champion causes—it's to fight and win wars." Decisions like Carter's don't facilitate the mission, they distract from it—and further emasculate the warrior class. The administration likes to say, as Carter did Tuesday, that "Discrimination of any kind has no place in America's armed forces." Yet discrimination is happening to Christians, who are being run out.

Marginalizing faith has serious long-term consequences, as we learned 50 years ago in the public schools. Now the same thing is happening in the military, and what's the result? We're celebrating gay pride at the expense of American pride.

Ask Abilene Baptist Church in Georgia. Their annual Fourth of July event, which was once a celebration of American exceptionalism, turned into a national headline when the Army—after 20 years of participating—refused to provide a color guard, claiming it violated policy to join a "religious service." Todd Starnes of *Fox News* broke the story, which shocked some conservatives. In the past most Marines have had the additional duty of providing color guard service—at funerals, churches, union events, you name it. Not once did they, who took an oath that included "so help me God," turn down a request for being "overtly religious." This church, incidentally, has a tradition of honoring our Armed Forces dating back to 1774 when its first "pastor" was a chaplain in the Revolutionary Army.

Faith and military service have been an inseparable piece of the American fabric for centuries. To see that fabric unravel at the hands of a radical few is sad but not inevitable. Courage, the courage that led the great men and women of this country to put on their uniforms, is needed more now than ever. Pray for our troops—not only that they would have the fortitude to fight the enemies abroad, but the agenda within.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Marie Sangellino**—thyroid cancer; surgery 7/9
- **Rod Green**—staph infection; needs meals sent
- **Ed Fink**—prostate cancer; treatment for brain tumors
- **Kay Ransom's** mother—in hospital, serious fall with complications from COPD; no broken bones
- **Judy Sartin's** uncle **Ernie Ek**—recent stroke; age 92 in CA, fighter pilot in WWII; Judy's friend in Houston, **Barbara Batura**—stage 2 cancer
- **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, cancer; improving, MRI clear; treatment continues
- **Pat Wilkes**—surgery recovery for torn shoulder tendon/rotator cuff
- **Bill Dennis**—home following rehab on infected knee drainage; pseudo-gout
- **Sandra Perry**—possible kidney failure, may need dialysis or transplant; heart valve issues recently diagnosed; neuropathy from diabetes
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo
- **Brittany Tope's** mother—breast cancer; broken ribs healed; doing better
- grandmother—on dialysis
- **Kim Howell's** niece **Tonya Robison**—delivered 32-week, 2 lb, 5 oz **Malachi Taylor Robison** a few months ago; in NICU in Louisville, KY

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- **Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr.; Pat Wilkes**—asthma
- **Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease; her medication is being changed over the next few months, so she is home in early evenings with one of her parents
- **Jonathan Hadders**—RA
- **Kirk Johnson**—MS
- **Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, macular degeneration; high bp
- **Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
- **Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis;
- **Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

Travel

The **Gintchins** are away until Aug; Tsevetonka and children in Bulgaria visiting family, Lazar to join them in July after his travels

Contact Payton Miller's phone number is 309-846-8810

to all with servant's hearts who made this year's vacation Bible school a joyful experience!



"Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame," Psalm 34:5
I stand and see the beauty that God is forming in me.



Exposing current thoughts & trends military

Pentagon Celebrates Gay Pride, *by Tony Perkins*

If you asked Americans what the mission of the military is, most would probably say to fight and win wars. By wars, they wouldn't mean the cultural wars. But President Obama's radical social policies seem to suggest the latter, as last week's Pentagon festivities made clear.

The latest Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, who has made more headlines for his attack on values than on terrorists, led the military parade for gay pride month at the Pentagon's official party—which featured one of the Army's "transitioning" officers, among things. To a standing room-only crowd, Carter's biggest rah-rah moment was introducing Brigadier General Randy Taylor, who said that he had to hide his relationship with his boyfriend under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). Today, he's pleased to say that he can show off his "husband" without fear of losing his job. For conservatives, now forced to closet their views, it was a sad irony to see this general applauded for his sexual choices when chaplains like Wes Modder can't even cite Scripture in a private counseling session! As a party favor, Carter announced that for the first time in history, the military is breaking from tradition and turning sexual orientation into a "protected class" —violating a fundamental 2011 promise and setting off a chain of events that many (including Lt. General Jerry Boykin) think could change the Armed Forces forever.

During the congressional debate over DADT, the military's chiefs were promised that the Equal Opportunity guidelines would not change—which, like many other assurances, has turned out to be a bald-faced lie that greased the wheels of repeal. As we've witnessed in the four years since, once the camel's nose was under the tent, the tent-poles started to fall. Under an affirmative action-type system, what troops do in the bedroom will transcend what they do in battle when it comes to key personnel decisions. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that the military will start catering to homosexuals and transgendered at the expense of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. As they have with every incremental change, activists will leverage this new standing as a way to demand access and force affirmation.

Yet Carter, who actually claimed that elevating LGBTs is a matter of national security, thinks people will buy his line: *"We need to be a meritocracy. We have to focus relentlessly on our mission, which means the things that matter most about a person is what they can contribute to national defense."* Obviously, we can't be a meritocracy when sexual expression becomes more relevant than professional experience.

continued on p. 3



meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
720-295-4530

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

Sunday morning

• **adult Bible class, "Marriage Boot Camp: Basic Training in Communication,"** Jim Reingrover

• **Sermon, "An Invitation to the Throne of Grace,"** Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon, "Our Spiritual Journey: A Traveler's Perspective," Payton Miller