

“FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY...” (2)

By Keith Greer

“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5:41-42)

There is no doubt that the apostles and early Christians suffered terrible persecutions. Yet, the church continued to grow because **“they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”** “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4)

What does it mean to preach Jesus? Anything about Jesus is profitable for us to hear and understand. The example He left for us to follow (John 15:13), the love He had for His Father

(John 17:1-5), the concern for His disciples (John 17:18-21), and His strong sense of duty and servitude to men (Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 19:10) are all wonderful guidelines for us to strive towards.

What is taught in the scriptures that can result in gaining man eternal life? What message did the apostles have that they were willing to risk their lives in order to preach?

Peter told the Jews on the day of Pentecost that “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”’ (Acts 2:32-36)

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6:3-5)

Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. We have the hope of living in heaven for eternity. When one preaches those facts concerning Christ – they give men real hope!

When Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch, they began in Isaiah 53 and Philip **“preached unto him Jesus.”** What the eunuch heard caused him to want to be baptized. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.” {Acts 8:36-38)

Over and over again in the book of Acts we can read of men preaching the gospel to the lost sinner and the honest heart rendering obedience to that teaching. In some form or fashion the sinner had to come into contact with this message of the gospel to have salvation and real hope.

What has changed this today friend? Do men still commit sin and need the blood of Christ in order to have their sins washed away? (Acts 22:16) Man is still weak, giving in to temptation and committing sin—thereby being separated from God, Isaiah 59:1,2.

Yet, many will try to tell us today that the Bible has lost its power and is no longer a relevant message that works today. Such conclusions have failed in understanding the power of the gospel as the revealed message of the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. Gospel preaching is still needed and will always be the only message that can save mankind! ***