

PREACHING THE WORD (1)

By Keith Greer

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” {Matthew 28:19,20} Jesus’ message to His disciples was, “take the gospel to the entire world.” Why? God desires mankind’s salvation {1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9}. How can that be accomplished unless His disciples preach the message?

Preaching. *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” {1 Corinthians 1:18-21}*

God determined that preaching would be the method used to save the lost and place His power within their hearts. {Romans 1:16} Do you remember Peter’s words when, following some of His difficult teachings, Jesus asked if the disciples would also turn away? *“But Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” {John 6:68}* Let Peter’s statement, “You have the words of eternal life” soak into your minds.

Have times changed? I recently heard Brother Connie Adams preach an excellent sermon, **“Go into All the World.”** One of the comments he made in that sermon still rings in my ears. **“If gospel preaching was the means of reaching the lost and dying in sin, why do so many today believe that less preaching is what is needed?”** Sadly, many have swallowed Satan’s lie that “less truth is better.” Allow me to explain...

Gospel meetings. When I was young, we had ten-day meetings, with both morning and evening services. There were two annual meetings, one in the spring and another in the fall, with others for special instruction during the year. In northern Indiana, where I grew up, there were five or six other local congregations of the Lord’s people. Meeting attendance was always good, and brethren supported each other’s meetings. For many years, most churches had two meetings, spring and fall, seven days in length. What are we doing today? Brother Adams referred to them as **“bobtail”** meetings – Friday thru Sunday – or week-end meetings. Why are we having shorter meetings? We’ve convinced ourselves that meetings no longer work, and people are just too busy. Could it be that Christians are too busy, and this is a contributing factor to why meetings no longer work? How many area meetings do you attend? Do you even attend the one at the local church?

Less preaching. Unfortunately, God’s people are now clamoring for shorter and fewer sermons. In many places, churches have gone to one sermon service on the Lord’s Day. In the churches that still have two services, brethren are demanding shorter sermons. One preacher recently told me that,

while on vacation, he attended a Sunday-morning service where the sermon was 6-1/2 minutes long! Is less better? Better be careful that fellow may be starting a trend!

Many wonder why we are no longer converting the lost as in years gone by. A host of reasons are given to "explain" the lack of numbers in getting folks to obey the gospel. Could be the times, the different churches, how busy people are in general, and of course no interest in spiritual matters. Could it be that the "lacking" is also alive and well with us who are members of the Lord's church? Brother Adams pointed out that according to his personal records, there have been more responses in the longer meetings than the shorter ones. Is that just a coincidence? ***