

October, 2008

Pause Ponder Profit

“If You Are Sincere, No One Should Judge You”

by Harold Hancock

Many today think sincerity is all that matters in the realm of religion. Sincerity is their plan of salvation, their condition for forgiveness of sins, their one commandment that must be kept. They are wrong! And those who go so far as to say, “If you are sincere, no one should judge you” do not understand the true meaning of sincerity or judging. Some who say this demonstrate insincerity.

Sincerity is freedom from pretense and deceit. It is honesty, truthfulness, and truth-loving. It is an integrity of the heart that allows us to have a good conscience when we do those things we think are right. Obviously, sincerity is a good trait to have, and it should be desired and admired by all. We need to be sincere in our approach and service to God (Hebrews 10:22; Joshua 24:14), in our love for one another (Romans 12:9), and even with ourselves (Titus 2:7). But one can be sincere and still be wrong. Sincerity means we want to do right, and we think what we are doing is right; it does not mean that we are right.

Abimilech was sincere when he thought Sarah was Abraham’s sister and desired to take Sarah as his own wife. Though sincere, he was wrong, and he would have been punished by God had he not listened to God’s warning. His sincerity would not have exonerated him from the guilt of the sin of adultery (Genesis 20:1-7).

Paul was sincere while he persecuted Christians. He thought he was doing what God wanted him to do. He said he had done this in all good conscience and that his conscience was void of offense (Acts 23:1; 24:16). Sincerity did not make Paul right when he sought to imprison and destroy Christians.

God demands not only sincerity, but also truth. Joshua said, “*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth*” (Joshua 24:14). Jesus taught that we should worship in spirit and in truth. Paul prayed that the Philippians might be sincere and without offense (Philippians 1:10). Sincerity must be coupled with truth in our service and worship to God and in our daily living.

We grow more perfectly in the word of God and in Christ by instructions and even by rebukes. For people to point out our errors and to try to teach us in no way violates Jesus’ statement in Matthew 7:1, “*Judge not that ye be not judged.*” We are commanded to show people their faults (Matthew 18:15) and to convert them from their error (James 5:19). We are to rebuke those in sin (1 Timothy 5:20) and to restore those overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1). In Matthew 7:1 Jesus was teaching against hypocritical judging. He was instructing us to correct our own mistakes before trying to correct someone

(Continued on page 4)



“Is Preaching A Waste Of Time?”

by Lloyd Atherton

There are five million sermons preached in America each year. The unparalleled opportunity of the pulpit to reach the minds of men is remarkable. Yet the world would be better off if most sermons were never heard. This is not to discredit preaching. Consider Paul’s statement to the Corinthians: “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 Cor. 1:21) It is to emphasize the danger of false preaching (Cf. Gal. 1:6-9). Jesus warned that there are many false prophets in the world (Matt. 7:15). Thus, many of those five million sermons do not contain God’s truth. Many who say they speak for God do not know God. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

The purpose of preaching is not to amuse audiences, discuss political issues, gain a personal following, or manipulate people for monetary reward. The purpose is to save lost souls, build up (edify) the saved, and, above all things, glorify God. “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). What does gospel preaching accomplish?

Preaching Converts The Lost.

“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the

Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Sinners who are lost and plunging headlong toward the fire with no extinguisher need to know of God’s love, Christ’s sacrifice, and the Spirit’s plan of salvation. Only through the preaching of the gospel can they be saved.

In 1901 at a Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, an assailant shot President William McKinley. He was taken to emergency surgery but the bullet that had slashed through his stomach and lodged in his back could not be found. He was moved to a private room and died a week later. Had surgeons been able to trace the path, locate and remove the bullet, he might have lived. It is interesting that on display at the Exposition was a revolutionary new device called an “x-ray” machine. Though the live-saving device was near, he died.

Wouldn’t you have liked to be able to walk into President McKinley’s room and tell him you knew how to save his life? Even so, preachers have the exciting privilege to tell men that there is a life-saving remedy — the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Preaching Convicts The Erring.

“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Those who were once enlightened and have left the Lord need to be rebuked of sin. Our efforts are not always warmly received. The story is told of Aleibiades, the brilliant but spoiled darling of Athens, who used to say to Socrates, “Socrates, I hate you, because every time I meet you, you make me see what I am.” The first essential to get one to repent is to compel a man to see himself as he is. Those who fall away need to be shown how serious a crime they are committing against Christ and how perilous is their immediate predicament. Gospel preaching is able to accomplish this.

Preaching Comforts The Faithful.

Paul used the gospel to answer the question of what happens to faithful Christians who have died before Christ comes the second time. Apparently the Thessalonians thought the faithful dead would not be included when Christ comes again. Paul pointed out that the dead in Christ would rise first, then those who are alive at his coming would be changed and together they would be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. He concluded his remarks with these words: "Therefore comfort one another with these words." Gospel preaching can help faithful Christians who lack confidence in the hope of their salvation.

Preaching Creates Faith In The Young.

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Psa. 119:9). By teaching God's word, we can help strengthen young people before they have to face life's hard side on their own.

Some parents make a mistake by insisting that their children do well in public (or private) school, but fail to demand (or even encourage) them to do well in Bible classes. Some fathers know their son's batting average and points per game, but never take time to learn what they're studying in Bible class. That sends a wrong message that intelligent children rarely miss. The father's training is the most important part of the early years and preachers have the great privilege of assisting parents in molding young minds.

Preaching Corrects Error.

The truth must be taught. One cannot teach truth without exposing error (Cf. Jude 3). We are known as much by what we condemn as what we endorse. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matt. 12:30). It is the

preacher's great privilege to help lead men from darkness to light.

Gospel preaching is certainly not a waste of time. We need to be busy sowing the seed of the kingdom, looking to God to give the increase. In that way we will be doing all the good that we can.

What Pleases The Lord?

by James W. Adams

We endeavor to please those whom we love. Professing to love Christ, we should strive to please him. Long ago the psalmist revealed how we might do this: "*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy*" (Psalms 147:11). The fear of God contemplates reverence and godliness. All true servants of the Lord have been characterized by deep respect, awe, or reverence for the Lord, his laws, and his institutions. Inspiration describes this attribute as "*the beginning of wisdom*" (Psalms 111:10). The person who "*hopes in God's mercy*" is one who recognizes that he is a condemned sinner, utterly dependent upon the mercy and the grace of God for salvation. He stands before God as one completely devoid of knowledge, absolutely dependent upon Divine wisdom for guidance. He will say, "*Speak Lord, thy servant heareth.*" These are the "Poor in Spirit" (Matthew 5:3).

**Turn your radio to KDRS 1490
AM each Sunday morning at
9:00 to hear *The Power
Of God Broadcast.***

(Continued from page 1)

else's mistakes. This is evident from the context. He said, "first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shall see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

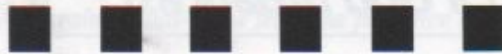
Often when one says, "I'm sincere; no one should judge me," he is really being insincere. He doesn't want one to point out his error because he does not want to change. To that person "sincerity" is only a word to hide behind.

What person who is really sincere, that is, truth-loving, does not want someone to point out the error of his way so that he can better serve God or live more righteously? Some need to admit to themselves that they are more loyal to tradition and self than to God and Christ. One cannot fool God today with his insincerity any more than the Pharisees could deceive Jesus with their insincerity when they honored God with their lips, but taught for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

Apollos was sincere when he taught the baptism of John. This is all that he knew at the time, and he was doing his best to live and preach it. He was willing, however, to be taught by Aquila and Priscilla and to conform to the new found truth (Acts 18:24-28).

Sincerity must be accompanied by truth. Truth proves and tries our sincerity. If we desire truth, accept it and live it, we are sincere. If we shun truth or reject it we are insincere. Desire truth, be obedient, be sincere.

*Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
Keeps his soul from troubles.
Proverbs 21:13*



Pause — Ponder — Profit is a monthly publication of the Second and Walnut Church Of Christ, Paragould, Arkansas.

Sunday		
Radio 1490 AM .	9:00 A.M.	
Bible Study	9:45 A.M.	
Worship.....	10:45 A.M.	
Worship.....	6:00 P.M.	
Wednesday		
Bible Study.....	7:00 P.M.	

Preacher: James A. Brown
Phone: 870-236-3371
www.paragoulchurchofchrist.com

**Second and Walnut
Church Of Christ**
400 N. 2nd St.
P. O. Box 356
Paragould, AR 72451

Non-profit Org.
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit # 356
Paragould, AR