

OakGrove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2022.11.06

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Sermon recordings

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Speaker-AM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Putting Self In The Proper Place

Recording:

tinyurl.com/steveself



Speaker-PM: Kraig Benney

Title: Becoming Examples

Recording:

tinyurl.com/kraigexample



“The wages that sin pays
are death, but God’s
gift is eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord.”

ROMANS 6:23

So, What's a Good Sermon? 11/5/2022 by Jefferson David Tant

Out of all the thousands of sermons preachers have delivered and to which people have listened, how would we determine which sermons are good, which are bad, or which are so-so? I would suppose that even preachers evaluate themselves from time to time, and on occasion might conclude, "Well, I'll never preach that sermon again!"

In answering the question, it would be good to go to the "Preacher's Manual," which we would agree would be God's Word. I doubt that any preacher would suppose that he could measure up to the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, but there are various Scriptures that do mention preaching that is connected to the apostles and others in the New Testament writings.

For some helpful advice, let's consider the words of one chosen by God to be a teacher, as he instructs a young preacher. Of course, we're writing about the apostle Paul and the young man Timothy.

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" ([II Timothy 4:1-2](#)).

Preach the Word

What is "the Word?" Obviously, it is the teaching of Jesus Christ. A good sermon is based on God's Word, not the opinions or doctrines of men. And if preachers are to "preach the Word," they need to spend some time studying and meditating on the Word. There may be various things that occupy a preacher's time and thoughts, but there must be a priority set on the matter of spending time with the Bible. Within it are the "words of life."

Oh, there may be times when a preacher says, "Let me give you my thoughts on that." But be sure that your thoughts are in agreement with what the passage says, rather than giving a different view.

Be Ready in Season and Out of Season

What does Paul mean by this? To preach in both summer and winter? Obviously, that's not what Paul meant, but it certainly would apply to preaching in good times and hard times. Yes, there are good times for preaching. The hearers are at peace with one another and there is harmony, and the audience/church is working together to further the Lord's work. But Satan is still at work in the world, and sometimes brethren are distracted by his devices, and there may be some difficulties the preacher faces. Some preachers don't want to get involved, and just ignore problems when they arise, hoping they will go away. But that's not how either Christ or Paul dealt with problems. They confronted them.

Reprove, Rebuke

These words are very similar in their meanings, and carry the idea of “to admonish, convict, convince.” I suppose this would not always be the most pleasant duty of a preacher, but if the body of Christ is to be whole and pure, it must be done. We certainly know that a medical doctor sometimes has to take measures to remove disease from our bodies. It may not always be pleasant for us, but we know that good health makes it necessary. Is the body of Christ, the church, any less important?

Some readers are familiar with the well-known denominational preacher in the United States named Joel O’Steen. In an interview on TV, he stated, “I don’t preach on sin. I want my people to feel good.” I guess that’s how he could build a church of some 40,000 members and become a millionaire.

The greatest preacher of all time, Jesus Christ, certainly did not hesitate to rebuke the Pharisees and others for their hypocrisy and sinful deeds in his preaching. And Paul did the same, even confronting a fellow apostle, Peter, for his bad behavior when he separated himself from the Gentiles in [Galatians 3:11-12](#).

And what is our attitude and behavior when we have to confront those who are in error? What should be the tone of our voice in this matter? Paul tells us in [Galatians 6:1](#): “*Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*”

I’m afraid that I know of too many situations where people may have been driven away by the harsh attitude of the preacher either in private or in public. How would we want others to deal with us if we have been in the wrong? Thus Paul said we should “look to ourselves.”

Exhort

This is an encouraging word, and Strong’s Greek Dictionary says: “parakaleo, par-ak-al-eh'-o -- to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation):--beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort(-ation), entreat, pray.”

I don’t think I need to add to that, as Strong gives a pretty good definition of what it means to “exhort.” And of course, this corresponds to what Paul said in [Galatians 6:1](#) about a “*spirit of gentleness.*”


With Great Patience

Just what does it mean to be “patient?” Would this not carry the idea that we are not to be quick to anger, not use harsh words, but rather to have a spirit of love and kindness when we seek to correct others, whether from the pulpit or in person?

Brethren, if we seek to apply Paul’s instructions to a young preacher to our own work, then obviously God’s Word will work its purpose, and the hearers of our sermons/lessons will be edified and strengthened and the church will grow.

The Psalmist closes the 107th Psalm with the following words: “*Whoso is wise will give heed to these things; And they will consider the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah*” ([Psalms 107:43](#))

And Paul’s words to the church in Rome also have an application to those who preach the gospel: “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor*” ([Romans 12:12](#)).



Quiet quitting. 10/29/22 By Nate Vick

This is something that has become widespread in China (maybe other places, too) and has started to spread to America. At least the idea has started to spread.

What is it? Well, it seems to be doing the bare minimum at your job to just barely get by.

If we take that at face value, we know as Christians that we should not be agreeable to this type of behavior.

Col 3:23 “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men”.

We just studied Colossians and talked about this idea in Bible class.

I think there’s a little more than meets the eye at first glance here, though.

I wish I’d saved the article that alluded to it, but it seems younger generations of workers are pushing back against extreme demands on their time by employers. I’m sure there are those who are just lazy or have other motives for not doing their best. But we shouldn’t assume all are doing it for the same reasons.

Employers in the 21st century keep expecting more and more from their employees without paying them for everything that they do, whether it’s working strange hours or not paying overtime because someone is salaried (like teachers).

There needs to be a balance between work and home, and rest needs to be included in there, too. People aren’t robots. We have relationships, feelings, and physical bodies to take care of. We have our health to maintain. We have our mental health to maintain, too. Working long or strange hours regularly or overtime without getting paid for it in any way hurts employees both physically and mentally. It hurts families, and we already have a problem in this country with the destruction of the God-designed nuclear family.

Employers need to be just and fair to their employees.

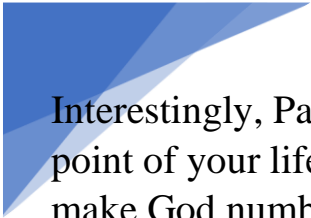
Col 4:1 “Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.”

Pushing people too far can lead them to get burnt out and push back in ways that maybe they shouldn’t, but still might not be entirely their fault.

Work is not everything. Where is God in our lives?

Is work our God? In America it seems that way sometimes. Do we give enough time to God?

I think most of us know that God gets far less time than He should in our lives. Work probably takes up a lot more time than almost everything else.



Interestingly, Paul gives the solution to this problem in Colossians. Make Christ the focal point of your life. He is preeminent (most important). Instead of work being number one, make God number one. Make family number two. Work should be number 3. This is hard in our culture today. There is a certain standard of living most of us want to enjoy. That costs a certain amount of money. What do we sacrifice to make the money required to pay for the standard of living we desire?

Ecclesiastes 2:17-24 “Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.”

Without the ability to enjoy the “fruits of our labors,” our work becomes a burden rather than something we can prosper from. This is why we need balance between work and family life, and time for rest. Otherwise, we get stressed out, burnt out, and can’t deal with the pressure at work. We take it out on friends or family or can’t show love to them. If we can’t get ourselves mentally or physically right, then we can’t be there for others. We can’t grow in our faith and do the Lord’s work.

Is it right to “quiet quit”? No. Is it right for employers to expect so much from employees that they can’t have families or have to neglect the family they do have? No. It is difficult to find an employer today that has reasonable expectations of its employees. We must do the best we can to balance our lives. We need to pray for God’s help and support one another in our efforts. As fellow Christians we owe that to one another.

Whether we’re an employer or employee, let’s try to act fairly and justly and treat one another as we would like to be treated. That would go a long way towards easing the problem.