

One Heart



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SPECIAL ISSUE! **20th Annual OKCSBS Lectures**

The Bold Church



This year's 20th Annual Lectureship held this Spring was a tremendous success. The theme centered on one, unique characteristic of the Lord's church: boldness. At a time when congregations are searching far and wide for a solution to falling numbers, doctrinal challenges, and changing times, we believe that recapturing the boldness and faith of the early church is a large part of the solution. Our character will determine our future more than all our pet projects.

For those that were unable to attend the lectureship, the lectures are now available in several formats. Audio recordings of each lecture can be found on the school website free of charge. Audio CD sets or individual lessons can be purchased by emailing a request to us. For

those that have already placed orders, we apologize for the delay and hope to have those produced soon. We have purchased new software that has a learning curve! For those who prefer the printed page, the lectureship book containing all the outlines from this year's series is also available for \$5 plus shipping and handling. None of these are profit making ventures. The price barely covers the cost.

Finally, we are printing this special issue of *One Heart Journal* to bring some of our lectures to our readers and supporters. They represent the kind of teaching and preaching we promote at OKCSBS. We hope that it is as beneficial to you as your support has been to OKCSBS.



The Bold Church Will Be Aggressive In Evangelism

By Benjamin J. Williams

Boldness is a characteristic that is un-daunted when outnumbered. “And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.” (Gen. 34:25) Boldness is a characteristic that is unimpressed by prestige and power. “Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.” (Mark 15:43) Boldness is a characteristic that is unfazed by circumstances. “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Eph. 6:19-20) Boldness is the result of righteous confidence, as opposed to presumption which is the result of pride. “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.” (Pro 28:1) “... Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.” (II Peter 2:10)

Tour of Acts

A group of twelve men were sent to the entire Jewish world, a world led by the same people who crucified their Lord, Acts 1:8. Just before they were sent to the Gentile world, God added one more to their number (I Cor. 15:8; Gal. 2:9). The plan itself is bold, and it required the same boldness on the part of the Apostles. Consequently, this set the standard of boldness as the local churches took the gospel to their communities and supported evangelism abroad.

We can learn several lessons as the Gospel is taken to the Jews in early part of Acts. First, boldness will help the gospel spread, not deter it. “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13) The fear that boldness will offend the community and detract from the gospel message is a false fear. True boldness is part of the system for New Testament style evangelism. Without

it, New Testament evangelism fails utterly. Second, boldness ought to be desired, not despised. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word ... And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:29, 31) Many criticize Peter as being too bold. The Bible makes no such criticism. He was sometimes foolish, but never too bold! Boldness is not a euphemism or synonym for naiveté or radicalism. It ought to be a desired quality among us. Third, boldness is an identifying mark of a Christian, “But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. ... And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.” (Act 9:27, 29) Could Barnabas introduce any preacher living today in this fashion? Where would he have to look to find boldness? If boldness is a mark of a Christian, we should ask what our timid behavior indicates about us!

As the Gospel spreads to the Gentile world, we can learn even more of the meaning of boldness. First, boldness preaches whether anyone likes it or not. “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46) In the face of opposition, boldness presses on! Note, however, that even the bold will eventually turn to a more receptive audience. Second, boldness sees opportunity in adversity. “And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” (Acts

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14:1-3) The term “therefore” indicates that the malicious behavior of the Jews only made the bold stay longer in their work. How long would we have tarried in Iconium? How long do we struggle to right an erring brother or congregation? Third, Apollos (though somewhat in error) found boldness in preaching the baptism of John. “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” (Act 18:26) Under what commission did he preach? He was acting under the example of boldness set by John. Fourth, Paul’s boldness included disputing. “And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.” (Act 19:8) Disputing error is not a lack of love, but rather is the result of love mixed with boldness. If we disputed a little more, maybe we would have less error in the first place!

Themes of Acts

In Acts, we also we several overwhelming themes related to evangelism and boldness. First, evangelism was performed at great personal cost. Christians paid for their boldness in blood. “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” (Acts 12:1-2) Prison was not uncommon. Paul saw an opportunity in his bonds to encourage others. “And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” (Php. 1:14) Boldness can be our standard in life and death. “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.” (Php. 1:20) Boldness conquers fear. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 13:6)

Second, personal loss was a personal privilege. If our boldness provokes persecution, we should be glad that we are doing something right! “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” (Acts 5:41) It is an honor to suffer as Christ

suffered. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.” (I Peter 4:12-14) When did we last rejoice at suffering? When were we last bold enough to suffer for it?

Translation of Acts: Boldness At Work In Today's Church

When we apply these principles to modern circumstances, we can see some obvious conclusions. First, boldness will not dilute the gospel with secularism. Our cowardice and disbelief pressure us to win people’s affections with worldly activities while we hide the Gospel. Secularism is a deceit that cloaks the gospel. “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:1-4) Such deceit pleases the “god of this world.” Anything that pleases Satan cannot be called “bold evangelism.” Boldness will utilize spiritual activities to promote growth even though that flies in the face of common thought. Boldness will accept spiritual growth as defined by the New Testament, even if it is not the kind of growth that many would like.

Second, boldness will try new ideas that conform to the New Testament pattern. One method of common Old Testament growth was simply to replace Jehovah with something more popular. Likewise, we see many today ignoring His pattern in an attempt to grow. Instrumental music used during worship is merely a golden calf designed to appease rather than convert. Like Moses, we should overthrow such idols and keep the pattern that has been shown to us (Heb.

8:5). Instead we should turn to methods that conform to the pattern set forth in the New Testament. More methods remain untested than those that we have tried so far! We can produce sermons on CD and DVD. They are permanent and can be passed along for little cost to lots of people. **WARNING:** They must be passed on to be affective, not kept! Many congregations have made the switch to a "Friends & Family Day" as opposed to a "Gospel Meeting." Just by changing the title, we open the exact same event up to an audience that might otherwise have avoided it! Some are hosting community Bible studies. They host a one-time Bible study outside of normal "church event" times and discuss a spiritual subject of importance to the community such as: marriage, raising children, etc. All of these should be considered as they are simply new methods for doing the same New Testament work.

Third, boldness will not accept failure as the *status quos*. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:

for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16 The failure in a local congregation is not in the tool, but in the workman. Only a slothful workman would blame a tool as perfect as the Bible. The workman should try harder! "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15)

Conclusion

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Pro. 28:1) The flight of the church away from simple Bible teaching says more about our character than our "changing times." The problem is not the changing times. The problem is that we are a changing people. We must reexamine our character, return to God's word, and replace timidity with boldness.



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The Bold Church Will Have Strong Bible Teaching

by Marion R. Fox



There is a necessity of being bold in our preaching, but neither arrogant nor mean-spirited. There are three aspects of boldly preaching strong Bible teaching. These three aspects relate to the teacher/preacher, the doctrine being taught, and the disciple.

DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

How are the Greek words defined? *parresia* (translated boldly) is defined: “[*pan* and *hresis* ...] **1.** *freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech ... 2.* *free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance*” [Thayer, p. 491] This word is found 31 times in the N. T.

The next word is: *parresiazomai* it is defined: “[*parresia*, q. v.] ... *to bear one’s self boldly or confidently; 1.* *to use freedom in speaking, be free-spoken; to speak freely ... 2.* *to grow confident, have boldness, show assurance, assume a bold bearing*” [Thayer, p. 491] This word is found 9 times in the N. T.

We can learn from how these words are translated in other passages. The word *parresai* is translated: openly, plainly, freely, confidence, and boldly (boldness) in the KJV. The word *parresiazomai* is translated: preached boldly, boldly, waxed bold, and freely in the KJV.

THE ASPECTS OF BOLDNESS

The first aspect is the boldness of the teacher/preacher. We must teach/preach the truth openly and plainly without fear of those who oppose the truth. It is useful to know the answer to the question: “What makes a teacher/preacher bold?” First, The apostles spoke with boldness because of their faith (Acts 4:13, 29, and 31), Second, Hope caused Paul to be bold (2 Cor. 3:12, Phil. 1:20, etc.), and Third, Service to God makes one bold (1 Tim. 3:13).

The second aspect is the strength of the teaching. If we know that our doctrine (teaching) is sound (*hygiaino* “*to be sound, to be well, to be in good health*” [Thayer, p. 634] Our English word “hygiene” is derived from this word.), we can be confident (bold) in the proclamation of the doctrine. We also know there is a pattern of

sound words (2 Tim. 1:13) that God wants us to teach. We know that sound doctrine entails such things as living correctly (Tit. 2:1-ff).

We know that some will not endure sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3). There will be people that want other doctrines to be taught (1 Tim. 1:10). Since there are various reasons why one would not want sound doctrine taught, this leads us to the third major aspect of this study (the nature of the disciple).

The third aspect of boldness is the character of the disciple (one being taught). Strong Bible teaching must be preceded by teaching that moulds the character of the disciple. The disciple will not accept the strong teaching unless his character is prepared to receive strong teaching. We will include a commentary on Heb. 5:11-14 to set forth this third aspect.

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 5:11-14

Paul sets forth a contrast of the weak (babes in Christ) with the strong (mature in Christ) resulting in the kind of teaching they could endure (Heb. 5:11-14).

Heb. 5:11 (ASV) Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing.

Of whom (This pronoun almost certainly refers to Jesus.) **we have many things** (“prop. *a collecting, collection*, [see *λεγω*], - and that, as well of those things which are put together in thought, as of those which, having been thought i. e. gathered together in the mind, are expressed in words. Accordingly, a twofold use of the term is to be distinguished: one which relates to speaking, and one which relates to thinking.” [Thayer, p. 380]) **to say** (*legein* - pres. act. infin. of *lego* “**1.** *to collect, gather; to pick out. 2.* *to lay with, count with; to enumerate, recount, narrate, describe ... to speak.*” [Thayer, p. 373]), **and hard of interpretation**, (“*hard to interpret, difficult of explanation ...*” [Thayer, p. 160] “difficult to be explained, hard to understand.” [Bagster, p. 109] *dus* “an inseparable prefix conveying the idea of difficulty, opposition, injuriousness or the like, and corresponding to our *mis-*, *un-* opposed to *eu.*” [Thayer, p. 160] This word is only

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found here in the N. T.) **seeing** (This gives the reason for Paul's doctrine being hard of interpretation.) **ye are become dull** ("[i. q. *nōthes*, fr. *ne* {cf. *nepios*} and *otheo* {to push; al. *othomai* to care about ...} ... fr. *ne* and *odune*, *onoma*], *slow*, *sluggish*, *indolent*, *dull*, *languid*" [Thayer, p. 431] "*sluggish*, descriptive of constitutional qualities and suggestive of censure" [Thayer, p. 72] "*Nōthros* refers to a deeper and more inborn sluggishness [bound up in the person's very life] ... the very constitution of *nōthros* makes him unfit for activities of the mind or spirit. ... Delitzsch defined *nōthros* as 'difficult to set in motion, sluggish, indolent, dull, feeble, idle.' ... In its earlier form, *nōthreia* was a common word for an ass." [Trench, p. 406] This word is only found in Heb. 5:11 and 6:12 [in the N. T.]; in Pro. 22:29 [LXX], and Ecclus. 4:34 and 11:13 [in the Apocrypha].) **of hearing.** ("1. *hearing*, by which one perceives sounds; *sense of hearing* ... 2. *the organ of hearing, the ear* ... 3. *thing heard*; **a.** *instruction*, namely oral; spec. *the preaching of the gospel* ... **b.** *hear-say, report, rumor* ..." [Thayer, p. 22] Note that this is a noun, not a verbal.)

Their dullness of hearing may be linked to the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 6:9-10). Jesus applied this passage to the Jews (Mt. 13:14-15). Note that they closed their own eyes to the truth, because their heart was "waxed gross" (vs. 15 —*pachuno* "[fr. *pachus* {thick, stout}; ...]; *to make thick; to make fat, fatten* ... Metaph. *to make stupid [to render the soul dull or callous]* ..." [Thayer, p. 497]). There are consequences in believing the truth (we must repent and convert) and some people do not want to change their lives. Repeated violation of one's conscience will cause the heart to become calloused (insensitive to the Word of God). Paul applied this passage to the Jews who rejected his preaching (Acts 28:25-27). In addition to these things (above), they had closed their eyes to the truth because they did not want to obey it. One must: "... will to do his will ..." (Jn. 7:17) in order to know the truth.

Heb. 5:12 (ASV) For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food.

For when by reason of ("With the accusative case: [a] *because of* ... [b] *For the sake of, for*" [D & M, pp. 101-102]) **the time** (*chronos* "time" [Thayer, p. 673] "*Chronos* is simply time as such or the succession of moments." [Trench, p. 221]) **ye ought** ("fr. Hom. down; *to owe*; **a.** prop. *to owe money, be in debt for*" [Thayer, p. 469]) **to be teachers**, ("*a teacher* ... of one who is fitted to teach, or thinks himself so" [Thayer, p. 144] This shows that time is required to be qualified as a teacher. It is necessary for teachers to know the truth to be qualified as a teacher. It is necessary for a teacher to be "apt to teach" (2 Tim. 2:2). It is also necessary for a teacher to have certain spiritual qualities in order to be a good teacher [2 Tim. 2:24-26.]) **ye have need** (If we are not mature, it is our business to learn the word of God.) **again that some one teach** (*tou didaskein* - pres. act. infin. of *didaskō* "...to teach; 1. absol. **a.** *to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses* ... **b.** *to be a teacher* ... **c.** *to discharge the office of teacher, conduct one's self as a teacher*" [Thayer, p. 144] "The articular infinitive singles out the act as a particular occurrence ..." [D & M, p. 138]) **you** (This refers to the ones who were dull of hearing.) **the rudiments** ("fr. *stoichos* a row, rank, series; hence prop. that which belongs to any στοιχος ... *any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise; an element, first principle.*" [Thayer, p. 588] We would say something like: "You need to learn the a, b, c's of this subject.") **of the first principles** ("1. *beginning, origin* ... 2. *the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader* ... 3. *that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause* ... 4. *the extremity of a thing* 5. *the first place, principality, rule, magistracy.*" [Thayer, pp. 76-77] This is the word for the beginning of something or someone.) **of the oracles** ("[dimin. of *logos* ... prop. *a little word* ... *a brief utterance*, in prof. auth. a divine *oracle* [doubtless because oracles were generally brief]; ... In the N. T. spoken of *the words or utterances of God* ..." [Thayer, p. 379] This Greek word is used of the high priest's breastplate in the Septuagint [Ex. 28:15, 29:5, Num. 27:21, etc.]. [God communicated through this breastplate {1 Sam. 28:6 etc.}] This Greek word is also used to refer to the Law of Moses [Acts 7:38 etc.]) **of God; and are become such as have need of milk**, ("*milk* ... Metaph. of *the less difficult truths* of the Christian relig-

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ion” [Thayer, p. 108]) **and not of solid** (*“firm, compact, hard, rigid.”* [Thayer, p. 587]) **food.** (*“food, nourishment ...”* [Thayer, p. 631] The solid food in this context is a fuller understanding of the types and antitypes of the Old and New Testaments [e.g. the Melchizedek priesthood etc.]. Some Jewish Christians were leaving the church to return to Judiasm.)

Heb. 5:13 (ASV) For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

For every one that partaketh of milk (In this context it refers to an understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures and how they relate to the New Testament.) **is** (This word should be in italics – cf. the KJV.) **without experience** (*“[peira trail, experience], inexperienced in, without experience of ...”* [Thayer, p. 56] This word is only found here in the N. T. Christianity is a religion that must be put to practice.) **of the word of righteousness;** (*“the virtue or quality or state of one who is dikaios; 1. in the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be.”* [Thayer, p. 149]) **for he is a babe.** (*“fr. nh, an insep. neg. prefix ... and epos ... an infant, little child ... a minor, not of age.”* [Thayer, p. 425] From this passage we see that a teacher must have experience in the word of righteousness in order to be qualified to teach. Christianity is a teaching religion, but the teaching is to be done by practitioners of Christ’s word of righteousness. James reveals that a teacher must be able to control his tongue [Jas. 3:1-ff.]

Heb. 5:14 (ASV) But solid food is for fullgrown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

But solid food for fullgrown men, (*“brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect.”* [Thayer p. 618]) **even those who by reason** (*“With the accusative case: [a] because of ... [b] For the sake of, for”* [D & M, pp. 101-102]) **of use** (*“[echō, ...] a habit, whether of body or of mind ... a power acquired by custom, practice, use ...”* [Thayer, p. 224] This word is only found here in the N. T.) **have their senses** (*“an organ of perception, external sense ... faculty of*

the mind for perceiving, understanding, judging” [Thayer, p. 17] This word is found in the Septuagint in Jer. 4:18.) **exercised** (*“to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind ...”* [Thayer, page 122] This perfect tense participle is probably in the middle voice indicating that they were to exercise their own minds. The perfect tense indicates that they were to have lingering results of past action.) **to discern** (*“[diakrinō], a distinguishing, discerning, judging”* [Thayer, p. 139]) **good** (*“prob. primarily ‘sound,’ ‘hale,’ ‘whole;’ ... beautiful, applied by the Greeks to everything so the good deposit in form, excellence, goodness, usefulness, as to be pleasing.”* [Thayer, p. 322] “referred to beauty, especially from the Greek viewpoint of that which is harmonious and complete, of something in which all the parts are balanced and proportionate.” [Trench, p. 413]) **and evil.** (*“univ. of a bad nature; not such as it ought to be. ... morally, i. e. of a mode of thinking, feeling, acting; base, wrong, wicked”* [Thayer, p. 320] “*Kakos* is constantly used in antithesis to *agathos* and less frequently as the antithesis of *kalos*. *Kakos* describes something that lacks the qualities and conditions that would make it worthy of its name. *Kakos* was first used in a physical sense. Thus the *kaka heimata* are ‘mean or tattered garments.’” [Trench, p. 329] Spiritual maturity enables one to discern between what is good (has all of its parts in the right proportions) and what is evil [something that is unworthy of its name]. The Judiazers’ brand [interpretation] of the Law of Moses was twisted and unworthy of the name: “Law of God” because the Law of Moses pointed to its own end or consummation [Deut. 18:15-19]. There are a number of arguments in the book of Hebrews that demonstrate that the Law of Moses pointed to the New Testament. In addition, there are a number of arguments in the remainder of the New Testament.)

SUMMARY

Teacher/preachers of the word of God need to be bold while teaching sound doctrine to disciples who have matured in order to be able to endure sound doctrine. If one knows God and the word of God, he will be able to mould the disciples (by the will of God) to accept the teaching/preaching of the truth. This will lead to spiritual maturity and to numeric growth of the Lord’s church.



The Bold Church Will Work Now, and Rest in Heaven

by Frank R. Williams

Whatever the subject, Jesus Christ is always the perfect example. All we have to do is find the teaching, the event, in the life of Jesus and have a willing mind to follow the intended lesson. With this in mind, let me ask, “Where did speak and what did Jesus do that relates to our subject: work now and rest in heaven?”

The event that brings about the words wherein Jesus addressed the subject before us is that of the healing of the man born blind in John chapter 9. The location is of question by commentators but has no importance attached to it. The event took place on a sabbath day (John 9:14). It was just before the healing took place that Jesus uttered the words which address the subject of this article. He said: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” This verse reveals the nature and the mission of God incarnate. John wrote of Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1,14). While he was “God with us,” he addressed both parts of our subject. First, he spoke of working now: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it day.” Second, he spoke of a time of rest in these words: “the night cometh, when no man can work.” In Jesus’ words we have a perfect understanding of our subject

ORIGINATOR AND TRANSMITER

Looking at the word “work” as Jesus used it is first in order. He said: “I must work.” The Greek word (eragomai) is a verb and means: to work, labour, and to do work (Thayer); therefore, Jesus is saying he must be laboring in the “works of him that sent” him. While the word, “works,” (the Greek, ergon) is a noun and means: business, employment, that which any one is occupied – that which one undertakes to do, enterprise, undertaking (Thayer). This takes our minds to the event in Jesus’ life at the age of twelve, when he was left behind in Jerusalem. He said to his mother and Joseph: “...How is it that ye sought me?

wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business” (Luke 2:49). The phrase, “my Father’s business” is an interesting one. It refers to the male ancestor and metaphorically, it means: “the originator and transmitter of anything.” Now, notice with me to whom these “words” belong in our text: “the works of him that sent me.” This is a most important point in understanding the text and what Jesus said. This is not the only time Jesus addressed the subject. When he had not eaten for sometime and the disciples questioned him about it; he said: “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Then, when praying to his Father just before his death, he said: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). You will notice that in these two verses, Jesus used the word, “work” in the singular; thus, the totality of all that his Father had sent him to do. Therefore, there was a body of work – singular – and within this body of work there was a number of works, all coming from the Father, as the originator and the transmitter.

It is easy to see that the “works” in our text refers to the many works within the one body of work which originated and was transmitted to Jesus by God, the Father. There are a few other points that need our attention when Jesus said: “I must work.” The word “must” (the Greek, dei) means: it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper and necessity lying in the nature of the case (Thayer). The work is right and proper, it is of necessity, because of the nature of the case; the works originated and were transmitted by God. Therefore, Jesus the perfect example in how we must understand the works which originate and are transmitted by God – they must be done as they have the authority of God!

CREATED TO WORK

The beautiful text: “For by grace are ye saved through the faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). It is nec-

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essary that we first notice a few words in verse eight, before moving forward. When Paul wrote: “and that not of yourselves,” the word “that” points back to the word “saved.” We also need to point out that in the Greek text, there is a definite article, “the” before the word “faith;” thus, the text reads: “For by grace are ye saved through the faith.” The word “faith” does not refer to one’s personal faith, but to “the faith once for all time delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). This helps us understand that our salvation is not of ourselves, but it came by means of God’s grace – his favor – and God’s revelation of “the faith” which is God’s power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). It is easy to see why Paul then affirmed this great truth – “it” – our salvation – “is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Our salvation, the means by which we are saved, is totally a gift of God and the motivation is God’s love: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). It is “not of works, lest any man should boast;” there is no room for one word of boasting on our part. In working out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12), taking advantage of God’s gift, we must remember: “... when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants” (Luke 17:10). It must be kept in mind when it comes to our personal salvation, it starts with us, as Peter said: “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40), and it is continued and maintained by our working “out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12) according to the terms of God. It yet remains that the means of our salvation, grace and the faith, are not of our works of merit.

Now, turning our attention to Ephesians 2:10, notice that it starts with the word, “For,” – that is based upon the above truth – “we are his workmanship” – it is not of man, for we were “created in Christ Jesus.” The “workmanship” takes places as we yield to the gospel of Christ — the faith once delivered! As the words of that beautiful song says: “We are the clay, thou art the Potter.” So, what is required of us? First, an open Bible to know the will of God; second, an honest heart to believe the will of God; and third, a humble spirit to obey the will of God; without these a child of God will never be produced. It is here that we must note that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” The “good works”

are laid out in the scripture: “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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There we have it, the “good works” for which we were “created in Christ Jesus” are the “good works” of which God has completely, thoroughly furnished us. We need no human institutions; the New Testament completely reveals the “good works” – for which we were “created in Christ Jesus” and he authorized the church to do them. It is within the church that God is glorified: “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3:21). Let no human institution take the glory that belongs to God. It is his work!

In the eternal mind of God, he prepared a plan, then, he revealed that plan: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed into the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). The “image of his Son” equals the “divine nature:” Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). Being made into the “image” of Christ, having become “partakers of the divine nature,” having been “created in Christ Jesus,” we are prepared; we are ready to fulfill our mission as the “workmanship” of God. Just as the young Jesus said: “I must be about my Father’s business,” so must we! We must do it with the same understanding as Jesus: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: for the night cometh, when no man can work.” We must work now! We must work the works of God; for we have but so much time in which to work: “for night cometh, when no man can work.”

REST IN HEAVEN

The last part of Jesus’ words come to the forefront: “the night cometh, when no man can work.” This naturally brings us to the subject of heaven. Space will not allow a treatment of the Hadean world where the departed spirit goes when separated from the body, as the body is laid in the grave to wait for the resurrection, wherein the body is once more

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joined with the spirit and the spiritual, heavenly, immortal, body comes forth (I Cor.15:44, 48) and meets “the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). For many years I have told brethren, if you really want to hear a good lesson on heaven, you need to hear an older preacher speak on heaven.” At the age of sixty-eight, I am not old but old enough, that now, I can preach on heaven regarding the nearness of it. Well do I remember the old beloved preacher, as he walked across the podium, he would look up in the direction of heaven and it appeared as if he were looking into heaven itself; so real was heaven to him and so must it be to us. The writer of Hebrews put it this way: “There remaineth therefore a rest, to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” (Heb. 4:9)

CONCLUSION

Finally, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1). The work is not complete, as it relates to us, until the body is laid in the grave. At which time we shall say: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:55-57). Finally, from my heart to yours: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

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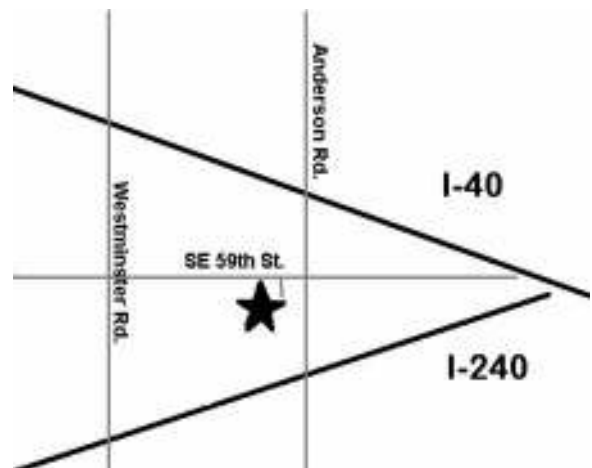
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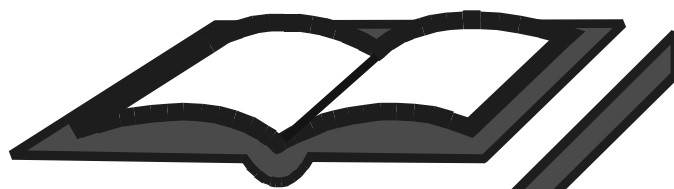
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2nd Hour 8:30-9:15 PM	Fundamentals of the Faith <i>TBA</i>	2nd Hour 8:30-9:15 PM	Minor Prophets 1 <i>Marion R. Fox</i>

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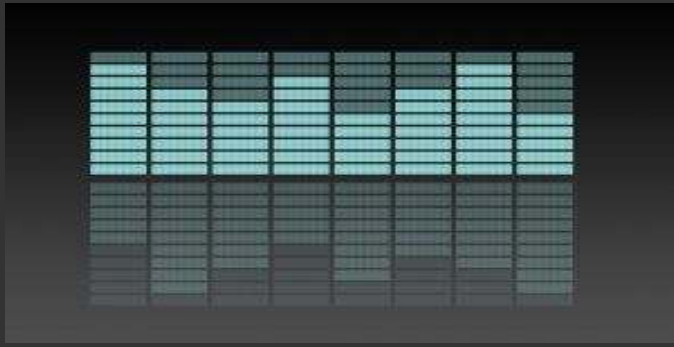
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