



# The Abiding Truth

PUBLISHED BY SOUTH END CHURCH OF CHRIST      EDITOR: AARON ERHARDT      October 2004

## Needful Preaching

The life of Paul stands as a blueprint for gospel preachers. He not only wrote that we are to “preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,” he lived it everyday! Paul set the example for those who do the work of an evangelist. Therefore, I would like for us to observe one important lesson from the preaching of Paul.

While in custody at Caesarea, Paul was visited by Felix, the procurator of Judea, and his wife Drusilla. The Bible says, “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:24-25). Felix was a very powerful person. He had the authority to release Paul or to have him executed. Yet Paul preached a sermon to the procurator that was “terrifying” (ASV).

Now why did Paul preach on righteousness, temperance (or self-control), and judgment to come? Have you ever thought about it? What was he thinking? Let me tell you why he did it.

Paul preached on those things because they were exactly what Felix needed to hear. According to Josephus, a Jewish historian, Felix had no right to Drusilla. They were living in an adulterous relationship. He records, “While Felix was procurator of Judea, he saw Drusilla, and fell in love with her; for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty, and he sent to her a person whose name was Simon, one of his friends; a Jew he was, and by birth a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician; and he endeavored to persuade her to forsake her present husband, and marry him; and promised, that if she would not refuse him, he would make her a happy woman” (*The Works of Josephus*, pp. 533, 534). Paul preached what was NEEDED!

When Paul traveled to Athens and other cities filled with idolatry he preached on the one true living God. Were they ear tickling sermons? No. Did his messages win him any popularity contests? Absolutely not. In fact, the craftsmen at Ephesus, who made their livelihood in idolatry, enraged the community to riot against Paul (Acts 19:23-41). Yet he never wavered in his preaching because it was what they needed to hear!

Continued on page 3, column 1

# Without A Doubt

Christians always seem to be on the defensive. "Why doesn't your church have a piano or an organ?" "Why does your church take communion every Sunday?" "I know you're a Christian, but what kind?" "You mean your church doesn't have fund raising sales?" "While being baptized, you have to be dunked?" These and other statements have been uttered countless times, and they probably always will be. As members of the body of Christ, we are made to feel that our position is on trial, that we must "explain" what we believe. We are the "odd balls" who appear weird and strange with our "funny" beliefs. While it is true that we must prepare to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15), it is not true that we must feel like we are the religious freaks of the day. Actually and factually, the reverse is true. Relax, Christians are the only ones who truly contend for views that no one denies. Our position is unassailable. No one doubts that what we do is right.

For example, consider...

(1) *Immersion.* Ask a Catholic priest, a Methodist minister, or a Presbyterian preacher if it is wrong to immerse adult believers. He will agree it is not sinful to do so. You see, there are discussions about sprinkling infants, but no one says that immersion is a sin.

(2) *Singing.* Ask a Baptist preacher or a Pentecostal pastor if it is a sin for a congregation to come together and sing. He will admit it is not wrong to do so. Even those in the Christian Church will not say that congregational singing is contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

(3) *Weekly Lord's Supper.* Do you know a denominational preacher who will argue that it is a sin for disciples to break bread upon the first day of the week? Most, of course, do not do it, but they do not believe it is sinful to do so.

(4) *Weekly Giving.* It is for certain that no preacher will say it is a sin to give of your means upon the first day of every week! Do you know of a church that teaches that a weekly collection is against the doctrine of Christ? Me neither.

(5) *Christian.* Is there an Episcopalian or Lutheran anywhere who would argue that it is wrong for a child of God to be referred to as a Christian? Many sectarian names are dearly held by their devotees, but no one says that being called a Christian is wrong.

The points that Christians are most often questioned about really are not items of dispute. So, my brother, do not feel like you are a persecuted soul who is always on the defensive. Everyone believes that adult believers may be immersed, congregations may sing, take communion and give of their means each Lord's day, and one may wear the name Christian. Your position is not debatable. Now, if they want to do something else, that is their problem. They must defend their (unscriptural) doctrine. They are on the defensive. The ball is in their court. The proverbial monkey is not on your back; it is on theirs. You relax.

Larry Hafley

**Request the Bible Talk Booklet!**

Continued from page 1...

Can you imagine standing before former President Bill Clinton with an opportunity to preach the gospel? What would you say? Would you seek to impress the President? Would you avoid all issues of controversy? Think about it. Would you have the courage to speak on needful things (i.e., abortion, fornication, adultery, lying, homosexuality, the necessity of baptism, the one true church) to the President? I think it is safe to say Paul would.

We need men in the pulpit today who will call sin "sin." We need preachers who will preach against abortion, homosexuality, immodesty, drunkenness, and denominationalism. We need preachers with the courage and conviction to oppose even brethren who "bring in damnable heresies" and "overthrow the faith of some." Just because a man has been baptized in water and calls himself a gospel preacher does not give him a "license to mislead." We need preachers who will oppose such men.

We need men who will preach on the one true church. Too many among us act as if they are ashamed of the church and its distinctive nature. They say we need to "preach more Christ, and less church." How can that be done? How can you preach the groom and not the bride? How can you preach the king and not the kingdom? How can you preach the foundation and not the house? How can you preach the savior and not the saved? How can you preach the head and not the body? Such is an impossible task. The church is "the fullness of him" (Eph. 1:23). We need preachers who will speak out and tell folks about the one true church of our Lord.

This is not to say that preachers

should be rude or impolite. Such behavior is counterproductive to the cause of Christ. We are told to "preach the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). However, there is no excuse for preachers to avoid issues of importance just because it might offend or upset someone in the pew. Tell them what they NEED to hear!

Sadly, many preachers nowadays deliver sermons that are strictly positive in nature. They are men-pleasers who seek to "dazzle" the congregation with entertaining presentations rather than to convict the sinner of his sins. Such dazzling performances was not the concern of Paul (2 Cor. 4:5). He did not fill his lessons with irrelevant stories and pointless anecdotes intended to impress the audience. He was interested only in preaching the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ. Would Paul's bold preaching be welcomed where you worship?

### *Free Tracts*

Bible Baptism  
Falling From Grace  
Is Hell Real?  
Calvinism  
The First Church  
Homosexuality  
Unsaved Believers  
The church of Christ  
CALL (502) 363-0557

**COME  
WORSHIP  
WITH US  
SUNDAY  
9:30AM & 5PM**

## Aaron's Notes

The Hebrews were called "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1). There can be no doubt that the writer of the book was in fellowship with these Christians. Yet we see that there are many horrific things they could do. For instance, they could depart from the living God (3:12), be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (3:13), come short of the promise (4:1), fall after the example of unbelief (4:11), count the blood of the covenant unholy (10:29), cast away their confidence (10:35), fail of the grace of God (12:15), refuse him that speaks from heaven (12:25), and be carried about with divers and strange doctrines (13:9). This proves that a child of God can fall from grace.

We all agree that faith is very important. The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). We are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). Yet from Paul's first letter to Timothy we see that there are many horrific things a child of God can do with his faith. For instance, he can have his faith shipwrecked (1:19), depart from the faith (4:1), deny the faith (5:8), cast off the faith (5:12), and err concerning the faith (6:21). This proves that a child of God can fall from grace.

The New Testament is filled with examples of people who fell away. Hymeneus, Alexander, Philetus, and Demas are all identified as truth-forsakers. What about Ananias and Sapphira? They were members of the church who were struck dead for lying to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:1-10). Surely no one believes they were still saved!

**South End  
Television  
Program  
Wednesday  
1:30 p.m.  
PAX 21**

**NEW TRACT!!!**  
Can A Child of God  
Fall From Grace?  
Call (502) 363-0557

**COME VISIT US  
AT THE SOUTH END  
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Mailing Address:  
4001 Taylor Blvd.,  
Louisville, KY 40215