

Preaching the Gospel of Christ

H.E. Phillips

I am a preacher of the gospel. I do not expect scriptural preaching to produce any lucrative rewards of monetary consideration. However, I have been amply rewarded in necessary substance, and I thank God for that. In recent years some preachers and their preaching have been very disappointing to the cause of Christ. Weak, shallow preaching with a compromising sound, and immoral, ungodly lives is a hindrance to gospel preaching. The envy, strife and jealousy among preachers greatly add to the problems. Much of today's preaching is adorned in commercial robes rather than with the salvation of souls.

There is no question about it; preaching the gospel of Christ is the greatest and most rewarding work on earth. Salvation of lost souls and the strength of the church is the incomparable reward of faithful preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Young men who aspire to spend their lives preaching the gospel of Christ have my greatest admiration and interest. Whatever is right and within my power to do, I am ready to encourage and help them toward this work of preaching the gospel. Upon occasions the best help given to young preachers is to caution them about the pitfalls they face in the life of a preacher, both as to attitude and to conduct.

The Theme of Preaching

It is amazing to observe the various topics proclaimed as the gospel, and the manner of preaching that is being done in the "name of Christ." Much of the preaching of today is designed to exalt and honor the preacher rather than Christ. It has become popular for preachers to appeal to social interests and the praise of men. That is the reason so much is said about those things that "tickle the ears" of the hearers. Special interests occupy the first place in the assemblies. Special appeals are made for money and "big operations." Special honor is paid to certain fathers and mothers, special days, special events, great projects, personal programs, etc., and just enough attention is given to Christ and his word to try to veneer it as "gospel preaching." In some cases more time is given to self-praise in what has been done than in telling what men and women ought to do to honor Christ.

What Should Men Preach?

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the **word**. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached **Christ** unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:4-6). "And when they believed Philip preaching **the things concerning the kingdom of God**, and the **name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

Gospel preaching must include the life, death, resurrection and authority of Jesus Christ. The only foundation upon which one can successfully build is the preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. No other foundation can be laid but the preaching of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). This foundation

is the preaching done by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:29). When Philip preached to the eunuch he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). When he preached to those in the city of Samaria, he preached Christ unto them. In preaching Christ, Philip not only told them Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, but he also preached about his kingdom: the kingdom of God. Gospel preaching, therefore, involves preaching about the kingdom promised by the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled in the days when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and empowered the apostles to speak the wisdom of Christ to the world. This kingdom is the church of Christ. Preaching Christ must include the church over which he is the head.

Many **theories** and **plans** have been preached concerning the nature, worship, work and organization of the church, all of which have contributed to the terrible state of denominationalism of the present day. The greed and sensual desires, with the material hopes of men, have been expressed in the creeds, written and unwritten, that are the common topics of much preaching today. Premillennialism has been preached as "gospel preaching" concerning the kingdom of God, but this doctrine is unscriptural and anti scriptural. Much of the preaching of the kingdom of God today is characterized by a false concept of the nature of the church. It has become more a social order and commercial business than the spiritual body of Christ. To preach Christ we must preach the "things concerning the kingdom of God" - the church of Christ; this involves its true mission, nature, organization, worship and discipline.

Preaching the Name of Christ

Furthermore, preaching Christ means to preach the "name of Jesus Christ." This name is all important because it is the only name given by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12). We are to do all that we do "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and this includes word and deed (Col. 3:17). One cannot escape the authority of Christ when he preaches Christ as Lord and King.

The name of Christ involves the authority of Christ. All authority has been given to him, and when one does not respect his authority in all matters regarding the church and manner of life, he is a worker of iniquity. This authority demands that the gospel in its purity be preached to all men. It requires the believer to repent and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). The authority of Christ demands faithful obedience throughout life. When any preacher presumes to announce conditions and terms of service to God that are not taught by the authority of Christ, that preacher is not preaching Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Perhaps the most serious consequences of failing to preach "the name" of Christ is appearing in the church today in the form of denominationalism and materialism. The church is made little more than a money supplying agent for the many human projects invented without the authority of Christ. We can expect nothing better unless and until we really preach Christ and his authority. The nature of the kingdom prohibits the kind of work being done in many areas throughout the world.

Paul instructed Timothy in his work of preaching Christ. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Preaching Christ requires straight and plain preaching that sometimes carries rebuke of error. Only the gospel of Christ will save the lost.

Credit H.E. Phillips and HEPhillips.org
Preacher of the Word (Vol. 1, January 15, 1996, #3)
For copyright information see www.HEPhillips.org/copyright.