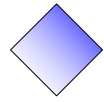


# The Voice of Truth



December 29, 2013

## "What is Your Life?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

*"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:13-17).*

What are your dreams, plans and goals for the future? Too many people place emphasis in all the wrong places when they think about the future and what they will do with their lives. We are prone to be too earth-bound in our thinking and to leave God out of our plans. People need to take life inventory. James's question, "What is your life?", when properly viewed, will enable us to take a life inventory.

What is your life from the standpoint of duration? It is a vapor (James 4:14-15); it is here only briefly and then is gone. James is saying stop and consider! Before making plans for the future, determine what sort of life you have. Is it permanent, abiding, enduring; will it be here tomorrow, next week, or the following year? "For my days are but a breath" (Job 7:16). "Remember how short my time is" (Psalm 89:47). "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Samuel 20:3). Man's days on earth are pictured as a flower that is cut down, and therefore soon withers (Job 14:1-2; James 1:10-11). Man's days on earth are pictured as a fleeing shadow (Job. 14:2). Life passes quickly as the "eagle hasteth to the prey" (Job 9:26). Man lives but one time on earth (Hebrews 9:27). With life as uncertain as this, how foolish are we to plan the future without regard to Him Who holds the future in His hands? Boasting of a definite future on earth is evil because it denies God's power and will (James 4:15-16).

It is imperative that we recognize that God has a plan and a will for life on this earth. "Even every one that is

*called by my name: for I have created him I for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7).* What should be man's purpose in life? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). We are to trust in God! If we will let Him direct us, then our lives will be immensely enriched. A study of Ecclesiastes reveals that Solomon tried basically the things that men try in their effort to find a purpose for being; the conclusion of chapter 12, verses 13, 14, is a studied conclusion: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Your life is a gift from God and is to be used for His glory. All men need to be confronted with the question: "What is your life?" We are urged to "examine ourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). The following poem should focus attention on this article.

### Life's Clock Author Unknown

The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop,  
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed,  
To lose one's health is more;  
To lose one's soul is such a loss,  
And no man can restore.

The present only is our own,  
Live, love, toil with a will;  
Place no faith in "Tomorrow",  
For the clock may then be still. ♦

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## “Distinctive Preaching”

### By W. Curtis Porter (1897-1960)

I cannot conceive of there having ever been a time in all of the history of the church that distinctive preaching was not needed. Perhaps there have been periods of that history in which such preaching was more sorely needed than at other times; but if so, the failure of some to preach a distinctive gospel was responsible for the increase of the need for it. And it may be that there was never a time when the need for distinctive preaching was more imperative than now. We have entirely too much preaching that means nothing, and the need of the hour is for men who have the courage to preach a distinctive message.

To me it is no compliment to a speaker for the audience to be unable to place him. I have heard it said of preachers: “He has preached in our community for two weeks, but people could not tell by his preaching to what church he belonged; he was an orthodox preacher.” While such things have been said by way of compliment, to me they shout their criticism and are not complimentary words at all. Whenever a man is so vague, indefinite, or general in his preaching that his auditors cannot place him, or identify him, there is something seriously wrong. A preacher is certainly not filling his mission as a preacher when his pulpit proclamations are characterized by such vagueness. I am talking, of course, about a preacher who stands identified with the church of the Lord. I am not so much concerned about how other preachers preach. If they are preaching the doctrines of men, there is nothing vital to the soul lost if they never become definite about it.

And yet if I were a member of some human church, I would want my preacher to preach the things for which the church stands. If I were the member of the Baptist Church, I would want my preacher to preach a Baptist doctrine; and if I belonged to the Methodist Church, I would want my preacher to preach a doctrine that would be distinctively Methodist; and the same goes for any other denomination. In any case I would expect my preacher to preach definitely the doctrines of that denomination. Then since I am a member of the church of Christ, should I expect less of the preachers of that institution? The world will lose nothing of importance if denominationalism is not distinctively preached; but if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached in a distinctive manner, a great loss is incurred.

#### Who Preaches What?

There is a vast difference between the truth of the gospel and the theories of denominationalism, and that differ-

ence ought to be held up to the people who hear. Jesus said: *“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”* (Matt. 15:13). Why, then, make any compromise with such plants? Or why fail to show that human institutions are not growths from a heavenly planting? I am just certain of the fact that it often becomes necessary to tell who preaches what. This would not be so necessary if denominational preachers would preach the doctrines of their churches, but they are like some of my brethren would be if they listened to the clamor of the audience for “soft preaching.” They have no distinctive message to proclaim. Consequently the average member of denominations does not know the doctrines of his church. You may preach ever so strongly upon some point of error, but he does not know you are talking about his doctrine, for his preacher has not preached it; such things have been kept from him. To this there are some exceptions, but the condition is very general.

In order for a member of the Baptist Church to know that you are contrasting the truth with Baptist error it becomes necessary to state that the error is taught by the Baptist Church. Otherwise he may not discover that you have taken his doctrine apart. The need of this was very forcibly impressed upon me as a result of one of my own sermons. I was engaged in a mission meeting near where I was laboring for the church. At one service I preached on the subject, “What Must I Do To Be Saved?” I contrasted truth with error and showed plainly what the Bible teaches about that subject. When the service had been concluded, a stranger came to me, took me by the hand, and complimented very highly that sermon, stating that he believed every bit of it. Upon later inquiry I found that he was the main leader of the Baptist Church of that community. And yet I had been preaching things that were in direct conflict with the doctrines of the church to which he belonged! The next day a conversation was heard over the telephone in which one lady told another that she should have been at the meeting last night, for she would have heard one of the best Baptist sermons that she ever heard. And yet I had not failed to preach the truth! However, they did not know the teaching of the Baptist Church; and if I had told who preaches what, they would have seen the difference. At least, they would not have accused me of preaching Baptist doctrine!

I know that harm can be done by mentioning denominations in the spirit of sarcasm. There is a difference be-

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tween exposing error and abusing the adherent of the error. We may show kindness to the man and yet expose the error which he holds. Therefore, I do not hesitate, when I feel that conditions demand, to call denominations by name and show the error of the denominations. This is exactly what Jesus did while he was on earth, and, judging from what he did then, it is exactly what he would do now!

### Make People Know They Are Lost

Preaching that is not distinctive enough to make the lost realize they are lost is not the kind of preaching it takes to save men. Whenever an unfaithful brother, one guilty of sins against the high heaven, or with an ungodly attitude toward the work of the Lord can sit under a man's preaching without feeling any discomfort or alarm, there is probably something wrong with the preaching. The man needs to be blasted with the gospel dynamite till he can see his lost condition. As long as your preaching allows him to feel secure in his sins he will not likely be redeemed from his sinful state. Just so it is with the member of the sectarian churches. If my preaching allows them to feel safe in denominationalism, there is not much chance to rescue them from it meshes. My preaching must be

distinctive enough to make them see the sinfulness of denominationalism, then I can have some hope of saving them.

Just remember that in order to save a man you must make him know that he is lost. By your following some other method he might decide to "change churches" because he likes the preacher, or that he might be with some other friends he especially likes, or something of that kind; but "changing churches" for any such reason is not conversion. What we want to do is to convert the man that his change may be the result of conviction.

Jesus Christ and the apostles did not hesitate to let men know they were lost. Paul called Elymas a "child of the devil," and "enemy of all righteousness" (**Acts 13:10**). There was no reason for Elymas to think that Paul considered him in a safe condition. Peter plainly told Simon to repent and pray that God might forgive him (**Acts 8:20-23**). He let him know that he stood condemned. And Jesus said the Pharisees were children of hell (**Matt. 23:15**). With such worthy examples before us, why should we fail to preach so that men in sin and sectarianism can see they need to be saved? (*Guardian of Truth November 20, 1980*)

*Credit: The Old Paths - 11/10/13 ♦*

## What Do I Owe My Congregation?

Author unknown

**I owe it my loyalty.** I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

**I owe it my financial support.** It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

**I owe it my presence.** If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

**I owe it the influence of a godly life.** The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others. ♦

## THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. "By their fruits ye shall know them," (**Matthew 7:20**). ♦

## An Injustice Done To Men! By Jarrod Jacobs

Someone once said, *"No greater injustice can be done to any person than to give them the impression that they are saved when, in fact, they are not."* How true this is! Brethren, let us not be guilty of allowing our friends and neighbors to go through life having never heard the gospel! May we never be guilty of the quote above and leave our friends with the impression that they are saved from sin when they are not!

How could such a thing happen? Perhaps the most common way this is done is when we know our friends are in religious error and we say nothing to them about it (**Jas. 4:17**)! How terrible it would be to see our friends and neighbors stand before Christ and be sent to a devil's Hell because we did not tell them the truth and they died in their sin (**Jn. 8:24; II Thess. 1:7-9**)! Are you one who does not give others the opportunity to hear the gospel preached? How many people have you invited to the worship services this week? This month? This year? How many have you taken an interest in and showed them how

the Bible can answer the most important questions of life? How many times have you shirked your duty and then soothed your conscience with excuses? These are good indicators of where your priorities truly are!

Do we allow fear of losing a friend, or the fear of being considered a "fanatic", etc., keep us from doing what we should (**Matt. 10:28**)? If we have, then let us repent and determine to show folks the truth before it is too late!

Christ said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God ..."* (**Matt. 6:33**). Friends, after we pass on, what will be left? Where will we, our friends and neighbors spend eternity? What effort are we making to help folks go to Heaven? Or, are our lost friends under the impression that they are saved already?

**Think about it!!**

Credit: The Old Paths - 7/3/11 ♦

### SUPPOSE - JUST SUPPOSE

Yes, just suppose that next Sunday Jesus stood at the end of the pew where you sit as you were about to place your offering in the collection plate, and just suppose that instead of the collection plate, he held out his hand, the hand that was nailed to the cross for you. Would you be willing to place your offering in that nail pierced hand?

Could you look upon that face stained with blood from the thorn pricked brow; see the body that was beaten and placed upon the cross, could you do this, look him in the eye and say, *"Lord I'm giving all I can"*?

Suppose as you looked upon Jesus, with the torn hands and feet, the beaten body, the pierced side and head crowned with thorns, he said to you, *This is how I showed my love to love.* ♦

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

**Hear and Learn** - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

**Believe** - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

**Repent** - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

**Confess the Lord** - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

**Be Baptized** - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

**Continue in the Apostles' Teaching** - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

**www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com**