

YOKEFELLOW

Vol. 34, No. 5

July-August 2007

FROM ONE PREACHER TO ANOTHER

Sam Willcut

I had the esteemed privilege of speaking at the recent MSOP graduation banquet. Here are some bits of advice, from which I have learned, either from others, or by experience, in the fifteen years that I have been preaching, and which I shared with those present on that special occasion.

First, do not neglect your family. Great men of God do not neglect their responsibilities at home. Noah did not neglect his family (1 Pet. 3:20). Abraham did not neglect his family (Gen. 18:19). Joshua did not neglect his family (Jos. 24:15). Just because we, as preachers, take personal responsibility to evangelize the world and to edify our brethren does not annul our personal responsibilities at home to be husbands and fathers. We have seen, over the years, the disastrous results when preachers have neglected their families. Sometimes, such men rationalize that they are putting the kingdom of God first—this we all should do, but again, we cannot do so to the neglect of our own personal families. Do not neglect your family!

Second, do not quit studying. No one will ever get to the place where he knows the entire Bible, even preachers. I believe some preachers get to the point where they feel that they have a good general knowledge of the Bible, and then they become lazy and quit studying as much as they did when they first began preaching. I think of the late and lamented Franklin Camp, who noticed the study habits of Gus Nichols and decided to study even more (I believe it was six hours daily), which he did all the way up until his death. Preachers, we do not know it all. Do not quit studying!

Third, do not quit preaching. Preaching is not to be a profession, as other professions (doctor, lawyer, and such like). When preaching becomes a profession for the preacher, then when the income stops, the preaching stops. We ought to preach even if churches do not pay us! We ought to preach for free, if necessary. This means that we do not stipulate prices for our speaking engagements—we ought never to turn down an opportunity to preach. Do not quit preaching! In addition, preaching comes with times of great discouragement. We will not convert everybody; even God in the flesh did not convert everybody. When we get discouraged, do not quit preaching! The world needs preachers more than presidents! "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). When we get discouraged, think of all of the mighty men of God who were discouraged and did not quit (Elijah, Jeremiah, and such like). Do not quit preaching!

Fourth, do not ever forget about the ones who sacrificed for you to become a preacher. Preacher students should never forget the individuals and congregations who graciously gave to them so that they could sacrifice a few years to learn how to become an effective preacher. Preachers should always remember, with gratitude, those who paved the way for them. I remember with fondness a little congregation in Verbena, AL (Midway Church of Christ). This small congregation supported me meagerly for the final three years I was a college student, but I would not trade those years of encouragement and opportunity for anything! They helped me to become the preacher I am today. I think of my parents. I think of other mentors along the way. I think of great preachers from our past who sacrificed to allow the church to flourish as it does today. From cover to cover, the Bible teaches that godliness and gratitude go together, and wickedness and ingratitude go together. As Christians and preachers, we ought always to demonstrate gratitude!

Fifth, do not think of yourselves more than ye ought. The Bible repeatedly teaches this principle (Rom. 12:3; Phi. 2:1-4; et al.). Pride is one of the most dangerous of all sins, and preachers are certainly susceptible to it. Whenever preachers get a taste of "success" (large congregations, multiple meetings, exposure from articles/books, and such like), Satan will try to use that to tempt them with pride. Preachers can form cliques, and associate with only those in their cliques. I have been to lectureships where some preachers, of some esteem, rarely talk to "the common preacher," while others will relate personally. While I do not wish to embarrass anyone, or leave anyone out, I can only think of some who have spoken to me, as a young preacher with no reputation, as if I was important to them. I do not know about you, but I will remember that for as long as I live. As Christians and preachers, we must try to treat everyone the same, and think of ourselves as equals with everyone.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list, but it will serve to point out a few nuggets of wisdom that all preachers, especially, should follow, including myself.

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MEN OF CHARACTER

Garland Elkins

Brethren Curtis A. Cates and Bobby Liddell are Christian men of character, and it has been my pleasure, and an honor, to work with the two of them, at the Memphis School of Preaching, for a number of years. I have been blessed of the Lord in numerous ways all of my life, and one of the greatest of honors and privileges is the exalted opportunity that has been afforded by the Lord to me to work with truly great servants of the Lord. Among those men of great talent, ability, and character are: Thomas B. Warren with whom I worked for more than seventeen years; Curtis A. Cates with whom I have worked for almost seventeen years, and Bobby Liddell with whom I have worked almost that long. In fact, I include all of the instructors of the Memphis School of Preaching, whom I respect, love, and appreciate, as faithful and able gospel preachers.

Brother and sister Cates and their children. Approximately twenty-five years ago, brother Roy J. Hearn, long-time Director of the Memphis School of Preaching, called me and stated that his health had deteriorated, and requested that I recommend someone to succeed him as the Director of the School. Without a moment's hesitation, I recommended brother Curtis A. Cates, who at the time was Dean of Public Relations of Columbia Christian College. Brother Hearn discussed this matter with the elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ (now Forest Hill). Thus, brother Cates was invited to succeed brother Hearn, and for more than twenty-four years did a superb job as the Director of MSOP.

I had known him for many years prior to this, as I was honored by brother Rex A. Turner, Sr. to speak on all of the lectureships conducted by Alabama Christian School of Religion, and each of those years to conduct the Open Forum. Brother Cates was an instructor and dean in that school for many years, and so we became close friends.

Brother and sister Cates and their boys. Brother Cates is a great Bible student, and teacher of the Word. He has also studied academically to the highest level. Sister Cates also has an advanced degree. However, far more importantly, they love the truth, teach it, and live it. They have two sons; Andy and Dan, both of whom are faithful gospel preachers. I have had both of them as students in my classes at MSOP and I respect both of them.

Brother and sister Liddell and their family. I have known brother Liddell for a number of years before he became a member of the Memphis School of Preaching faculty. Sister Joan Liddell is an outstanding Christian lady, and together they have reared an outstanding Christian family. Their daughter, Keri, is married to a faithful Christian man (and she has spoken on the MSOP lectures), and their two sons, Anthony and Nathan, are both outstanding gospel preachers, faithful and able.

It was my pleasure to have the Liddell's two sons, Tony and Nathan, in my classes at MSOP. They were members of the same class and graduated together. In my classes, they always sat side by side, studied hard, and were always respectful.

Brother Liddell is a great preacher of the gospel, having done outstanding work as a local evangelist in different congregations. He has excelled as an instructor, and he has earned advanced degrees.

Though neither brother Liddell nor any of the faculty at MSOP wanted brother Cates to resign as Director, since he did so, I do not know of anyone whom the elders of Forest Hill could have selected that would have equaled brother Liddell. He is a man of good judgment, a good Bible student, a lover of the truth, and a lover of the Lord, His church, and the Memphis School of Preaching.

Brethren Cates and Liddell are to be highly commended for the truly Christian way that the transition from one director to the other has been made. The reason is: these two Christians are men of Character!

It is my pleasure to commend both the Cates and Liddell families, and to thank God for them.

MSOP LECTURES ON PODCAST

The 2007 Lectures are now available for use with portable mp3 players and similar devices. We have also registered with the Apple iTunes Store. Go to the iTunes store, search for Memphis School of Preaching, and subscribe to this free podcast. We hope to add lectures from previous years as well. For more information, visit <http://www.msop.org/podcast.shtml>.

PREPARING TO EVANGELIZE

Bobby Liddell

The word "evangelize" comes from two words: "good" and "messenger," and it means to preach the gospel (Rev. 14:6). The gospel is the "good news" of salvation in Christ (cf. Luke 2:10), the message which we are to proclaim. If we would prepare to evangelize, there are several questions which we must answer: When, What, Why, How, and Who?

When should we prepare to evangelize? NOW, for when death comes (Heb. 9:27), or Christ comes (Mat. 24:36), it will be too late. We must understand the urgency of preparation (cf. John 9:4). One day, it will be too late to do good, or to undo wrong (Luke 6:46; Jam. 4:17), to get ready for eternity (Mat. 24-25), and to prepare to evangelize (Luke 16:27ff). Judgment is coming (Acts 17:30-31), and we must prepare to evangelize NOW, or we should prepare to be lost, to see the church lose her strength, to see the numbers decline, and, very possibly, to see the doors close.

What should we do to prepare to evangelize? We must get ready to tell people the good news (Mark 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2). We must prepare ourselves to be able to teach the truth (John 8:32; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16). The fact that souls are lost without the gospel should spur us on to study and learn God's Word that we might teach it to others (2 The. 1:7-9; Rom. 10:13ff). We cannot tell people what we do not know, but we should be able to tell them what we do know. If we have obeyed the gospel, surely we can tell others what we did, but let us not be content to stop there in our knowledge and ability.

Why should we prepare to evangelize? Because the lost need to hear the good news of salvation made possible by the love of God and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The downtrodden need a lift (Luke 19:10). Those in darkness need light (John 8:12). The despised need love (Rom. 5:8). Those who are dying in sin need to hear about life in Christ (John 14:6; 10:10). We should prepare because God commanded that we evangelize (Mat. 28:18ff; 1 John 5:3), but also because we care!

How should we prepare to evangelize? We must prepare with hearts filled with compassion (1 Cor. 13; Luke 10:33), minds filled with knowledge (2 Tim. 2:2; John 8:32), and attitudes of sincerity (Jude 23; Rom. 2:21ff). We must also prepare to face disappointment, rejection, anger, and apathy (cf. Rom. 5:8-9).

Who should prepare to evangelize? Those who realize the value of one soul (Mat. 16:26), that sin brings death (Rom. 6:23), that Heaven and Hell are real (Mat. 25:46), and that their souls are at stake (1 Tim. 4:16). Likewise, those who realize that no price is too costly, no sacrifice is too great, no burden is too heavy, no hardship is too severe, no excuse will suffice, and no time is better than now—to prepare to evangelize. Let us all be messengers of the "good news" of the salvation found only in Jesus Christ.

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BILLY BLAND NAMED ADMINISTRATIVE DEAN

For fifteen years, brother Billy Bland has exemplified Christian character and faithful service in his roles as instructor and Dean of Students at MSOP. On August 1, he will begin to serve as Administrative Dean, a new and much needed position. As Administrative Dean, brother Bland will continue to oversee evangelistic campaigns, will be in charge of the responsibilities involved with our residence halls, will coordinate the work of the secretarial staff, and will assist the Director in the area of finances.



Brother Bland was born in Oxford, Mississippi, married Terry Collums, and they have two children Anna and Jared (now deceased). They also have three grandchildren. He graduated from Memphis School of Preaching (1977), received the MSOP Graduate Diploma (1991), and has B. A. and M. A. degrees from Southern Christian University.

He has done local work in Tennessee and Mississippi, and now serves as an elder in Coldwater, MS. In addition to being Editor of Far East / World Evangelism Newsletter, Billy writes articles for various other publications, conducts meetings, and speaks in lectures in the United States, Canada, China, India, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, and Thailand. He conducts mission work in the Far East and Russia, and teaches classes in Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions, Singapore, where he also serves as Chairman of the Board.

JERRY MARTIN TO BE NEW DEAN OF STUDENTS

Brother Jerry Martin, who has contributed greatly in his role as Instructor will, on August 1, become the new Dean of Students. He is uniquely qualified for this position.



Jerry (MSOP 1979) is a native of Crossett, Arkansas. He and his wife, Denise, have three sons, Paul (2002 MSOP graduate), Chad, and Nathan, and one daughter, Amy. They also have six grandchildren.

Brother Martin holds a B.A. degree in Bible, and an M. S. degree in Counseling from Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama. He is currently a PhD candidate in Marriage and Family Therapy at Regions University (formerly Southern Christian).

The Martins did local work in Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, and Colorado before moving to Tennessee to work with the Cordova Church of Christ in 1998, where he also serves as one of its elders. In addition to his preaching and teaching duties, he uses his training to provide counseling to Christians in the Memphis area.

Jerry preaches in a number of Gospel meetings each year, as well as speaking on several lectureships. He conducts seminars on marriage enrichment, conflict management, and grief management. He also enjoys working with the Indian Creek Youth Camp in Walker County, Alabama, where he has directed Teen Week since 1989.

We are confident in the abilities and dedication of both brother Bland and brother Martin, and trust their labors in these new roles will be to the advancement of the great work of Memphis School of Preaching.

"Strengthening The Heart"

The Forty-second Annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectures are planned for March 30-April 3, 2008. The theme: "Strengthening The Heart," will be an encouraging, instructive, biblical study, addressing not only the need to strengthen our hearts for the trials and troubles of life, but also to look to the Scriptures to learn God's way to do so.

Faithful brothers and sisters will present uplifting lectures on such topics as: Trusting God's Providence, Seeing God Through The Tears, The Heart That Grieves, When Bad News Comes, Remembering The Foundations Of Faith, Facing Responsibility As A Caregiver, et al.

On Tuesday, April 1, 2008, the *Seminar For Prospective Students and Supporters* will take place at 2:30 P.M. On that same day, at 4:00 P.M., will be *The Alumni And Friends Dinner*, a highlight of our year. Monday through Thursday will begin with Chapel at 8:30 A.M., with lectures throughout the day, closing with the evening's keynote addresses at 7:00 P.M. (preceded by congregational singing at 6:30).

We believe this lecture program will provide a much needed boost to all who attend. Thus, we hope you will begin now to plan to be with us. We will greatly and joyfully anticipate your presence.

**FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL
MSOP LECTURES
MARCH 30-APRIL 3, 2008**

Needed Support For MSOP Students

Thanks so much, dear brethren, to all who responded to our plea with either one-time or monthly support for our students, and to all who have given so generously for student housing. We are deeply appreciative for every contribution, whether large or small.

We have a good number of students accepted to begin the Fall Quarter (August 20), and we have several others who are in the process of being accepted. Many of these good men are in desperate need of monthly support. They are giving up their jobs, and leaving their homes behind--because they are committing themselves to two years of intensive study and preparation to take the message of salvation to a lost world. They want to preach the gospel, and they need our help.

Can you, or the congregation where you are, respond to this need? Any funds given will be helpful as they seek the ability to provide for themselves and their families, while here, the basic needs of life.

WANT AN ADMISSIONS PACKET?

Are you interested in preparing yourself to preach the Gospel? Or, do you know some faithful man who is? We will be happy to send an information packet containing all one needs to get started: an MSOP Catalog and a full color, twenty page brochure.

Already, we have accepted a good number of quality students for this school year, and we hope you will be among the graduating class of 2009! There is still room, and time to complete the admission process--but hurry. Contact us today!

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