

Christian Leadership Training Course

by
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Introduction

Having worked in New Delhi since 1968, establishing the Lord's Church here, and seeing it grow through the years, both in numbers and in spirituality, I am very happy to announce that this body of the Lord's people now has its own elders. I congratulate this congregation and its three elders: Sunny David, Francis David, and Kumar Malik. I pray that, since you have reached this point in your development, you will continue to grow and set an example for churches of Christ throughout the whole country.

I am a firm believer that the church of our Lord throughout India and the East needs to develop its own leaders: elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, and even every member of every age, both men and women. Of course the Lord has given men the responsibility of being elders and deacons and preachers, but the ladies have also been given responsibilities: teaching the children, the younger women, and setting a good example for all.

Because of the great need for leaders in each congregation, I wrote the following material to give some ideas and suggestions on what is expected, how to develop one's abilities, and seriousness of meeting our responsibilities.

Particular emphasis is placed on preachers and their training because of our great need for them, and because of the interest many of our young men seem to have in becoming preachers. It is my prayer that, out of this study course, the church will develop the kind of preachers and leaders that will be a credit to the Lord's people throughout the Eastern world.

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Lesson 1

Leaders Needed

Leaders have always been needed in every walk of life. They are the key figures in politics, the military, business, schools, religions, and families. A country, business, or any organization will rise or fall, depending on the kind of leaders it has.

I think all of us know that when we speak of a leader, of giving leadership, we are speaking of a person who has the qualities and abilities to demand the respect of friends, associates, and fellow citizens to the point of being able to reason with them, to persuade them, and to lead them in some particular direction. In other words, such a person is able to move others to follow him. When one has this quality by reason of personal charisma, training, or the need of the hour, he is put into a very responsible position. Not only does he have to answer for his own actions, but also for the actions of those he is able to influence.

Actually, a people, country, army, business, school, or anything else, can go no further than its leader. Therefore with good leaders, with better leadership, people are benefitted and lifted to a higher plane. On the other hand, those who deceive the people into following them, even though they are actually selfish, wicked, and care nothing for their people, or those who are unwise in leadership and make bad decisions will bring terrible consequences on those who follow them.

God is our creator and He always thinks and acts in our interest. Seeing us in sin, and without hope, He sent His Son into this world to live and to die for us that we might be saved and then to lead us on to heaven itself (John 3:16,17). Jesus said, *"I am the*

way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me” (John 14:6). Now who could improve on that kind of leadership? Not a soul in this world. We would be wise to look to Him and to follow Him if we expect to go to heaven.

From the beginning God has not only provided man with leadership from heaven, but has given us some great leaders here. Men who stand out in history are Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, to name only a few. What great stories could be told about these men and all that they were able to accomplish in their time! Even today we are inspired by them.

During the time of Christ, we read of John the Baptist, who served as a forerunner to Christ, the man who came to prepare the way for the Saviour. Then of course Christ was born into this world as the Son of God, the leader who had no equal. During His short life many came to Him and followed Him, both because of what He said and what He did.

But the Lord knew that He would not be in this world in the flesh for very long, because the cross was before Him. Knowing that His work must go on, He chose twelve men called apostles that He would teach and train. In the book of Matthew of the New Testament, we read, *“And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed*

Him” (Matthew 10:1-4). Two other apostles were eventually added to these: Matthias, who was chosen to take the place of Judas after Judas had betrayed the Lord and committed suicide (Acts 1), and Paul who was the special messenger to the Gentiles.

After the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection, He instructed the apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). The Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, had earlier been promised to them (John 14:26). He would guide them into all truth, He would make it possible for them to remember all that the Lord had taught them, He would enable them to speak in the languages of the people and He would give them power to perform miracles to convince the masses that Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God.

After receiving the Holy Spirit, the apostles preached the gospel with the result that the church was established. They found, though, that there was more work than they could do. So the Lord enabled them to choose a number of faithful brethren from among them to help with the work. The apostles laid their hands on them, giving them the power of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles (Acts 6). During the early years of the church, others were chosen to receive the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, but those who received that power could not give it to others. Thus, miracles continued until the apostles had died, and those on whom they laid their hands. By that time the New Testament had been given in written form and miracles, used to prove that the speaker was from God, were no longer needed. Faith would now be produced, not through the seeing of miracles, but by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and by having the written word in hand so that the average person could go to the scriptures themselves to see what was taught (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

The Lord also had leadership plans for the non-miraculous age. Although He was the one and only head of the church, and would direct the church through His word, after the apostles had died it was His decree that each local congregation should have its own leadership and that each congregation would be autonomous or independent from all other congregations. Although they would fellowship one another on the basis that they all followed Christ and were governed by His word, each congregation would be led by elders chosen by the local members because of their ability to meet the qualifications outlined in the scriptures in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Deacons would also be chosen to serve under the direction of the elders. After them would come preachers and teachers. This was God's plan for leadership in the church, and we'll take a closer look in future lessons.

Lesson 2

Elders in the Church

In our last lesson we discussed how God has always provided good leaders for His people. He even sent His own Son into the world and then He chose a group of men called apostles to lead the church in its beginning years. After their departure, He set into motion a natural order of leadership that has continued to this day. That brings us to our present study which will have to do with elders in the church.

There is only one church and it is to be found around the world. It is the Lord's church, Christ's church, or the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18,19; Ephesians 4:1-6; 5:23-27). This is the only church we can read about in the Bible, the only one authorized by God. That church is made up of many congregations to enable people to obey God and to worship and serve the Lord wherever they live. We read of many congregations like this in the New Testament, such as the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2), the church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:1), and others. Each congregation was made up of a number of members who recognized Christ as their head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23). Each one was also autonomous or independent from all others, although they fellowshiped each other and worked together since they were all of the same body, wore the same name, worshiped alike, and preached the same gospel. But they were independent in the sense that the Lord authorized that each congregation was to have its own leadership; that is, its own elders and deacons, provided their members were able to meet the qualifications laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

In the scriptures we read of the church at Philippi having

bishops (another name for elders) and deacons (Philippians 1:1). Paul exhorted Titus to ordain elders in every city in Crete (Titus 1:5). Even Peter acknowledged that he was an elder. He said, *“The elders which are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly; not for dishonest gain but eagerly: nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”* (1 Peter 5:1-4). The flocks to which he refers are the local members of the church. The chief Shepherd is Jesus Himself.

Can a local congregation exist without elders and deacons? Yes, because their men may not yet be qualified to be appointed to such positions of leadership. It may be that they are too young physically; that is, not being married, or if they are married, not yet having children old enough to obey God. Or they may be too young spiritually; that is, being novices or too young to serve in this type of leadership. In that case, who will give leadership to that congregation? The male members, of course. What is the difference? The difference is that if one is appointed to serve in a position in which he is not qualified, he is more apt to be filled with pride and fail to serve as he should. If the men as a group recognize that they are not qualified, and yet are willing to humbly lead as best they can, then when they do become qualified and are appointed on that basis, they will make the kind of elders for the local congregation that God wants them to be.

We can see all of this as we read the qualifications laid down in the scriptures for one who would become an elder. Paul wrote, *“This is a true saying, if a man desires the position of a bishop,*

he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money: but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence; (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Paul then said to Titus, “For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I had commanded you — If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money; but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:5-9).

First of all, it should be pointed out that each congregation which has elders must have two or more. You never read of any congregation in the scriptures having only one elder. This means that the Lord was opposed to one-man rule, or a dictatorship. Second, elders were to be selected on the basis of their maturity in life and in their spiritual life, enabling them to provide wiser leadership. Third, they were called pastors or shepherds, those who would lead the flock (Acts 20:28). They were known as bishops or overseers, and presbyters, which again is another name

for bishops or overseers. Fourth, their qualifications demanded that they be good moral men, having a wife and believing children. This showed that they had the ability to govern and bring up their own family according to the Lord's will. They were also required to have the ability to teach, not seeking honor and glory, or putting emphasis on material gain, but rather desiring to serve the Lord and their brethren.

Elders, then, are to give leadership to the local congregation of the Lord's church. They are to see that the word of God is taught, that the church is kept pure, that false teachings are rejected, and that the church worships and serves God faithfully. The members are to respect them and to follow them as they follow Christ.

Lesson 3

Deacons in the Church

Our last lesson dealt with elders in the church, who they are, their qualifications, and their work. We want to follow up now with a study of the deacons in the church.

Who is a deacon? According to the scriptures he is one who serves — a spiritual servant. The case of the seven chosen in Acts 6 to assist the apostles is often set forth as an example of the work of deacons. Although they are not called deacons in that passage, they seem to have been doing the type work that deacons are to do.

After Paul listed the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3, he goes on in verses 8-13 to give the qualifications of a deacon. He said, *“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

As you can see in Paul’s statement, not just anyone could be a deacon, as was also the case of being an elder. Since the qualifications and the work of elders and deacons are somewhat tied together, it automatically follows that elders and deacons must have a very close relationship with each other, and they do.

It has been said that the work of elders concerns the spiritual needs of the church but the work of deacons deals with the material or physical needs of the church. Do you remember the apostles in Acts 6 and their reason for choosing seven men to help them? They had reached the point where they were using their time in helping with man's physical needs rather than the preaching of the word. The seven were chosen to help with those physical needs, thus enabling the apostles to concentrate on the spiritual needs. So it is with elders and deacons.

The elders are there to see after the spiritual needs of the church, to make sure that the gospel is taught, that the church is kept pure, etc. The deacons are chosen to assist the elders, and to serve the congregation in whatever capacity they are needed. Since there are spiritual as well as physical needs in the church, the elders are specifically to see after the spiritual needs, and then they can call on the deacons to see after the physical needs of the members, or to help in any other way in which they may serve. For instance, the church must meet somewhere, either in a rented place or in a building of its own. The elders may choose to turn over these arrangements and the care of the property to the deacons. They may also arrange for food for a needy Christian or help a sick person while he is unable to help himself.

Both those who would be elders and those who would be deacons must meet certain qualifications. This ensures that they have the physical, moral, and spiritual qualities which will be needed to do the job that they are being appointed to do. These are offices, spiritual offices, or jobs that they are to render to the church and to the Lord.

In both instances, only men are in position to be appointed, and in both cases, two or more men must be appointed. If only

one man is qualified to be an elder, then he cannot be appointed. The same would be true in the case of appointing deacons. And since deacons are to assist the elders, if there are no elders, then neither can there be deacons.

It should also be pointed out that if qualifications must be met to be an elder or deacon, if one conducts himself improperly, that is, becomes immoral, or breaks God's law in some other way, then he may be dismissed from his office and will no longer be recognized as an elder or deacon. These are not "life time" jobs, but they are to be held only as long as the qualifications can be met.

Let's take a few minutes now for a closer look at the qualifications for being a deacon. Paul said that he must be grave or serious, not double-tongued, saying one thing one time and something else at another time. In other words, one must speak in such a way that people can believe him and have confidence in him. He is not to drink or be a drunkard, making a bad example of himself and unable to do the work he is supposed to do. He is not to be greedy of filthy lucre, or greedy of money or of material things. If he does covet such things, his wrong emphasis in life will become obvious to others, and they will realize that he is not very spiritual. He is to be faithful to God and always have a pure conscience. He is to be a tried and tested person, one who is dependable, and one who is not being accused by others of doing things that are bad or wrong.

Not only are there qualifications for the one who would be a deacon, but there are qualifications for his wife, too. She must be sincere, not a slanderer, or one who is telling tales on others or gossiping about others, but she must be serious in her actions and faithful in all things.

Those who would be deacons can be married only one time, that is, not divorced and remarried and all mixed up in marriage. They must rule or guide their children and their families so that they will be examples to others. Those who are able to meet these qualifications, and are chosen to be deacons, will make a great contribution to the Lord's cause if they are faithful in their service.

In his writing, Paul spoke of elders and deacons being over the church in Philippi (Philippians 1:1,2). This is a good example for all congregations. Naturally, those congregations that are able to appoint and have elders and deacons according to the qualifications laid down in the scriptures will be in position to do a greater work for the Lord. Brethren everywhere should strive to comply with the Lord's wish in regard to leadership.

Lesson 4

Preachers in the Church

Up to now we have talked about the work of elders and deacons in the church. We have noted their qualifications, that each congregation must have a plurality of elders and deacons to serve, and we have considered the specific jobs of each office. These positions of leadership should be filled only by those who desire to serve. Men must never be appointed against their will.

Let us now consider the preacher and his work and how he fits into the local congregation. It should be noted that God does not authorize him to be the boss over the church with which he works, or to be the pastor of it. A pastor can be a preacher but not all preachers are pastors. A pastor is an elder, an overseer, a shepherd. As related to the local congregation, he can be one of the pastors or elders, provided the congregation has other elders. But where there is a congregation with qualified elders, then the preacher, as well as all of the members of that congregation, must serve under the direction of the elders.

God has always used preachers in His work. In the Old Testament they were generally referred to as prophets, and in the days of Christ there were the apostles, but all of them were messengers of God or preachers and teachers who proclaimed the word of the Lord to those who were around them.

We know there were some great preachers in those early days. We recall how John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness and asking the people to repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand, which was the same as saying that the church was close by (Matthew 3:1,2). Peter and Paul, in particu-

lar, were great preachers in their time, along with so many others. This was true not only then but there continues to be good men up to our present day who give their lives to declaring the whole counsel of God.

After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, He called the apostles together and said to them, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark recorded it like this: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"* (Mark 16:15,16). You can see by these statements that the Lord wanted these men to convey His will to the world through the medium of preaching. It was not His plan to reveal His teaching to man through some miraculous manner, to speak to man from heaven, or to give each person special revelation. In spite of that, you can still hear people even today talking about how God spoke to them, how He revealed His will to them in some way, how He told them what they should do, etc. These people are wrong. God has not spoken to them in these days separate and apart from His word. To do that would be contrary to His teaching. Also, to speak to one in this manner, and not speak to all like that, would make Him a respecter of persons. So God uses His written word, and those who would faithfully proclaim it, to make known His will to one and all.

Read through the book of Acts, and especially pay close attention to all of the conversions. If you will do that, you will observe that there was always a gospel preacher on hand to reveal

God's will to the hearers. Even with the Holy Spirit guiding the apostles, and on the occasion when the angel or Spirit of the Lord spoke to Philip, or when Peter saw a vision, in all of these cases it was the man himself who was directed to go to someone and preach the gospel to them (Acts 8; Acts 10). The preaching was not done through some supernatural person or revelation.

The Hebrew writer says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), but how does faith come? Paul tells us, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). Concerning Jesus and all of the things He did, John wrote, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:30,31).

Paul said to the young preacher, Timothy, *"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching"* (2 Timothy 4:1,2). Someone has said that all of this means that the preacher must preach the word when the people like it and when they don't like it. In other words, the truth must be preached for the good of mankind.

It is a serious thing to preach the word of God. The messenger must preach it without adding to it or subtracting from it (Revelation 22:18,19). Paul said concerning preaching the gospel, *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone*

preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8,9). Paul was saying that the one, true, and pure gospel had been preached to the Galatians. And to emphasize the importance of that gospel, he said that if he should now come and preach yet another gospel, or something different than that which had already been preached, or even if an angel came down from heaven and did that, such a false messenger would stand condemned by God. If that be true of Paul, then would it not likewise be true with us?

There is a lot involved in preaching. One should preach because he is a Christian, he loves the church and the souls of men, and he wants to preach. He should not preach just to have something to do or for a way to make a living. It is not always easy to be a preacher. There are many sacrifices to be made. But, also, many blessings come to the faithful preacher of God’s word.

Lesson 5

Teachers in the Church

Up to this time we have talked about elders, deacons, and preachers and their leadership roles in the church. Each one has a very important work to do and we don't want to forget that. The elders and deacons, of course, make up the human side of the organization of the church, while preachers are to be faithful proclaimers of God's word.

The next leadership role in the church is that of being a teacher. This work is very similar to the preacher's work except that it incorporates a larger number of members of the church. Perhaps a better way of putting it would be to say that all preachers are teachers, but not all teachers are preachers. Men only can qualify to be a preacher, but men and women alike can be teachers. That will be explained as we go along.

While preaching is generally done in a public setting with the entire congregation making up the audience, teaching is normally done on a personal level or in a class situation. We have both well illustrated in the scriptures. For example, Peter and the apostles preached to a large group of people on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem. The record says of the hearers that some three thousand heard and obeyed the Lord (Acts 2:41). An example of private teaching would be in the case of Aquila and Priscilla taking Apollos aside and explaining to him the word of God more perfectly (Acts 18:24-28).

When a congregation of the Lord's church begins, especially in parts of the world where the church is not very strong, it often worships in a home or a small hall. In this case, preaching

is usually the teaching method. But as the church grows, and there are families with children, although preaching continues to be the means of proclaiming the gospel to the over-all number, it becomes necessary to take the children aside so they can be taught on their level in a class situation. There may be more than one children's class, and where the church has the necessary facilities to provide classroom space, there may also be numerous other classes such as young people's classes, ladies' classes, and even divided adult classes according to age. In this kind of setting the children may be taught by a man or a woman, but often times women teach these classes. A woman may also teach the ladies' class. Of course with the young people and the adults, where the group is made up of men and women, men would be asked to do the teaching. Such classes are altogether necessary if the various age groups are going to grow in a knowledge of God's word. Learning situations and keeping the interest of the class is very difficult if a group of people of all ages is meeting together and if the preacher or even the teacher speaks to the entire group with one level of instruction. When the word of God is being taught, in order for it to have its greatest effect, and to have the maximum influence on those present, it must be done in a class situation where the teacher can do the instructing on the level of those present. Those in the field of education know this and that is why schools are divided into classes or standards of instruction.

Not only is there opportunity for both men and women to teach in class situations, but they may also teach in the home, and on a personal level when in the company of their friends. Many often express an interest in preaching, but not much is said about teaching, personal work, and teaching in classroom settings. It is as though one type of service is important and

the other is not. Actually, in the end, teaching may be far more important than preaching. Preaching to groups of people has its limitations as to the amount of teaching that can be done. In a class, or when studying on a one-to-one basis, the teacher can deal with the problems, needs, questions, etc. of those with whom he is studying. It is a well known fact in larger congregations that the strength of the church depends on the teaching done in the classroom.

There are many advantages when it comes to being a teacher. Not only can all members of the church serve as teachers in one capacity or the other, but one can engage in this type of work whether he is financially supported or not. In other words, one can have his secular job to earn his living, and then on the Lord's day he can serve as a teacher for one of the classes. He can also do personal work, teach his friends at work, teach through tracts, by his example, visit the sick, and serve as a teacher in many other ways.

Paul said that one of the qualifications for being an elder in the church is that he must be apt to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). That is, one must be able to teach God's word, and even publicly, in order to be an elder, a leader in the local congregation of the church. How could one even begin to think about occupying such an office without having the ability to teach? That would just be impossible.

Again Paul said to Timothy, *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:1,2). That is the point, as Christians, concerning the truth of God. We are constantly to be passing it on to others so they, in

turn, can teach others.

As the Lord's people, we grow spiritually, not only as we study and learn God's will for ourselves, but also as we use the knowledge we have to teach others. It is a well known fact that the teacher learns more than the student, because he must study the whole of the Scriptures in preparedness for his students' needs. But if one fails to use his knowledge in teaching, gradually he will forget what he has learned, and he may even find himself in need of someone to teach him again the first principles or the basic teachings of the Bible. The Hebrew writer speaks of this very thing when he said, *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Hebrews 5:12-14). That would be a sad state to find oneself in. Please don't let it happen to you.

The Lord needs teachers, many of them, and I would urge you to obey God, if you haven't already, to learn well the Lord's will, and teach it to others.

Lesson 6

Women Teachers

Our purpose for this series of studies is to learn the kind of leaders that God wants in His church today. We are not interested in creating offices and positions contrary to God's will. The work that God has given us to do must be done in the way He has directed or else it will fall short of His wishes.

We have seen that He requires each congregation to have elders and deacons to lead the members; that is, if there are qualified men within the congregation who can be appointed to these offices. If not, the men must be responsible for giving leadership until there are those who are qualified to be appointed. Then we have seen that there are to be preachers and teachers serving under the elders, along with the other members, and their job is to preach and teach the word of God.

With those lessons completed, we now want to give some time to Women Leaders or Teachers in the Church. In our last lesson we showed from the scripture how women may do personal work, teach children's classes, and also teach ladies in class situations. Now in doing these things, they would be assuming a leadership role, but this would fall under the oversight of the elders, naturally.

The Bible clearly teaches that the woman is to keep silent in the church. Paul said, *"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands*

at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church” (1 Corinthians 14:33-35). Paul says again, “Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:11,12). By putting these statements together, and looking at the context in which they were written, I think we can see that the main idea here is that the woman is not to place herself in a position of authority over the man. She would be out of place to stand before the church to speak publicly, such as to preach or to teach a mixed audience. On the other hand, in a class situation, where a male member of the church is in charge of doing the teaching, she might be called on to answer a question or she might ask a question. In neither instance is she taking control or usurping the authority over the man. She is in subjection to her husband or parents, whichever the case may be. She may also participate in public singing in worship, not as the song leader or singing a solo. Rather, she would join in with all of the other worshippers in singing praises to God. In doing so, she would in no way be usurping authority over the man or over the leadership of the local congregation.

When Jesus called the apostles, He called men only as listed in Matthew 10. When He commanded that the gospel be taken into all the world, he gave this command to the apostles (Matthew 28:18-20). As you read through the book of Acts and all of the New Testament, you will not find women publicly preaching the gospel to both men and women. You will not find Christian women being asked to serve as elders and deacons in the local congregation. Now in the religious world there are women today who preach, and there are women who are taking positions in the organization of some churches, but you will not find this in the Church of Christ, the Lord’s one and only church. When that

happens you can mark it down that that congregation, or congregations, if such be, have gone off into apostasy. Women who do publicly preach and take a church office are in direct conflict with the scripture.

Now does this mean that the woman is inferior, that God has by-passed her, that His church caters mainly to men, and that men are given a superior position over woman? Does it mean that women will always be second-rate Christians in the church, second-rate, or without any rating, when it comes to the leadership of the church? No, none of these things are true. The fact is that God has given man a specific work to do and He has also given woman a specific work. Why should either want to take the place of the other and do the other's work? Both have important roles in the church, and if they will do the work God has given them to do, they will both do a great work and there will be peace and harmony. Satan, however, enters the picture and influences some men and women to rise up and to make a big issue out of the work that each is to do, questioning why one should not be able to do the work of the other. The fact is, God knew best and His way is not only right, but it is the best way.

If you will take a look at Bible history, you will observe that there were many great women, both in Old Testament times as well as during the New Testament period. Women have a great role to play today, and that role can be as great as they want it to be, provided they will stay within the guidelines that the Lord has laid down and will put forth the effort to do the work the Lord wants them to do. The same is true with men. Both men and women generally fall far below their potential simply because they hold back and restrict themselves, set limits for themselves, build barriers around themselves, and simply show and demonstrate a lack of faith in their lives.

The Lord permits women to teach as many women as they want to teach, as many children and young women as they want to teach, to do as much personal work as they want to do. There are countless good works that they may do, caring for the sick, the aged, for orphans and the needy. Some of our own sisters in Christ have become known around the world for engaging in these kinds of teaching efforts and service to others. For sure, a good, godly woman is behind every good elder, deacon, preacher, or missionary. We just need more of them to get involved in the work God has given them to do. If this could be done, the church of our Lord would grow as never before.

Do we have any women leaders, that is, women taking the lead with other women, teaching women, doing personal work, engaging in good works? Yes, we have many, and these are the ones who are not griping and complaining about women being left out of the work of the church.

I would like to encourage you as a Christian woman to accept this challenge of greater involvement and service. If you are not a Christian, I urge you to become one. If you will believe in Christ and be baptized, He will save you (Mark 16:16).

Chapter 7

Becoming a Preacher

It is important to know, from God's word, the kind of leaders He requires and how to have such leaders today. The wrong kind of leader can deceive you by his teaching and by his life. He can encourage you to follow him instead of the Lord. On the other hand, a true leader of God can help you to go to heaven. Certainly, as a result of this study, we would hope that some of you who are reading this will want to become leaders in the Lord's kingdom, the church.

We have studied some of the different leadership offices in the church, such as being an elder, deacon, preacher, and teacher, and we have also discussed the woman's role in teaching. But since the preacher and his work are of utmost importance, we want to spend several lessons on this part of our over-all topic. In the course of this series of studies we will try to cover the major facets of his life, such as his family, his training, his habits, and his teaching.

We will begin by thinking about becoming a preacher. You might be wondering who in the world would want to become a preacher? Well, there are already many preachers, and no doubt many others would prefer to be preachers rather than be or do something else. As far as the Lord is concerned, and in the eyes of those who truly belong to Christ, preaching God's word is the greatest work in all this world. It is a great work because one is doing the work of God, he is helping people understand the word of God, he is helping to shape the souls of men and women, and helping them decide where they will spend eternity (Mark 16:15,16; Romans 10:13-15). It is a noble, eternal work.

But how does one become a preacher? Does he just decide to become one? Is he asked to be a preacher? Does he receive some kind of call from God? Most preachers come out of a Christian family background. In other words, the father and mother are believers in Christ, have obeyed the Lord, and are members of the Lord's church. They worship each first day of the week with the church. Perhaps there is a son that is influenced more and more by his parents and other Christians as he grows up. After he obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian himself, he wants to be a preacher. From time to time he may be given the opportunity to lead in worship by helping to wait on the Lord's table, to word a prayer, and to assist in other ways. This encourages him to become more involved and in time to begin to teach and to preach. This is an ideal situation.

Many young men come across the church on their own, through friends, or by taking a Bible correspondence course. As a result of their contact with the church and their personal studies, they decide to obey the gospel. They are impressed by the local preacher, their interest in God's word grows along with their concern for those around them who are not Christians, and they decide they want to preach.

Others are converted out of other churches. Often times these men are older, and have already done some preaching, so it is very easy for them to decide that they want to be a preacher in the Lord's church.

Some of these men who have come out of denominationalism believe that they were especially called of God to preach. There are all kinds of stories told about such preachers. In some cases they thought the Lord actually spoke to them. Others claim that they received a sign. Some had dreams, etc. But the fact is, the

Lord has not personally or miraculously called anyone in any of these ways in this day and time. Through the commands in His word, God does call us to preach, but that call is made to every Christian.

When Peter and the apostles were preaching on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and a large number asked what they should do, we read, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call”* (Acts 2:38,39).

Paul said to the Ephesians that they should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they had been called (Ephesians 4:1). He said to the Thessalonians, *“That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory”* (1 Thessalonians 2:12). But how did He call them? Paul answers, by saying also to the Thessalonians, *“to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 2:14). But how were they called by the gospel? The gospel was preached to them and they were invited to come to the Lord as Jesus has said earlier, *“Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls, For my yoke is easy, and My burden is light”* (Matthew 11:28-30).

So there was nothing miraculous or unusual about this calling. Notice that Christ said, *“Come...and learn of me”*. Now what happens when we learn of Christ? We become believers in Him. Through having the gospel preached to us, that is, the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we are

called to obey the commands of the gospel: to believe in Christ, to repent of our sins, to confess Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized for the remission of our sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The Lord then saves us, adding us to His church (Acts 2:47). All of this is a natural and normal process, and is according to the Lord's plan. It is a matter of being taught, of believing, and of obeying. There is nothing miraculous about it.

But what about being called to preach? The Lord calls every male member who is truly converted to the Lord, who loves the Lord and the souls of men, who has the knowledge of God's word and has the ability to preach the gospel. Better still, He commands them to do this. Christ said, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). Paul said to the young preacher, Timothy, *"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching"* (2 Timothy 4:1,2)

Now, are you a preacher? Do you want to be a preacher? Are you a Christian? Are you a member of the church that you read about in the Bible? Have you been called according to the Lord's teaching? Will you preach the truth only?

Lesson 8

The Motives for Preaching

The preacher is a very important person when it comes to the Lord's plan for making known His word to the masses and therefore we need to get to know him better. We need preachers and we need better preachers, and we need to learn to have respect for dedicated preachers. Maybe we can make a contribution toward this end as we give some special time to this subject.

In our last lesson we discussed the matter of becoming a preacher, his calling, and how one becomes a preacher, or a messenger of the Lord. We found that there is nothing miraculous about this, but as one grows to maturity, learns of the Lord and is influenced by His word, then in becoming a Christian and a member of the Lord's church, the knowledge of the importance of the truth creates in that person the desire to become a preacher. In other words, he wants to preach or teach the gospel to others, both privately and publicly. Or one may be older in life, or converted out of a denominational church where he was a preacher, and now that he understands for the first time what the real truth is, he has a desire to preach that truth, and so he does.

Of course there is much to be said about becoming a preacher. It is not a light matter. We need therefore to think about the motives for preaching. Unless one's motives are right, he cannot be the preacher God would have him to be.

There are many people who cannot understand why a young man would want to preach. Especially among the poorer classes, they cannot help but think that he is more interested in filling his stomach than he is in saving souls. They are therefore suspicious

of his motives and find it very difficult to have much respect for him.

In countries where Christianity is a minority religion, and where there are a lot of poor men who serve as preachers, the local people will often pass these up in favor of the foreign preacher. They see the foreigner as one who has sacrificed greatly in leaving his people, his country, and a better living to come to a poor country to serve the Lord, and therefore they conclude that he loves the Lord and is very dedicated to serving Him and saving souls. That being the case, they are eager to hear him preach God's word and they are good to respond to his teaching.

But as these local young men grow older, and prove by their years of service, dedication, and sacrifice that they are sincere and as they begin to show some graying hair, the local people are more prone to accept them and to listen to them. So young preachers, in particular, must realize that they must prove themselves. They must show by sincerity and hard work and love of the brethren that they are serious about what they are doing. They must demonstrate that they are not hirelings and hypocrites but that they are truly converted and that they are willing to pay whatever price is necessary to preach the gospel and to serve the Lord. Remember that Jesus said that a person is known by the fruit he bears (Matthew 7:16).

If a young preacher, or an older man for that matter, is preaching merely for the money he may receive, this will become very obvious. Of course it is not a sin for a preacher to receive a salary, since a laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7), and that is true even in religious work, but if one's motive is merely to draw a salary, he is wrong, he is an hireling, and he will not be successful in his work. It doesn't take long for the average

person to see why this man is preaching.

Just because one is a young man, a young preacher, that doesn't mean that he is working only for the material benefits he may receive. He may be as honest and sincere and as dedicated to the Lord as he possibly can be, and naturally he should be, and must be, to please the Lord and to do the work he needs to do. One must begin to preach at some stage in his life and the best time to begin is while one is young. In that way he can study, learn, and get the training he needs before he has gotten his life entangled in sin and perhaps not be able to survive or to overcome the consequences of that way of life. Timothy was a young preacher and he seemed to have had all of the qualities any young preacher would want to emulate. On one occasion, Paul said to Timothy, *"Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them; that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself, and to the doctrine. Continue in them: for in doing this you will both save yourself, and those who hear you"* (1 Timothy 4:12-16). A preacher, especially a young preacher, must always conduct himself in such a way that he will not be refused and despised because of his youth. Rather, by his example in good living and in his zeal for the Lord and His cause, he may be appreciated and respected by all who know him. This should be one's goal always.

Titus was another young preacher, and Paul wrote to him things that would indicate that he was a good man, one who could be respected and depended on to do a good work. Notice what

Paul said, *“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience...Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you”* (Titus 2:1,2,6-8). This is the kind of preacher we need today, and young preachers in particular should take note of Paul’s words of advice.

It is possible for preachers to have various ulterior motives such as feeling that the job of preaching is easy, that it pays well, especially if one is receiving foreign support, that there is little or no supervision, that it gives one the opportunity to travel, that he has a position and therefore has an ego and pride, etc. Again, bad motives, wrong motives will destroy. One should preach, having been genuinely converted, having a deep conviction for God’s work, with a love for the Lord and the souls of men, desiring to serve the Lord, being willing if necessary to sacrifice for His cause, and being faithful in all things. These motives will be seen in one’s life and work and will lead such a person to become a great preacher and servant for God.

Lesson 9

The Preacher's Training

To have better leadership in the church, we must know what the Bible teaches on this subject and how to bring it about. We know that for any organization to exist for very long, it must have good leadership. We know that Christ is the head of the church and directs all of its members through the Bible, the word of God. We know, too, that He has provided a pattern in His word for leadership among the members. It is not to be in the form of a dictatorship, but two or more men are to serve as elders over each congregation, provided there are men within the local congregation who can qualify to be appointed to this office. If not, then all of the men together are to give leadership until there are those who are qualified. When there are elders, deacons are to be appointed to assist them with the work. After the deacons come the preachers, teachers, and the members in general.

Although the preachers serve under the oversight of the elders, still we are giving special attention to the preachers and their work since there are so many of them and since they need help and encouragement to improve their service to God.

Often times preachers, especially young preachers, are not respected by the church and people in general because it is suspected that many of them have wrong motives for preaching. This trend must change if the church is to grow and spread. We must be sure that we do a better job of preaching and converting and instilling within Christian men a desire to work for the Lord, and that their decision be based on good motives, that is, to save their souls and the souls of others.

To follow up on these points we are now going to think about the preacher's training.

It is not enough for one to say, "I'm going to become a preacher", and then to begin to preach. For sure, the desire must be there, but the person wanting to preach must be made to realize that he must train himself or prepare himself for preaching if he is going to be successful in his work.

A young man brought up in a Christian home has a real advantage over those who do not have Christian parents. The young man with Christian parents will, hopefully, be brought up in the care and instruction and admonition of the Lord, being taught faithfully from God's word (Ephesians 6:4). He will receive valuable training and good habits will be formed. He will be taken to worship and he will be encouraged to study his Bible and to pray. Then as he grows up and becomes a Christian himself, he can receive a lot of help and encouragement, as well as much good experience, in the local congregation, teaching classes and having occasions to preach and also to lead in evangelistic studies in homes.

If one is not blessed with a Christian home, is converted later in life, or as a preacher has been converted from denominationalism, he will have to get his training more on the basis of personal determination to study the Bible on his own, through Bible correspondence courses, through studying with a preacher friend or some other interested member of the church.

Hopefully one will take advantage of secular education as he is growing up, and perhaps even go on to college. You may ask if a man is planning to preach the Bible, why would he want a secular education? Because he needs a broad base of learning, along with his knowledge of the Bible, if he is going to be able

to have an influence on many who will have higher education. Even Jesus, it is said, *“increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”* as he was growing up (Luke 2:52). Because of that He was able to talk to lawyers, tax collectors, and the leaders of His day, and the record says that *“He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Matthew 7:29). In other words, He spoke with knowledge and understanding and as one who knew what He was talking about. They were amazed, and had great respect for Him because of that. No, we are not talking about having to have a doctor’s degree to preach the gospel, but neither should one be ignorant as a preacher.

Paul was a very educated man. Luke was a physician. Most of the apostles were common and unlearned people, as far as much secular education was concerned, that is true, but they would have had basic schooling as children, and they had also been trained by the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

So prepare yourself with a good education. If the brethren are operating a Bible school, college, or a preacher training school in your area, put forth an effort to attend it. If that is not available to you, perhaps the church will grow and one day such schools will be available to your children or to their children. As for you, you can study your Bible, along with other Christian books and materials that you have the opportunity to add to your library. Personal dedication to learn is vital to the development of every preacher. One of the best ways to add to one’s Bible knowledge is in actually teaching others, through personal studies or grading Bible correspondence courses offered by most larger churches. Try to obtain a concordance to help you locate scripture references.

Go ahead and preach and teach as you have opportunity in

your village, town, or city, and to those of surrounding areas. If there are congregations around you, perhaps you will have the opportunity to preach to them. If there are not, perhaps you can arrange meetings among friends, or interested parties, and with this effort, not only will you learn and grow, but you may have the opportunity to convert some people and even to begin some new congregations of the church.

Even though you might have been preaching for some time, you must always continue to read and study the word of God, to grow in your Bible knowledge. Prepare your sermons in advance. There is a difference between talking and saying something worth being heard. You were not born a preacher, but you must become one through sincere effort. Don't be lazy and indifferent about your study. Remember that you are dealing with the word of God and you must know it well if you are to be successful in teaching the truth to others. You also must know it well to be able to deal with false teaching and to answer the many questions you will be asked along the way. Show love, but at the same time be firm. Be strong, but be gentle. Show sincerity but be able to smile. There are many works and responsibilities involved in preaching, but you certainly will want to be a good preacher, a hard working preacher, and one who is able to bear good fruit for the Lord.

If you are the kind of preacher God would have you to be then you are going to be able to influence many people for the Lord, and you are going to have the respect of the people who know you. Furthermore, there will be many young men who will want to imitate you and pattern their lives after yours.

Lesson 10

The Preacher's Life

We have discussed elders, deacons, preachers, and others in the church that are involved in leadership. At this time we are discussing a number of things on the subject of preachers, and as we continue with this lesson we want to talk about the preacher's life. We must keep in mind that the preacher is also human, with problems and needs, and that he must safeguard his reputation just like everyone else.

There are many sides to a preacher and even to his life. If you are a preacher, or would like to become one, you need to think seriously about the things we will be saying. While preaching itself is very important, its effectiveness depends much on the kind of life the preacher lives. It could be that he is a hypocrite or a hireling. We certainly pray not, but if he is, he needs to be exposed and rejected as a preacher.

First and foremost, remember that a preacher's life and his preaching should complement one another. In other words, he should practice what he preaches. Luke wrote in Acts 1:1 concerning Jesus that He *"began both to do and teach"*. Notice that He lived it, that He practiced it, and then He preached it, or taught it. That is the kind of preaching the world needs now and always. Any other type is a mockery.

In this study, I would like for us to think about the preacher's physical life: the way he lives, his morality, his social life, his habits, his speech, and then I would like for us to take a look at the preacher's spiritual life.

We'll begin by thinking about the preacher's physical life. It

is true that he may have lived one type of life before becoming a Christian, but now that he has obeyed the gospel, through repentance of sin and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, as a Christian and a developing preacher he must live a clean, pure, godly life. His morals must be beyond question. Paul made a statement to the Roman Christians which would especially apply just here. He said, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* (Romans 12:1,2).

Preachers, especially young preachers, must be careful with their conduct around young women. Even older preachers must be constantly on guard around the opposite sex so as not to fall into temptation and destroy their reputation as well as their souls. Paul advised the young preacher, Timothy, to conduct himself in such a way that no man would despise him because of his youth, but that he should set a good example in all things (1 Timothy 4:12). He went on to say, *“Flee also youthful lusts: but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Timothy 2:22). Paul then said to another young preacher, Titus, *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age”* (Titus 2:11,12).

Preachers must watch their tongues, their speech. Never lie or tell dirty jokes, curse or swear. Paul advises that one should always use the kind of speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:8). One should not use his tongue for gossip, or for revenge. James said, *“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift*

to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19).

What about his habits? Naturally he should not smoke, drink, chew tobacco or use other similar habit-forming substances. Neither should he get hooked on any type of drugs. He should stay away from any form of entertainment that is questionable and wrong. He should always pay his debts. The preacher is no different to the Christian except for the fact that since he is more of a public figure, there will be those watching closely to see what kind of life he is living and how he conducts himself in relationships with others. Both fellow Christians and people of the world will probably be more critical of him than of the average Christian.

The same is true with the preacher’s social contacts. Who are his friends? What type of people does he associate with by preference? It is true that he must deal with all kinds of people because of the nature of his work, but he must be careful of the personal friends he keeps. They should not be questionable characters, with bad morals, etc.

More important than his physical life, what about his spiritual life. What about his prayer life, the time he spends in studying the Bible? Does his daily life denote spirituality? How much time does he spend preparing his sermons? Does he have good study habits? Is he really interested in his work? Does he show love and sincerity in his preaching? Does he get to worship services on time? Does he give of his money as the Bible teaches? Does he do personal work, teaching, visiting the sick, etc.? When he is away from home, does he attend worship? How do people around him look on him? Does he have a good name?

If one is not spiritual, it will come through. Paul said, *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the*

Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17). Christ says that we should put Him and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). Again, He said, *“If any man desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”* (Luke 9:23).

A preacher is the one who has dedicated himself to living for the Lord, of proclaiming His word, of helping people to be saved in this world and in the world to come. He therefore has taken upon himself a great responsibility. He must ever be conscious of the commitment he has made to the Lord and to his fellowman. He must be dedicated, willing to sacrifice his time, and his life if necessary, to the Lord’s cause. Anything less is too little. Someone has said, “Don’t become a preacher if you can be anything else; but if you just must preach, then and only then preach.”

We need preachers — good preachers — more preachers that have truly given themselves to the Lord’s work and will be faithful to Him to do that work for the rest of their lives.

Lesson 11

The Preacher's Family

We have been discussing the type of leadership the Lord wants in His church, and we would hope that this would encourage some of you to think seriously about obeying the Lord, becoming a Christian, a member of the church of Christ, and then preparing yourself to be one of those leaders.

It may be that you are interested in preaching. If so, our present studies specifically deal with the preacher, his motives, training, and life. In this study we will think about the preacher's family.

Many men begin to preach while they are very young. Really, this is the best time to make that decision so that one can prepare himself and get the proper training. Then as he matures, marries, has a family, he is well prepared to do the work he has chosen to do. Before marriage, he may live with his parents while receiving his training, and this will give him security, a place of belonging, and association with his family members who love him and want to encourage him with his work.

Let it be understood that the scriptures do not teach that a preacher is forbidden to marry. Occasionally a preacher decides not to marry, and that is fine, if it is his choice. By choosing to remain single, he can give more time to his work, he will be free to travel, and he will not have to have the kind of monetary needs as a man with a family. Evidently the apostle Paul did not marry and he advised those of his day, because of the difficult times they lived in, that it would be better that they not marry. However, his writings make it clear that if they still felt the need

to marry, they should do so (1 Corinthians 7:7-9).

Most preachers do choose to marry and have families, which brings us to another major consideration. Since the preacher is a Christian, and a member of the church of Christ, and plans to spend the rest of his life in the Lord's work, also he needs to marry a woman who has not been married before (Matthew 19:9), and that woman should also be a Christian, a member of the Lord's church. He will need all the help and encouragement possible from a companion who is a faithful follower of Christ. To marry one who is not a believer, or to even marry one who is a member of some denominational church, can be disastrous. The Apostle Paul said, *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14,15). It might be argued that the main thing would be for one to be a believer in Christ, and the matter of being a member of the same church would not be much of a problem. But it would be a very great problem, and the best way to avoid it is not to become yoked and united in marriage with a person who does not share your faith and relationship with God.

The next question concerning marriage is, what do you do when you are in an area where the church is small and there are not many young Christian ladies available for marriage? In that case, before entering into marriage, you must choose a young lady who can be taught the truth and converted to the Lord, perhaps along with her family. If this cannot be done with one girl, maybe it can be done with another. If it seems to be impossible to find and convert the right person for a wife, one must decide whether he wants to serve the Lord or to get married. To be mar-

ried to a woman who is not a member of the Lord's church can prove to be disastrous to the man who wants to preach the gospel.

But the young man might reason that he will marry and then he will convert his wife. This sounds good and logical, but often times it doesn't work out according to plan. Certainly one cannot force his wife to obey the gospel and become a member of the Lord's church. She has a mind of her own and is responsible for her own soul. She must not only be taught, but she must also be given the freedom to make her own decision. Now, what if she refuses to respond? Then you have a real problem if you are already married. The way to avoid such a problem is simply to refuse to marry one who is not a member of Christ's church in the first place.

Keep in mind that the person one chooses to marry will be a very important factor in regard to his family, his work, and the influence he will have in the area where he lives.

A preacher will want a woman who is united with him in Christ, so that she can be a part of his work. She must be a person he can love and respect, one he will be proud to have as the mother of his children. In the family, the husband will be the one to earn a living and to take care of his wife and children, but the wife will be the one who takes care of the home and the children, keeping the house clean, providing the meals, seeing after the children in times of health and sickness, helping with their character training and their spiritual training. It is important therefore that he choose a wife who will be matched to the man's own character, capabilities, and dedication.

The home should be a haven for all of the members of the family. It should be a place where Christ is honored, where both the husband and the wife are respected and loved and helped and

encouraged. It should be a retreat to return to for strength and reassurance. It should not be a place where fussing and fighting are constantly going on. It should not be merely a place to eat and sleep, and where the family members hardly know each other. Rather, it should be a place for Bible study and prayer, a place of unity, a place of peace and contentment.

Certainly there will be some problems along the way. If a man is developing a Christian home, those problems can be worked out.

The wife should be highly esteemed outside the home also. She should be encouraged to train and prepare herself to teach her children at home and the children in the local congregation the ways of the Lord. She should go with her husband to visit the members and others of the area, especially when he is going to houses where the men are not at home. She should be seen as a helper and a supporter of her husband, a real Christian wife and homemaker who is given to hospitality, helping the sick and needy, and giving herself to good works.

The children should be brought up in the teachings of the Bible, having respect for their parents and being a good influence on other children and young people (Ephesians 6:1-4). When they become young adults they should have been taught and trained in such a way that they too will become Christians.

A preacher should never be mean to his family, and it should never come to the place, because of his actions or the actions of his wife, that separation and divorce take place. If such a thing ever happened, whether or not it was the preacher's fault, it would be advisable not to continue to preach, because of the negative effect of his example.

Lesson 12

The Preacher's Support

What does the Bible say about supporting a preacher? Should he be paid? There have always been people, and even some in the church, who have opposed this practice. Some congregations take care of their own preaching by letting the men of the congregation take turns preaching. After doing this for a few years, there have been cases where the members begin to think that it would be wrong to give a preacher a regular salary.

Before seeing what the Bible says on this subject, let me ask this question: Doesn't a preacher have to live, too? If so, how is he going to pay his expenses and provide for their needs? It is true that a young preacher may not need much support, because he may still be living with his parents. There are any number of possibilities that would make it unnecessary for one to receive a salary. But again, what about the preacher who has only his brethren, the church, to look to for his support? What then?

When Jesus sent out the seventy to preach to the people of Israel, He said, *"Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house'. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house"* (Luke 10:3-7).

Paul said that even an elder of the church who gives his full time to the Lord and His cause is worthy of receiving financial

support. Hear what he said, *“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain’, and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’”* (1 Timothy 5:17,18). Paul goes back to Deuteronomy 25:4 to show that even oxen were rewarded for their work. He then uses that fact to show that any laborer is worthy of his hire whether it be an elder or preacher. He explains that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:13,14).

We know that in addition to being an apostle and a preacher, Paul was a tentmaker by profession (Acts 18:1-3). Explaining to the Corinthian Christians some of the things that he had experienced as a servant of the Lord, he said that he had also laboured, working with his own hands (1 Corinthians 4:12). With the church being young, he didn’t want to be a burden. He said again to the Corinthian Christians, *“Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?”* (2 Corinthians 12:14-18).

Although Paul did not want to burden his brethren by looking to them for financial help, still there were those who did give to his needs at times. For example, we read where the Philippian brethren supported him. Paul said, *“Now you Philippians know*

also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you did aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:15-19).

Now I think that we can see from God’s word that the principle of supporting or giving a salary to a preacher, or even to an elder who uses his full time in the Lord’s work, is certainly there. Naturally it can be misused and abused, as can any other principle, but the point is, this practice is not forbidden by God.

But who is to pay the preacher? Scripturally, the church, and the church is made up of individual members. They are the ones who give to make it possible for the preacher to be paid. How much should the preacher be paid? It depends on the work he does and how much the church is able to pay. If the church is not able, that ends the matter right there. But if the church can pay part-time support, or full support, then it will be up to the elders, or if there are no elders, for the men of the congregation to meet, discuss their needs, whether this is the preacher they want to use, and if so, how much they will want to pay, based on the money they have available. Then they may call in the preacher and convey to him their decision. If they are able to agree on the salary, and what his duties will be, the matter is settled. It is just that simple. If he feels he cannot live on what they offer, naturally he will have to make other arrangements, and so will they.

Or it may be that a congregation may have sufficient funds to help with some work in another part of the city, state, or country. It may even be that they have received a request from a sister congregation for help with financial support for their preacher. They may choose to do this or they may not be in position to do so.

There can be many different circumstances and situations to arise concerning the preacher and his support, but all of these can be worked out by brethren as they go along, dealing with the needs as they develop. Certainly, though, it is scriptural and right for the church to support their preacher, if they are able to do so.

Lesson 13

The Preacher's Use of Money

The first purpose of these lessons is to inform those of you, who may not count yourselves as leaders, what it really means to be a leader in the church of our Lord. Our second purpose is to encourage those who may be Christians already to learn what the Lord requires of those who would become leaders. A scriptural leader is not born, but he is made by study and service.

We will continue our study of the preacher, his needs, problems, and work. For our study at this time we want to talk about the preacher's use of money.

Paul said, *"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, goodness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses"* (1 Timothy 6:7-12).

Preachers are like most other people. They often put too much emphasis on money. They want to preach, but in order to do so they must have a salary. If the church is not able to support them, and if they are unable to find support otherwise, they may begin to come up with different schemes on how to raise money

for themselves. They may line up a number of people to visit each month with the hope that they will give them some regular support. Those who are giving may feel that they are thus fulfilling their responsibility to God. The preacher may not preach at all since the ones who give to his needs do not attend any services he conducts. This, then, is a form of deception.

But whether a preacher obtains his salary honestly or dishonestly, the sad thing is that so many don't know how to handle their money, and this is especially so if they are receiving more money than they really need. Some find a way to get on foreign support, usually receiving more funds than they would through their local brethren. Those who are dishonest may receive funds from two or more sources, and end up with a considerable amount of money. It becomes noticeable when they spend lavishly on themselves, buying houses and property, invest in a scooter or car, and boast of their new-found wealth.

Money then, the love of money, leads many preachers to use unscriptural ways to raise their funds. They may use deception and lies. Then such dishonest men will misuse the funds they received, boasting of what they have been able to do. What will happen to them? They will destroy themselves in the end, and often times the end comes quickly, because how long can you go on deceiving people without being caught? But even while going on with their pretense, who will attend their meetings, and who will believe the things that they preach? Most who know them will realize that something is wrong.

Again, preachers are like a lot of other people in that they may fall into the habit of borrowing money from their brothers and sisters in Christ. Even those who are honestly trying to live a good life and to faithfully serve the Lord may make this mistake.

They have not learned the lesson, however, to live within their means. They feast today and face famine tomorrow. They see too much that they want. They try to keep up with too many of their friends. To be cutting it close, and then to borrow money, makes it very difficult to repay the money. This can cause friction, bad feelings, and loss of confidence and respect for the preacher in the hearts of those who have loaned money he is unable to return. I would suggest to you preachers, work hard and do everything you can not to fall into this pit. Live on less and have less if you must, but live within your means. If that is not enough, in spite of everything, maybe you need to earn your living from a secular job, and then preach on the weekends and help with the work in other ways only in your spare time.

The Bible condemns covetousness, the love of money, the abuses of the use of money, the misuse of money, the waste of money, and the many other problems that grow out of managing money. The Lord would have a preacher to be a true follower of Christ in every aspect of his daily behaviour. It is great to preach, but if you can't be a sincere Christian while you preach, it is a terrible sin against yourself, the church and especially against God.

Another problem most preachers have with money — and I am speaking of those who would honestly and sincerely claim to be doing their best to live according to the Lord's will — is that of not giving to the Lord as the scriptures teach. Even though they may preach to the church on the subject of giving, most preachers do not *practice* what they preach. Somehow they think that they are exempt from the rule. Most would be ashamed to tell anyone what they actually gave. Usually it is just a token. As a matter of fact, they don't preach on giving very much because they know that they themselves are not giving as they should.

Do you remember Ananias and Sapphira and what happened to them? At the time there was a special need to help the Christians in Jerusalem who had come from distant places and had stayed over to hear more of God's word, being strengthened in the fellowship of others who had accepted Christ. As a result, the local disciples were even selling their possessions and lands in order to take what they received and dividing it among those in need. This was not something that was forced on them, but rather it was a voluntary thing. Ananias and Sapphira got in on this and claimed that they were giving all they had received from a parcel of land, when actually they were holding back part of the price. As a result of their lies, they both fell dead at the feet of the apostles (Acts 5:1-11). If the Lord was using this method today, how many preachers, as well as members of the church as a whole, would fall dead this Sunday at the time of the collection?

Preachers need to learn to give as they have been prospered, as they have purposed in their hearts, and cheerfully, in order to set an example for their brethren (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7). If they would do this, they could preach on giving and brethren would respond accordingly.

Yes, preachers and their families need to take some lessons on how to deal with money. If they will let Jesus help them with this, they will be far better off.

Lesson 14

The Hireling Preacher

For the last two or three lessons we have dealt with the preacher and money. This is so important because most preachers have problems with money. The lesson today will more than prove that.

No, it is not wrong for a preacher to receive a salary, but when he sells his very heart and soul for a little money, he is wrong. When I think of someone doing such I am reminded of Judas who was willing to betray our Lord for 30 pieces of silver. He ended up committing suicide, and the preacher who can be bought to preach is actually committing spiritual suicide.

But what is the difference between being supported to preach — simply receiving a salary for services — and being bought to preach? Surely you already know the answer to that question. It is one thing to be converted, to sincerely desire to preach, and to receive a salary to enable one to do so, but it is another thing altogether to preach for any one who will buy one's bread.

I have been approached a number of times by so-called preachers who actually offered to “change over to the Church of Christ” if they could receive full-time support, and they would even throw in two or three churches in the deal. In other words, they were saying that they were working with some churches, and if I would give them a salary, they would bring those churches along with them. That means that they would cease to be whatever they were and from that time on they would call themselves the church of Christ. In that case, they would have agreed to be immersed in water, and to make other changes according

to the requirement. But what kind of men would suggest such things? What kind of churches would agree to that kind of deal? Naturally, I had no interest. Very little can be done with such preachers and with such churches, for that matter, because they have no conviction or conscience. They would sell their very souls for money. This kind of thing breaks your heart, but it does happen.

Jesus talked about the sheepfold, the door to the sheepfold, and the good shepherd. Of course, the sheepfold is the church, there is one door into the church, and the good shepherd is Christ, who is the way into the church (John 14:6). Now hear what Christ says: *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep, and am known by My own”* (John 10:11-14).

Please notice that Christ is the good shepherd and as such He is willing to give His life for the sheep. The “sheep” here represent Christians or the church. Paul said in Acts 20:28, in speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”* Paul refers to the church as being the flock, and he also brings out that Christ has purchased the flock, or the church, with His own blood. That is what He meant when He said that *“the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep”*.

Christ also talked about the hireling. He said that the hire-

ling is not the shepherd, that the sheep do not belong to him, and therefore when the wolf or the enemy comes, the hireling leaves the sheep alone and unprotected. Christ said that in the meantime the wolf, or the enemy, catches the sheep and scatters them. In other words, he deceives the people and divides them. Christ explains further that this happens because the hireling is a hireling and doesn't have any concern for the sheep. He doesn't stay to protect them from harm. The same would be true with preachers and teachers who are hired to preach, who have not been truly converted, and who have no real concern for the members of the church. As long as everything is going well, and they are getting their pay, they are "on the job". But if a problem arises or if they are questioned, the hireling will disappear, leaving the congregation prey to teachers of false doctrine who will cause the members to be divided, scattered, and lost.

Christ says that, as a good shepherd, He knows the sheep and the sheep know Him. Even in today's world, the Lord knows His people and His people know Him. He will therefore never leave them nor forsake them.

Let's take another look at a hireling. This is a man who perhaps has become a believer in Christ, but he has been taught that there are many churches, and that one is as good as another. Needing work, and thinking he would like to be a "full-time" preacher, he may offer his services to most any church he comes across. This kind of man is especially drawn to foreigners because he thinks they can be more easily deceived. If they are of a different church — even in the Lord's church — he may supposedly be converted, he may be immersed, he may even take some training. But since he was originally trained, perhaps, to be a preacher in a particular church and has learned their doctrines, then he probably will continue to preach those doctrines regard-

less of the religious group he is with. And if things don't work out with one church, he can quickly switch over to another.

What sort of man can do this kind of thing? Only a hireling. It is true that people may sincerely change from one church to another, but generally this is the result of being convinced that they are in error and they are now leaving that error to accept the truth and to be a member of the true church. But the change is one of the heart, not merely a change in pay master. To sell one's spiritual allegiance for money is very low indeed.

So a hireling is literally for hire. He has no heart, no real conviction, no commitment, or anything else. He can switch from one church to another with no difficulty, especially if he can get a little more pay. He is always looking for a better deal.

Sometimes we hear of a whole group of preachers leaving one church for another. In such cases, it is very unlikely that they were truly convinced of their error and left their denominational church in order to become a part of the church of Christ. While it is not impossible for a preacher now and then to learn of his error and to correct it, generally when a number of preachers are willing to change religions, it is because they are disgruntled with their church, or see an opportunity to increase their salary, or for some other ulterior reason.

My friend, I hope you are not an hireling. If you are, you need to repent and obey God. To those of you planning to preach, I beg you to learn God's will, obey it, and become a member of the Lord's church, the only true church in existence (Acts 2).

Lesson 15

Foreign Support

Since the church in foreign countries are still young, hardly any congregations are able to support their own preacher. In a few congregations the members do the preaching, or the preacher earns his living through secular work. There might be other situations which would make it possible for a congregation to have a preacher even though it is unable to support him entirely from the collection. Of course the church is growing over the country in numbers, in spirituality, and in ability, but probably it will still be some time before the local congregations become financially independent.

Because the church is not able to support its own preachers, this has led many men to seek foreign support. Brethren in America, Canada, England, Germany, Australia and other places have responded very generously. As a matter of fact, many of their preachers have come here and have seen the need. They have met men who expressed a desire to preach, and as a result, numerous ones have been put on support. This would appear to be a good thing, and no doubt it has been the means of helping the church to grow in some cases, but it has also resulted in some bad things.

With foreign support being available to young men who have no job and not much hope for the future, scores have been attracted to the ministry. This type of work has great appeal in a country where there are many religions, with many gurus, and so-called “holy men” devoting their lives to religious works. The majority of these men find it is easy to talk, having no stage fright. Because of their culture they prefer not being required to

do any manual work, so the life of a preacher, as they see it, has wide appeal. Add to the advantage that these preachers will be able to take pride in the fact that they have a foreign salary, and perhaps will receive side benefits along the way, maybe even a trip to America or some other country. A further advantage is that they will not be responsible to any local brethren, and their foreign supporter will not be present to look over their shoulder and supervise them closely. Even if someone might be sent occasionally, he will not know the local language, and his visit will be short.

This summary is not meant to say that all who end up on foreign support take advantage of their foreign brethren, and neither is it implying that those who are still on foreign support — and there are many — are using and misusing their foreign brethren and the support that they are receiving while giving little or nothing in return. Certainly some of the preachers are good and honest and are trying to do a reliable job, but I must say that many others are not. This is the bad part about foreign support.

There are preachers who have even set up rackets to work their foreign brethren and to get everything out of them that they can. They are not ignorant. They find out what appeals to brethren and then they begin to push that program. Schools, preacher training programs, orphan homes, and preaching trips where hundreds and even thousands are baptized are some of the favorites. Some appeal to the sympathy of brethren by telling of orphans, fires, and floods. Then there are preachers who have letterheads and envelopes printed up so that they can write to hundreds and hundreds of their foreign brethren, asking for help. Even if a few respond, they can do quite well. Some are seen buying up property, houses, cars, videos, and other things, and of course all in their name. A few have even built small empires of control

over groups of preachers during the past few years. True, in the end some will somehow get away with their fraud, but others will be caught. This will cause their foreign brethren to be so disappointed that they may refuse to help with foreign work all together in the future.

Those on foreign support may be lazy. Some of them don't even know enough truth to preach a scriptural sermon. Just think about dozens and hundreds of preachers being converted from other churches. Why would they change in such large numbers? We would like to think that they heard the truth, saw their error, and had a desire to obey God, but to be more realistic, it is likely that most of them changed because they heard that the Church of Christ was hiring preachers and paying more than they were already getting. Now if they are put on support, what do you think they are going to preach? Christ said that the gospel should be preached (Mark 16:15), and Paul said that the word should be proclaimed (2 Timothy 4:2), but if preachers don't know the truth, how can they preach it, even though they may receive support. This system produces a hireling system as anyone can see if he has his eyes open.

Also, as mentioned earlier, those on foreign support feel no responsibility to the local brethren, and the local brethren have no way of controlling them, or directing them. This creates a bad situation. Many such preachers are young, and they need guidance and supervision. But if they won't listen, or just drift around over the country all the time, how much good will they accomplish?

Another bad thing about preachers being on foreign support, usually they will not settle down and build self-supporting works, for the simple reason that their foreign brethren will pay them

more than local churches, and they don't want to be on support to local brethren and having to answer to them. If they would build self-supporting congregations, then turn over to local preachers the work with those congregations, so they could move on to repeat their success, then I would be in favor of such an arrangement, but seldom does a self-supporting church ever become a reality. This means that the church itself is weakened to the extent that it relies on foreign support, year after year after year. It weakens the local church, too, in the sense that Christians don't come forward to accept their individual responsibilities, feeling that this is a "foreign" work.

Another bad thing about foreign support is that local brethren tend to look to the foreign brethren with a desire to please them. When these preachers come they are asked to do all of the baptizing, and sometimes they come between local brethren and cause divisions that last for years. How sad it is that local preachers often divide up according to who is supporting them, and refuse to work together, etc. I would say to churches: it may be more difficult for awhile to do without foreign support but, in the end, you will be stronger when you support your own work. Why not determine to give it a try?

Lesson 16

Building a Self-Supporting Church

Most young men who want to preach will readily tell you that they desire to be a full time preacher. They don't seem to have any interest in part-time preaching, doing secular work to make a living and then preaching on the weekends, holidays, and on different nights through the week. I know that I have talked to many and have given them this advice, but they usually come back with this answer: "Yes, but I want to give my full time to preaching". Now what does this statement say? Simply that they want a full time salary. But they surely know that the church in their area is still young, that Christians are few in number and are unable in most cases to pay a preacher a full-time salary. This means that they must turn to some foreign source for their full-time support. What will many of them do once they make this connection? They will receive a full-time salary, and that is about all it will amount to. Neither they nor the church in most cases will be benefitted by this arrangement.

As a young preacher, if you are really converted to the Lord, and if you are sincerely dedicated to Him and to preaching His word, take one step at a time. There is a lot more to being a preacher than just deciding to preach, more than just having the desire to be a full time preacher. First of all, get some training. Get your education at home, and some college education if possible. Then while you are doing this, read and study your Bible. Find other books that will help you with your study. If you are a member of a local congregation, participate in all of the activities. If there is a preacher training school in the area, maybe you can arrange to go for a year or two.

While you are at home, preach at every opportunity you may have. If the church cannot support you, and you want to go out on your own, marry, and have a family, then get yourself a secular job. While you are working for a living, you can also work for the Lord. The Apostle Paul did this (Acts 18:3), working with his own hands to make his living (1 Corinthians 4:12). But that didn't stop him from preaching, did it? And neither will it stop you from preaching, if you really want to preach God's word. As a matter of fact, if you are really determined to preach, you will find a way to do that.

Learn to work with others. Don't count other preachers as your enemies, as your competitors. Even if they don't treat you the same way, you should have the proper attitude toward them.

Maybe you can work with a local congregation, or go out to another area, start a work, and stay with it, help it to grow, and finally help that congregation to reach the point of being able to give you full support. As you are doing this, don't become the big boss, or do all of the preaching, teaching, praying, singing, etc., yourself, but work with the congregation in such a way as to encourage the members to grow themselves in their abilities. If you will respect them, and build in them respect for you because of your honesty, sincerity, and your willingness to work, then they will surely grow in every way and will soon reach the point where they can support you. After this happens, don't feel puffed up and big or important, but be yourself, humble, having love for your brethren, and a desire to reach the lost around you with the gospel.

If you really want to do something great for the Lord, then build a self-supporting congregation. This will be a real test for you. It will be a great example for other preachers and congre-

gations. Really what the church in this whole part of the world needs is to become independent, self-supporting churches; to have elders and deacons, to support their own preachers and to take care of their own needs, to prove to themselves that they are capable, to be able to stand on their own, independent from outside help. This would be reassuring to all, to show what is possible.

So many brethren up to this point have been so prone to look to others for help that they fail to be concerned about their own development. They still have their hand out, even though in many cases they should be taking care of their own needs. How many families within a congregation are self-supporting? They may not be rich, or have large salaries in every case, but still they earn enough to provide for their own needs. Now if this be true, why can't the members in that congregation give enough to take care of the church's needs? It is not that one family must do this alone, but with several families giving 10 or 12 percent of their income to God, they can support their own preacher. When they achieve this independence, they would never want to be dependent on others again.

Now once there are some self-supporting churches scattered around, others are encouraged to follow their example. Furthermore, as congregations become self-supporting many other things begin to take place. They can consider growing to the point of sending their own missionaries out. They are now able to help with preacher training schools. And some day there may be enough Christians in the area for them to band together and establish their own Christian college, to support their own orphans' home, and other such good works.

Again, what can you do as a preacher? Teach the church

the importance of growing in numbers, but also help Christians to grow spiritually, in their giving, and in their vision. Don't sit with them and drain them of everything they have. Don't be negative, lazy, with no initiative or goals. Get up and go to work and help the church to become independent, being determined to be fully supported yourself by your own local brethren. That is a worthy goal to work for and a great day to celebrate when it happens. With God's help it can become a reality.

Lesson 17

The Preacher's Appearance

You might not consider appearance to be a Bible subject or one worthy of our time, but when you think about the preacher, who he is, what he represents, and his influence, you can see that everything about him is important.

No, I am not suggesting that the only young men — or older men for that matter — who can be preachers are those who are handsome, well-dressed, and come from wealthy backgrounds. Actually, it was said of our Lord that He had no form nor comeliness, and when seen, there was no beauty to be desired (Isaiah 53:2). Most of the apostles came from uneducated, poor, and harsh backgrounds. Even Paul was not thought to have been a great speaker and probably had poor vision, according to Galatians 4:15 and 2 Corinthians 12:7. I know that I have personally seen blind preachers, crippled preachers, and many who were far from having the most pleasing physical make-up. Most preachers are certainly not wealthy but neither are they the poorest of the poor. So I am not talking about physical beauty when it comes to the preacher, but I am referring to what he allows himself to become, his general attitude, his overall appearance, and how others see him.

The preacher is a messenger of God in the sense that he proclaims His word. First of all, he must not only appear to be spiritual, but he must *be* spiritual. He has put off the old man of sin, which represents ugliness and distaste, and put on Christ and righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). He is not to be proud, haughty, and boastful, but meek and gentle, and loving (1 Peter 5:5; 2 Corinthians 10:15-18; Matthew 5:5; Titus 3:2; 1

John 4:21). Paul makes a statement that could well apply to the preacher, when he said, *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* (Colossians 3:12-17).

So the preacher must be Christ-like and ever a godly example in all that is good and right. Brethren are watching and so are the people of the world. If he is not sincere and genuine, that can be seen easily. If he is a hypocrite, all will know it. If one intends to be a preacher and have much influence on those around him, he must practice what he preaches.

Not only must a man be at his very best in regard to his spiritual appearance, but his physical appearance is equally important. Of course there are many people today who will tell you that you shouldn't judge by outward appearance because the thing that is important is what may be found in the heart. It is true that man often sees the outward appearance of a person regarding his looks, clothing, actions, etc., but it is equally true that the Lord looks on the heart, concerning motives and attitudes (1 Samuel 16:7). Yet, one's physical appearance often betrays one's feelings, what is in his heart, his values, his motives, and his attitudes. If a person has a rebellious attitude, his clothes

may reflect it. If he has low standards, his general appearance will likely be of equally careless or low standards. Appearance — chosen appearance — does betray a great deal about the heart, good or bad. But it does not tell everything: appearance can be deceptive. That is why the Bible says that the Lord looks into the heart itself, and will judge accordingly on the day of judgment. Nothing will be hidden from Him at that time.

Let me go on to suggest another point concerning the preacher's physical appearance. Remember he is a preacher of God's word, and represents the Lord in that sense. Therefore he should put forth an effort to stay clean, shave daily or keep his mustache and beard well-trimmed and groomed. He should keep his hair cut at least short enough that no one would accuse him of competing with the young women in his general appearance. Paul says that is a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14). Of course the old argument on that is, how long is long? The person who has long hair knows when he has long hair and so do you and I, and that should settle the matter. Of all people who would not want to have objections raised against his grooming, it would be the preacher who is really concerned about his work. The preacher should dress neatly, not to the point of showing off or calling special attention to himself, but he should wear his better clothes during worship and preaching services. What would he wear to a wedding, to a funeral, or if he was being invited to meet the President or the Prime Minister? If a person is unable to afford a suit, or a nicer form of dress clothes, including shoes, then he can at least dress in the best that he has, and see to it that his clothes are clean and neat.

We are living in a time when people have gotten so casual with their dress and appearance that it is ridiculous. If a preacher, for example, cares so little about his clothes and grooming that he

looks like a tramp, with no respect for himself and others, not to mention God, who would want to hear him? Who would want to come to him for spiritual help? Don't kid yourself, those things do make a difference! I realize that it can be taken to an extreme, but many have carried to the opposite extreme today. If a man respects himself he will show that respect in the way he dresses.

It is argued that when a preacher gets down to a casual and sloppy level in his appearance, he is relating to the common people. Are you serious about that? People want someone to look up to as an example of what it means to better their spiritual and physical lives. If all they see is a low standard, they will more than likely turn and go in the opposite direction. Look at your business people, your successful people in any field, and see how they dress. Again, one doesn't have to be wealthy to have a good appearance and to have the respect of the people, but he does have to care about himself and the message he is sending to the people around him.

Preachers, think about these things and how you can improve your life and how you appear to others. It does make a difference.

Lesson 18

Who Is a Preacher?

Who is a preacher? We will attempt to tell you who a preacher is and who he is not. You may be surprised at some of the things you will learn in this lesson. First we will consider who the preacher is, what he is called, and some of his works.

The preacher is said to be a minister. Although many think that the preacher is the exclusive minister in the church, actually all Christians are ministers. That is, the preacher and all members are to minister to the people around them. They are to help those in need and to show their concern for their fellow-man, first for Christians and then for others. Paul spoke of himself as a minister to the Gentles (Romans 15:16). On another occasion he said he was going to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints (Romans 15:25). He said that we are ministers of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6). Paul said he was a minister of the gospel (Colossians 1:23).

The preacher may be an evangelist. A preacher who is described as an evangelist is one who goes from place to place as he preaches the gospel (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5).

The preacher may be a missionary. Although the word missionary does not appear in God's word, his work is described there. The missionary is one who has great zeal for the Lord and goes even to far away places to live for extended periods of time, to preach the gospel, and to plant the cause of Christ. Was not Paul and many others of the New Testament just that?

The preacher is a servant. Paul, Peter, James, and other

preachers of the New Testament era called themselves servants (Romans 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1). That is, they considered themselves the servants of the Lord and of their fellowman, in dedicating their lives and energies to their use. They were not ashamed to refer to themselves as such.

Yes, the preacher is all of this, and much more. On the other hand, a preacher is not a lot of things he is accused of being. We'll notice some of the things he is not at this time.

The preacher is not a Pope of the church. Christ is the one and only head of the church (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). Neither is he the big boss of the local congregation. That is not the work of a preacher. As we have seen, he serves instead of bossing people. The elders of the church are to oversee the local congregation, including the work of the preacher.

The preacher is not an apostle. There are no apostles today. In order for one to be an apostle, he had to be with the disciples from the baptism of John up to the time that the Lord was taken up into heaven, and of course he had to be an eye witness of the Lord's resurrection (Acts 1:21-23). There are people in the world today — even preachers — who claim to be apostles, but they are fakes and impostors.

The preacher is not a pastor, bishop, elder (three terms for the same office), or deacon as those terms are commonly used. Scripturally, a preacher could be any of these, provided he is able to meet the qualifications laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. But today "pastor", "bishop", and "deacon" are generally titles given to denominational preachers who are neither members of the Lord's church nor have they met the qualifications laid down in God's word.

The preacher is not a miracle healer or performer. The apostles, and those on whom they laid their hands that they might have the power of the Holy Spirit, were able to perform miracles, but preachers or members of the church in general were not given the power to do miracles. Even if miracles were being performed today, certainly preachers and others who are in man-made churches and organization, and who wear denominational names and titles, would not be the ones selected to do such things. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that with the coming of the Lord's perfect will or law, miracles were no longer needed. If you still think that some of those preachers can perform miracles, check with them and see if they ever put new legs on people, or new arms, or give new eyes, or raise the dead, and such like. Christ and the apostles did these types of wonders, not "healing" a headache or "curing" an unseen ulcer.

The preacher is not a "Reverend", "The Right Reverend", "The Most Right Reverend", etc. Neither is he a spiritual father, or a religious doctor. Men love titles and seek to elevate themselves with such, but the Lord condemned them. Jesus said, *"Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Matthew 23:9-12). The Psalmist David, in referring to God, said *"holy and reverend is His name"* (Psalm 111:9).

The preacher of the Bible is just an ordinary man. He is not a big man in the sense of occupying a big office, or of lording authority over the people "in his church". As far as one can go in the Lord's church is simply to be a preacher of a local congregation under the oversight of the elders of that congregation,

provided there are qualified men to serve in that capacity. If there are no men qualified, he must work under the leadership of the men of that church. He is not the head of that congregation. He is not to be given a title or to be exalted or honored as some great person. Rather, he is to preach God's word, to serve, and minister to the needs of the local congregation and the people of the area.

The scripture nowhere talks about one man serving as the head of the church, universally or locally. We do not read of one man being the bishop or the pastor of the church at Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, etc. Neither does the Lord approve of men being in such positions today. This situation creates politics and power that are contrary to God's will.

Paul's attitude was, *"For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"* (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Are you a preacher? Do you desire to be a preacher? What kind of preacher will you be? We pray that you will be the kind of preacher the Lord describes in His word.

Lesson 19

The Preacher's Library

Whether one is young or old, he needs to develop a habit of reading and studying the Bible. That especially applies to preachers since they spend a lot of their time teaching God's word.

No, God does not give a preacher his message, except through the Bible itself. He has not promised to make a direct revelation, or to put in his heart — separate and apart from the written word — what he should teach. Whatever the true preacher says is based on his former studying and comprehension of God's word, or what he has heard from others over a period of time. Without a Bible and a knowledge of it, or without receiving information from someone, or through literature, he would not be able to preach anything that would resemble a sermon from God's word. Something cannot come from nothing. Of course the apostles were directed by the Holy Spirit in their preaching and writing, but we do not receive our information today in this manner, because we do not live in the age of new revelation and its confirmation through miracles. We are commanded to search the scriptures (John 5:39), to study (2 Timothy 2:15), and that we should preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2). Christ said that the truth will make us free. How is that done? As stated, by reading and studying and obeying the truth (Hebrews 5:8,9). Paul says that the scriptures completely furnish man unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16,17), and that the Lord has given to us everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

All of the foregoing statements emphasize the preacher's need for study and preparation if he is going to be effective in

preaching God's word. Of course most anyone can get up and say something, filling time, but if a man intends to preach and to expect people to hear him and to be benefitted by what is taught, he needs to prepare himself to say something worthwhile. It is a serious matter to be a preacher, because one is dealing with God's word, and is passing on information to men and women concerning their souls and where they will spend eternity. No work could be more serious.

Let me suggest that each preacher should build his own personal library. Naturally he should begin by purchasing a well-bound Bible in his language, and if he is bilingual he will want a Bible in each language he knows. Choose a widely accepted Bible, one that is recognized as being the best translation from the original language. I say this because there have been many translations and versions brought out in the English language alone, and sometimes two or more in other tongues. The King James in English is still widely accepted. Some would now prefer the New King James Version since it has updated some of the words, giving expressions that are used today instead of those that were common in the 1600's. Another good version would be the New American Standard version. There are others, also, but beware of paraphrase versions, personal translations, and such like. Even they can be purchased for your own personal study, for comparison of one with the other. But be consistent in your preaching and use one version. Do your memory work from one that is known by most of those to whom you will be preaching.

Don't become fanatical, though, about those versions you do not use and forbid brethren to have them in their possession. People must be warned about some of these newer versions and taught concerning them, but no one has the authority to forbid their use.

Next, you will need to get a good concordance to be able to look up the verses that pertain to a word or to a subject. Using a variety of scriptures on your subject will strengthen your lessons.

A Webster's dictionary, or any good English dictionary, along with a Bible dictionary will be of tremendous help to you in your study. You will need the English dictionary to help you with the spelling of words, their pronunciation, and their meaning. Your Bible dictionary will also make it possible to become familiar with different biblical words, their meanings, and the scriptures that pertain to them. A good book along this line which would be very helpful is **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** by W. E. Vine.

Another book to add to your collection would be a Bible Geography, along with maps of the Bible world.

For those who want to get more involved in their studies, there are Hebrew and Greek Lexicons available, books which give the words and their meanings in the original languages of the Scriptures. In the Greek in particular, Thayer's Lexicon is widely accepted.

Then there are Bible commentaries, books of sermons, topical studies, and numerous others that are available. Many of these have been written by our own brethren.

I would caution you about the type of books you purchase for reading and studying. The ones you would find available to you at book stores, and especially at religious book stores, would be denominational and most of them would be full of religious error. If you read such books for information, to see what others teach, and to know how to answer them, be sure to compare what you read with what the Bible teaches on that subject.

If you as a preacher of the gospel want books written by brethren, talk to the local brethren to see if they can put you in contact with a book store operated by members of the church, or if they can help you with an address from which such materials can be supplied.

If there are magazines published by Christians, be sure to ask that your name be put on the mailing list. You may even be able to arrange to receive some foreign publications, enabling you to keep up with the Lord's work throughout the world.

While these books and publications may be of great help to you, realize that they were written by men. Put God's word above them and be sure in your reading and studying and in your preaching that you put the Lord and His will before everything else. Respect others, and especially preachers and writers of the church, but follow Christ only.

Keep adding to your library as you go through life. Take good care of your books as precious tools. God will bless you and your work as you grow in knowledge, ability and service.

Lesson 20

Methods of Preaching

We know that the job of the preacher is to preach, to proclaim God's word, to take the gospel to a lost and dying world (Mark 16:15,16). Back in the days of the apostles the main means of getting the gospel out was by word of mouth, that is, through standing before an audience and telling those gathered there of Christ and the salvation He brought to the world, as in Acts 2. Another way was through personal teaching, as in the case of Philip talking to the man from Ethiopia about his need to believe in Christ and to obey the Lord (Acts 8). There were also scribes in those days who spent their time copying the scriptures and making them available for reading. Paul and others wrote letters to their brethren and through those letters they took advantage of the opportunity to exhort Christians and to encourage them to be faithful to the Lord, to be on guard against false teachers, etc. (2 Corinthians 7:8).

But since those days things have changed significantly. There are many tools with which to work, many methods or ways that can be used to get the message out to one, or to many, or to the whole world. We think of the advances in the medical profession. There are now so many medicines, so many tools with which to practice, and so much to learn of the healing processes that a doctor cannot master all of these things, so he chooses to specialize in a particular field of medicine or practice. This is true also with the preacher. There are so many ways to preach and teach God's word, so many tools to use, so many methods for getting the word out. One man surely cannot do all of these things well, so he must choose the ones in which he will devel-

op his abilities. All of the methods and tools may be good and effective, as long as they do not conflict with God's will. We will mention some of them.

Of course there are the traditional ways of teaching God's word, and they are still powerful. I refer to pulpit preaching and personal work, in particular. There is really no substitute for facing a group eye to eye or a one-on-one encounter. These methods are effective because the gospel is being proclaimed and it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

In the category of preaching there are what is called gospel meetings. Some call them conventions. A time is set in a meeting house, hall, or some similar place, in which a gospel preacher is invited to speak, and so for a set period of time he preaches the gospel of Christ, night after night. This often attracts large crowds of people and many may obey the Lord. A meeting such as this is sometimes conducted in new areas, to begin a congregation of the Lord's church. I would urge brethren in this part of the world not to copy American brethren and limit your meetings to two or three nights, but rather continue for a week or ten days, or two weeks. Spend enough time in the meeting to build interest and to do some good. You should know that years ago the brethren in America had lengthy meetings, and this helped the church there to grow rapidly.

Literature is another tremendous way to get the gospel to the local people, as well as to a whole nation. Tracts, Bible correspondence courses, magazines, books, advertising and newspaper teaching have not only introduced the Lord to untold numbers of people, but also have been the means of strengthening the church and providing the members with teaching materials. Christian literature is still a powerful medium.

But reaching the masses and going into homes which would otherwise be closed to the gospel, you can't beat radio preaching. Also through this method, Bible correspondence courses and other types of literature can be offered.

In addition to radio there is the even more powerful tool of television. TV is already being used effectively in some countries and in years to come one preacher will perhaps be able to use television to speak to people all over the world.

In conjunction with the area-wide or nation-wide use of radio and television, tapes, videos, cable and satellite systems can be used in preaching.

Other tools which can add to a lesson are visual aids: filmstrips, overhead projectors, and even charts and blackboards. Through visual aids people not only have the opportunity of hearing the Lord's word, but also of seeing the message being brought to life. Those are powerful tools even in this modern age.

There are also Bible schools, Bible camps, retreats, seminars, and lectureships where members of the church and their friends, young people, and other specific age groups are invited to come for fellowship and indepth Bible study.

It is true that some of these methods of teaching or types of meetings are more popular than others. But times change, and the effectiveness of methods change. We must find out what interests people, and how best to reach them, and then use those ways to win them for Christ. The church must be flexible in its methods of work. As long as the gospel of Christ is preached in its purity, that is the important thing, and that is what will convince hearers of the truth. Of course, attempting to attract

people through the use of shows, all kinds of entertainment, food and refreshments, and things that appeal to the flesh is not right or wise. If you gain people through worldly things, what do you have even though they respond?

So the young preacher is faced with all kinds of possibilities in his work of taking the gospel to the world. He should choose methods which best suit his abilities and the interest of his audience. He must get proper training, and then use those tools as a means of spreading the cause of Christ and influencing people for the Lord.

Young man, be a public speaker, a teacher, an evangelist, a missionary, a radio speaker, a writer, a publisher, but do something for the Lord. As all of us work together, using our varied talents and abilities, and all of the methods and tools at our disposal, we can take the gospel to the world and change the world for Christ. May the Lord help us to do so.

Lesson 21

The Preacher's Talk

In this lesson we will discuss the preacher's talk, his language, or terminology. In other words, the average preacher is going to use certain phrases and expressions as he talks to people. Like everyone else, he is influenced often by his religious friends and neighbors. Of course, not everything these people do or say is wrong, and certainly it is not wrong in itself for us to use methods of work or expressions in our speech that are used by denominational groups. But there are things that we should guard against, or if we are guilty of doing those things, we should rid ourselves of them.

The preacher must be very careful as he speaks because those who are listening will readily pick up and use whatever he says. He must always strive to be a good example.

Because of carelessness, or unawareness of error, preachers and members of the church in recent times have begun to use statements like: "It's time to go to church", "We are going to church", "Are you going to church?", and many other similar expressions. I grew up being taught that we don't "go to church", but we "go to the meeting place" or we "assemble for worship" or we "go to worship". I believe these are still the correct ways of saying what we are going. But someone might say, "Everyone understands that when you talk about "going to church" you mean that you are "going to worship". But such assumption is the way false teaching slips into our speech and lives. The denominational world refers to the meeting house as the church, and that is why they speak of "going to church". We know that the church is not the meeting house, but rather

it is the spiritual body of Christ, made up of the called out or the saved, which has reference to the people who make up the church (Matthew 16:18,19; Ephesians 5:23-27; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23; 1 Corinthians 12:20). So let's get it right. Let's quit talking about "going to church" and talk about "going to the meeting house" or "going to worship".

Then we hear some preachers, as well as those who are not preachers, talking about "my church", "my members", "our church", etc. Now where did we learn such expressions? We certainly didn't get them from the Bible. If they didn't come from the Bible, we must have gotten them from our religious friends who are not members of the Lord's church. Maybe they can honestly talk about "their" church, and use other such expressions, but we cannot do that. The church does not belong to us. It belongs to Christ. He said, "*I will build my church*", and He did, but that doesn't mean that it is ours (Matthew 16:18). We are honored to be members of it, but it is not ours. We didn't build it. We didn't shed our blood for it. We are not the saviour of it. But Christ is all of those things to His church (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23). You might think that I am making a big thing out of an unimportant matter. Such wrong wording might seem so innocent. But the fact is, this is how people begin to drift from the Lord and His way. I ask you to watch your language.

Besides these and other denominational expressions, preachers in this part of the world find it difficult to distinguish between telling the truth and lying, or misrepresenting, exaggerating. Of course where there is so much bribery and people come at you from every direction for something, it becomes a way of life to deny things, to offer false explanations, and to simply say "no" when the true answer is "yes". The world naturally says that is all right, but the Christian must be honest and truthful. Paul said

that we should not lie to one another (Revelation 21:8). On the other hand, the Bible teaches that we must be honest in all things (Romans 12:17). Another way of putting it, we should always be truthful in dealing with one another and even with people of the world. If people can't take our word, and have confidence in us that we are telling the truth, then who can they trust? Actually as Christians we should be the ones who can always be depended on to tell the truth.

Preachers also have the bad habit of talking down to other people, especially a fellow preacher. It is easy to become envious and jealous of preachers, to find fault with them, to discredit them, to make accusations against them, and to gossip about them. All of this is very bad. Of all people who should speak well of others, it should be the preacher. Let me encourage you to begin to say something good about your fellow preachers.

Still another area where preachers have a difficult time with their tongue, or their language, is that they are bad to brag and to boast. To hear them talk, they are the greatest thing going today. Let me urge you to tone it down some. If you are all that great, your brethren will recognize it without any boasting from you. If you are not, bragging will only make matters worse. James says that the tongue is a little member but it boasts great things (James 3:5). Instead of speaking highly about ourselves, we should be humble and meek in spirit and in life. Christ said, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*" (Matthew 5:5).

As you can see, preachers are not perfect. They have their problems, too. Because they do have problems, we should not use them as an excuse to continue in sin or to quit the church. The preacher, like everyone else, must work hard to cause those around him to have faith and confidence in him. To do that, he

must watch his tongue and always use it in an honest and responsible way.

The preacher is in a unique position. Since he is a preacher, his brethren and others expect him to speak up, as representative of the group. But he must be conscientious in what he says and always speak in a way that would bring honor to Christ instead of bringing reproach to His name.

I would invite you to think seriously about the things that have been said. Try to improve your speech, speaking always “*as the oracles of God*”, for it is from the heart itself that our words originate.

Lesson 22

The Work of Preachers

As we have stressed, to be a preacher of the gospel and to influence people for the Lord, one must have the desire to preach, he must have proper motives, and of course there must be some ability. While some have some natural speaking ability, more is required if a man is to be the preacher he needs to be. He must have a sincere love for God and man, he must be willing to live and work sacrificially, and he must desire to study and to take training for his work. It would even be wise to have a course in public speaking. It is not that we are trying to develop such a professional type person that he becomes so learned and proficient that he does his work coldly and without feeling, but we must remember that a preacher is dealing with the word of God and with souls, therefore he needs to do his job well.

In the church of our Lord there is no miraculous “calling” and it is not necessary to have a “church license” or “permit” to preach. Someone might ask, “Do you mean that just anybody who wants to preach can do so?” In a sense, that is true, provided the person is a man, is a member of the church, a faithful member, has the desire to preach, and the brethren agree to accept him as a preacher. Even if one congregation is not interested in using his services, others may be, or he can always go out and find someone to preach to. So the problem is not the matter of being allowed to preach, but of preparing adequately to preach.

But why would a preacher need to prepare for this type of work? Because it is serious spiritual work, and there is a lot of hard work involving long hours, provided a man actually does the work he needs to do. Preaching is not all glory, just lying

around with nothing much to do. It is not just traveling, having everything given to you, being provided good food to eat, and no one to answer to. Preaching requires that one work sincerely, and that he be continually looking for opportunities to teach. He must visit people, comfort and pray for the sick, help people with their problems, convert souls to Christ, teach and train young men to preach. He may be called on to share with others. He may be rejected by some and he may even have to suffer persecution because of his faith and his work.

If you want to see what preaching is all about, read through the book of Acts. Read about Peter and John in Acts 3 and 4, and how that even after they had healed a man, they were called in by the High Priest and leaders of the Jews and warned not to continue to preach in the name of Christ. Later they were beaten and put in prison, but the record says that they continued to preach. The record also says, *“But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:19,20). Later we read, *“But Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). The writer says further, *“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”* (Acts 5:41,42). Then look at Saul and how he persecuted the Lord’s people; but later he was converted, his name was changed to Paul, he was made an apostle, and as you go through the book of Acts you can see all that he went through and how much he suffered for Christ (Acts 8 and 9).

Not only the apostles but many many others as well were

persecuted because they preached Christ. But you might say, “Yes, but that was back in the early days when there was injustice and repression, but things are different now.” It’s true that there may be some differences today, and there may not be the type of persecution now as was brought against the Lord’s people in the first century and at other times in history, but any time you stand up for right, preach Christ and do what you can to spread His cause, there will be some who will not like it and will oppose you. Paul said, “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Timothy 3:12). That was true then and it is true now. The point is, the faith of the apostles and others in the first century was tried and tested by the things they suffered. They had to have strong faith to endure such hardships. Likewise today, we must know who we serve and why we serve Him, and we must be faithful in that service. Hopefully, we will not have to experience such terrible things as they did back then, but if we are called on to do that, then hopefully we will pass the test and we will be faithful to our Lord.

We can see that there is a lot involved in being a preacher of the gospel. He is there to work and to serve, not to be lazy and unwilling to respond to the needs around him. He is not counting the hours he serves against the support he receives. He is not looking to do less, but to do more.

Besides preaching, conducting meetings, doing personal work, converting souls, baptizing those who want to obey the Lord, he will also be called on to perform marriages and to conduct funerals. To perform marriages, one must find out what the local government requirements are, get registered and recognized so you can legally do this service. Be careful, however, concerning the marriages you perform and be sure that the couples can be scripturally married, that is, that neither person has been

unscripturally divorced, and that neither is involved in multiple marriages. If one person is a Christian do not marry him or her to someone who is not a Christian.

As to funerals, don't spend your time judging the dead and sending them to heaven or hell. That is not your job. Your message is to be to the living, to comfort them as you can, and to encourage them to prepare themselves for death and the judgment.

When it comes to baptizing, don't "save up people" (as some have described it) until the foreigner comes, so he can baptize them. You should not do this even if you are receiving some support from him. If you have taught these people, converted them, and if they want to obey the Lord, then proceed to assist them with their obedience.

You will need to have sufficient time to study and prepare for your sermons, but don't spend all of your time in your office, if you have one. Instead, get out among the people and work for the Lord and preach and teach and evangelize. That is your work as a preacher.

Lesson 23

Doctrinal Soundness

In this study think with me about the preacher and his doctrinal soundness. We are talking about the doctrine of Christ and one's dedication to that.

Of course there are many churches, with all of their varying doctrines and practices. They would have their own preachers, rules and regulations, or the lack of them. There are also many other religious groups. But we are not interested in those — any of those. We are interested, however, in what the Bible teaches, and in being faithful in abiding by that teaching, and in proclaiming it to others.

To begin with, for a preacher to be doctrinally sound, that is, sound in his beliefs and in his preaching what the Bible teaches — naturally he must believe himself to the point of obeying the Lord, being saved, and being added to the Lord's church by Christ Himself. In other words, how can he teach others to do what he has not done himself, unless he is a hireling, and a hireling stands condemned in the Bible and should be rejected by the Lord's people.

A preacher, then, is a man who has heard the gospel, believed it, repented of his sins, confessed Christ as the Son of God, and has been baptized, or buried in water, for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:38). Having done these things, the Lord has saved him and added him to His church, to Christ's church, the one and only church in the Bible (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 1:18). Now that he has obeyed the Lord, and has become a member of the Lord's church,

he is a Christian, and is prepared to worship God each first day of the week and to live the Christian life.

As a Christian, this man has decided to preach the gospel. What does this work require? It means that he must read and study God's word and adequately prepare himself to preach. He must know and understand God's will to the point that he can teach it to others, without adding to it, subtracting from it, or substituting for it in any way (Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:6-9). He must realize the seriousness of abiding by the doctrine and teaching of Christ. We read of the first Christians, *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). The apostles' doctrine in which they were continuing was the teaching of Christ. The Apostle John said, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9). James said, *"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does"* (James 1:25). We can easily see from these scriptures that a preacher, or any Christian, must be faithful to God and must continue to abide in the doctrine or teaching of the Lord if he is to be acceptable. These scriptures also teach that if one does not do so, God will not be with him and bless him.

In speaking to Timothy and Titus, Paul talks about sound doctrine, sound speech, etc. In 1 Timothy 1:10 Paul lists such sins as murder, immorality, and lying, saying that they are contrary to sound doctrine and sound teaching. He urged in 2 Timothy 1:13, *"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."* Again, "sound teaching" means teaching that is from God. To

Titus Paul said concerning his work as a teacher, *“For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work”* (Titus 1:10-16).

Paul continues by saying, *“Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine”* (Titus 2:1). After exhorting Titus concerning teaching aged men, aged women, young women, and young men, of their duties and responsibilities, he concludes this by saying, *“Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you”* (Titus 2:8). He gives further instructions and adds, *“not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you”* (Titus 2:10-15).

We could go on reading in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and other such letters where so much is said about being doctrinally sound in faith, speech, in morals, in dealing with others, and in all teaching and preaching.

This is why preachers need to study the Bible and fully know and understand what it teaches, to be able to do a good job teaching it to others. One should be well versed in the Old Testament, the history of the Jews, the differences between the Covenants, why the Old Testament law is no longer in force, and why the New Testament law is binding on men today (Hebrews 9 and 10). The preacher must understand the doctrines concerning the gospel and the plan of salvation, the conversions in Acts, and all about the Lord's church, and its organization (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Mark 16:15,16; Ephesians 5).

There are so many other things in the Bible which a preacher must know in order to preach and teach the whole truth. He must, at the same time, be aware of false teaching and always oppose error, of course with love, but with firmness.

Lesson 24

Preachers Not Needed

Though we realize that all leaders in the church are essential to the Lord's body and its work, in this study we are giving more attention to the preacher himself, because there is such a great need for well-trained and knowledgeable preachers. Yet, we are going to discuss at this time some preachers not needed.

In every segment of society, in every type of profession, there are always some misfits, some who do more harm than good, some who take advantage of the situation to promote their own selfish interest. The same is likewise true in the Lord's work. There are some that are drawn to preaching and being a minister in the church who are not needed nor wanted. This is the case because of their motives, the kind of life they are living, and their unwillingness to comply with the teaching of God's word.

Needless to say, if they are not converted or if they are not members of the Lord's church, they are spiritually unqualified to preach the gospel. Now let us consider a number of others who are not needed.

1. Women cannot serve as public preachers, speaking to adult mixed audiences. Nowhere in the New Testament do you ever read where a woman served in such a capacity. There are cases where a woman personally or privately taught adults, both men and women. Public preaching, that is, to mixed audiences, was always done by men. Christ commanded the apostles (all men) to take the gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15,16). Was the Lord unfair in not including women? No, since men have been given work to do and women have also been given work to

do. The Lord knew man and woman, what was the best for them, and so that was His decision. For men and women to be competing with each other in preaching would have been disastrous. We can see even in the secular world what is happening when men and women are competing with each other for all kinds of jobs. It actually causes them to become enemies. But this cannot be the case in the Lord's church, because those who ignore the Lord's teaching will be rejected. In that case, what would be accomplished?

2. Homosexuals are not needed as preachers. True, there are some religious groups that have given in to pressure and accepted them, but what have they accomplished? Homosexuality is an immoral practice and the Bible condemns it. It is not normal and natural. Paul describes these kinds of people when he said to the Romans, *"Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting, being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;*

who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:24-32). How can you imagine people with a background like this wanting to become preachers? What would they preach? First of all, they need to repent. But that is not all. We are talking about people who were like those who lived in Sodom and God destroyed them because of their wickedness, and the sin of sodomy, homosexuality and immorality has come down to us today from that period of time (Genesis 18 and 19). Paul says that the effeminate, the abusers of themselves with mankind, and such like cannot enter the kingdom of God or the church (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Is there any doubt as to who he is talking about? Have you ever wondered what a homosexual would preach?

3. Immoral men are not wanted as preachers. As with the homosexuals, the scriptures condemn immorality such as fornication, adultery, and other sexual activities. Such is said to be a work of the flesh and needs to be repented of at once (Galatians 5:19-21). Those who have become entangled in divorce and remarriage should not become preachers, and if such has taken place after they have become preachers, it would be advisable to quit preaching. Even if they were not at fault, or have scripturally corrected their lives, still it would be better not to continue to preach since all of that would become a stumbling block for man. Then what to do? Just try to be a faithful Christian.

4. Unfaithful Christians should not preach. Neither should they preach if they have been scripturally withdrawn from by the church. Preaching demands that one be faithful to the Lord, that he practice what he preaches. If he himself has not corrected his own life, how can he help others?

5. False teachers are not needed. Sometimes one is a faithful preacher for a while but then he himself is deceived and he begins to preach some false teaching. In such a case, he should be disciplined since he is no longer teaching the truth, and in preaching error he will deceive people and cause them to be lost (2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17,18).

6. Hireling preachers are not needed. They are not working for the Lord but for themselves. They will preach whatever you pay them to preach. This is condemned by the Lord Himself (John 10:11-13).

7. Those who love this world and love money are not needed as preachers. There are some who get too involved with the world, are dishonest, do questionable things, constantly striving for more money, and the material things of this life. John said that we should not love the world or put those things first in our lives (1 John 2:15-17). Paul said that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). We must put the Lord and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).

We do need preachers, and lots of them, but they need to be men who are truly converted, dedicated, faithful to God, having a love for the Lord and His cause, and will therefore work hard to spread the cause of Christ.

Do you want to be a preacher? If so, are you willing to pay the price?

Lesson 25

Dealing With False Teaching

The preacher in particular, but also other leaders in the church, as well as all of the members, will have to deal with some false teaching along the way. I say the preacher in particular because he is constantly preaching, and many times moving about in both the general area, as well as in the local situation, and in meeting people he is going to be confronted with all kinds of teaching and in many instances he will be asked about different doctrines. What will he do in those cases? Ignore it, compromise, or try to answer it.

First, we should explain what we mean by false teaching. It is any teaching that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. That would cover a lot of territory, naturally, since there are many different religions. But perhaps the average preacher would have to deal more with false teachings within the framework of Christianity, since he would be constantly around people in general who believe in Christ, and since his teaching, based on the Bible only, would differ with many of the accepted teachings in the so called "Christian community". But even the people of the world, and those of other religions, would be familiar with a lot of things being taught in the name of Christianity, and they too would raise questions about these things.

All of this is to say that the Lord has a church, one church, established by Him, for which He died, is head of, and saviour of, with Christ being the foundation, and wearing the name of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Romans 16:16). The scriptures teach that those who obey the Lord are saved and Christ adds them to His church

(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,47).

Now in addition to that one church, there are many other churches. These were established by men; they wear the names of men; they worship according to the teachings of men; and most everything about them is based on false teaching. These churches tell you that there are different ways to be saved. About anything and everything that you can think of is taught by them. Now how can the people in general be aware of these things, these false teachings, unless these matters are compared to the teaching of God's word and it is shown that the truth is superior to error. It is regrettable that any time has to be spent with false doctrine, but there is no way to escape it. If you don't, then people will go on believing that which is false. Most of them will continue to believe it any way, but at least when the truth is preached, and false doctrine is condemned, then those who are seeking the truth can be saved.

The preacher therefore needs to study his Bible to the point that he is fully familiar with its over-all teaching. He must especially be well informed concerning the gospel, the church, worship, and other basic teachings that pertain to one's salvation. Then he will do well to read and study the basic false doctrines in the various religious groups and learn how to answer them on the basis of what the Bible teaches. He must have confidence in the truth, have ability to deal with false teaching, and remove any doubts that the people may have when it comes to the difference between truth and error.

Even Christ and the apostles had to deal with false teaching. There were those coming to say that they were the Christ. The Lord warned, *"Then if anyone says to you, Look, here is the Christ! or there! do not believe it. For false christs and false*

prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:23,24). Paul wrote, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17,18). To the church at Corinth, Paul pleaded, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Paul said to the Colossians, “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Colossians 2:20-22). John said, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Hear Christ as He says, “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). Again, He said, “Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matthew 7:21-23).

So the Lord and the apostles and the scriptures themselves are warning us against false teaching. Why? Because those who accept false teaching, instead of the truth, will be lost. Therefore

we must warn people against error with the prayer that they will reject it and will go on to believe and obey the Lord that they might be saved.

No, the answer is not to shun false teaching and keep people ignorant and therefore unwarned against these dangers. Neither will it benefit anyone to compromise the truth and try to mix truth and error together. Truth mixed with false teaching is not truth and cannot save.

But in meeting false doctrine, that does not mean that we should stay on things like that all the time. Neither does it mean that when we do deal with those in error that we should be mean and ugly and deliberately try to destroy them. We must love them, and do all we can to show them the error of their way so they can be saved. We must not be dogmatic and refuse to listen and to study with those who are in error. Don't write anyone off, but do all you can to save all with the truth of God, but remember that only the truth can make one free or save one.

Lesson 26

Training Preachers

We invite you now to think with us about the need for training preachers. As we have said before, preachers don't just happen. Neither does the Lord open their minds and pour in their sermons each week. Good preachers come as a result of years of hard work. As young preachers, they can begin by reading and studying their Bible, and helping in various ways within the framework of the local congregation. If there is a preacher training school to attend, then he may want to go there for two or three years.

But what about training preachers in general? What can be done to help the preachers over the country to get the training they need?

The local congregation is one of the best preacher training schools there is. That kind of training can be on-going for one or for any number. To begin with, the members of the local congregation should encourage their young men to be preachers. Oh yes, a lot of parents want their children to grow up to be doctors, teachers, lawyers, business people, and to be in other professions because they are recognized and accepted as honorable professions, and also they pay well. But there is a lot more to life than for one to make a lot of money. Why not encourage your young men to be preachers and for the young women to be preachers' wives? Preaching and the Lord's work is the greatest work in the world. It is also honorable and acceptable to be a preacher. It may not pay as well, and in most cases will require sacrifices, but it is still worth it. If members of the church would encourage their young men and women in this direction, surely it would

make a tremendous difference.

Then with one or more young men in the congregation wanting to be a preacher, the whole congregation can encourage this. They can give opportunities for them to participate in the various meetings. There can also be a training class where they can study, have opportunities to give Bible lessons, and for the teacher to offer suggestions. The leadership of the congregation can give them an opportunity to speak from time to time. They can also be benefitted by associating themselves with the local preacher, going with him on visits, participate in Bible Quizzes for the young people, etc. Yes, the congregation can be a perfect training place for those who want to preach. If congregations all over the country would develop training programs like this, there would be enough preachers to take care of all of the local needs with enough left over to go out to new areas to begin new works.

I know of congregations that have turned out any number of preachers over a long period of time. I know of many other congregations that have never produced one preacher. What made the difference with these congregations? Evidently the congregations that produced preachers were those that encouraged their young men to preach and helped them to become preachers. It is obvious that those congregations that have not produced preachers did not do the kind of work that was needed to produce preachers.

There may be some preacher training schools around over the country where the young men can go to get special training for preaching. It would be a place where they would live in a hostel with other young men, attend Bible classes and other classes each day, and that would continue over a period of two years or more. Their teachers would be preachers themselves. While there, they

would also have occasion to go out with their teachers and other preachers on preaching and teaching trips. A school like this is no guarantee that one will come out being a capable preacher. A lot will depend on each student. Each one will have to apply himself and work hard to succeed. It will be up to each one to study and put forth every effort possible to do well.

Since the church is still young, and without enough members to support its own preachers as it needs to, the problem with a preacher training school is that those young men who go there to get training to preach — what do they have to look forward to as far as preaching in their congregations back home when those congregations are not in a position to support them? The only other alternative is for them to try to get on foreign support, but neither is this the proper solution since this kind of an arrangement creates many problems. There are other solutions, for those who love the Lord, want to preach, and at the same time have support. For such young men, they can get secular jobs, work with the local church until it can support them, and then switch over to full time church work with the church fully supporting them.

Then as the church grows, it will some day have enough members for them to band together to establish a Christian college, and in time there will no doubt be several such colleges to offer training and an education both to young men and young women.

In the meantime, let each preacher and each congregation become conscious of the need of training young men to preach the gospel, and let them put forth an effort to do what they can to help provide this training.

Look at Paul and how he worked with young preachers like

Timothy and Titus, and no doubt many others. Read 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

Lesson 27

Dealing With Problems

Although the preacher is not the Pastor of the church or head of the church, still, being in a leadership position and preaching God's word, he would have the respect of a lot of people, and many would naturally come to him with their problems. That doesn't mean that he will be able to answer or solve all of them, since he is human too and has problems of his own. Still, he may be in position to help a lot of people by offering ideas and suggestions from God's word that would help them to find a solution to their problems.

First, preachers many times have problems with their fellow preachers. There is often a lot of envy and jealousy on the part of one or the other. This may come about as a result of one producing more fruit than the other, over money, foreign contacts, and such like. Sometimes one has been able to go to a foreign country and the other has not. There is competition, an uncooperative spirit, bragging and boasting, and many other such things to contend with. My preacher friend, if you are guilty of any of these things, then you need to repent. If your preacher friend is guilty, then he needs to repent. But how do you go on living with your own brethren when these kind of things are going on? You must forget all of these little petty things and concentrate on your work and do the right thing. If you will put forth the proper effort to always do the right thing, then a lot of these problems will automatically disappear. Of course it is always possible for preachers to disagree about something. Even Paul had to correct Peter on one occasion in relation to his inconsistency in dealing with the Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 2:11,12). Also, we read where Paul

and Barnabas disagreed concerning whether John Mark should accompany them on their second missionary journey. It was agreed that Paul and Silas would go together and that Barnabas and John Mark would return to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-41). All of them were still brethren, respecting one another, since it was a matter of judgment, and simply went on with their own individual works. So I am telling you to be sure that you do right and go on with your work. Furthermore, look for areas in which you can cooperate and work together. If you will, you will be surprised at the progress you will make in dealing with each other.

Second, the members will bring problems to you about marriage — that is divorce and remarriage. You will need to study Matthew 19:9, Romans 7, and other passages on this subject and tell them that God intended that there be one husband and one wife, that unfaithfulness on the part of one or the other is the only cause for divorce, and only the innocent party is free to marry again. But you will hear dozens and dozens of problems concerning marriage, and when you think you have heard them all, there will always be another one. Just be sure you know what the Bible teaches on the subject and show them what the Bible says.

What about one being legally able to perform the marriage ceremony? You will need to check on the requirements and qualify yourself to perform marriages. Then you will be asked about a place to bury the dead. Usually if you will check with those who are in charge of the local cemetery, you can work it out to pay an annual fee and arrange space for those of the congregation who die.

Most members of the church find it very difficult to confess their sins and ask the church and God to forgive them so they can be restored (James 5:16). You must show them, from God's

word, that if a Christian errs publicly then he must comply with the teaching of God's word. What if he refuses? Then steps must be taken to encourage him to correct his life. Only as a last resort should one ever be withdrawn from (Matthew 18:15-17).

How do you deal with bribery? When money is offered to encourage someone to break the law, it is wrong. The Bible says that we are to obey the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-7). Many of the tips that are given, are given for some service rendered and it has become traditional to do that.

How do you deal with arranged marriages and the dowry system? Arranged marriages in this part of the world is an accepted thing and has been practiced for hundreds of years. It can be abused, and no doubt it is. As far as the dowry system is concerned, it has been outlawed. Nevertheless many will practice it, and again, abuse it. It is a vicious system, a degrading system, that should not be practiced.

Is it ever right to lie? No, since the Lord and His word states that we must be honest in all things (Romans 12:17; Colossians 3:9).

How do you thank a person for what he has done or given? Many are under the impression that if you thank someone for something that you become obligated to him. Being thankful is a Christian duty (Colossians 3:15; 1 Timothy 2:1; Colossians 3:17). Thanking someone for something is not just a western custom. It should be learned and practiced by all. If you can't thank someone for something that he has given to you, then you should not take it.

What about owing money? Paul states that we should owe no man anything. That doesn't mean that we cannot borrow

some money from someone, provided we have it understood that it will be paid back, and then we do that. We shouldn't owe money and refuse to return it. Many get entangled with their friends with money. This is a mistake and should be avoided.

How much should one give to the Lord? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:2 that he should give as he has prospered. Someone has said that the Jews gave one tenth of what they had, but since we live under a better law with better promises that we should give that much, or more. But how can one do that? By putting the Lord first. If all would do that, the church would have more than enough money to do all of its work.

As you can see, all kinds of problems and questions come up. One must go to the Bible to see what God has said, and where the Bible does not necessarily say yes or no on some point, then one should try to use good judgment, thinking of himself and others, and the example that he is setting.

Lesson 28

Converting Souls

The preacher, as well as all members of the church, have been commissioned by the Lord to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). This is to be done through teaching, presenting the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which is designed to make believers out of them (Romans 10:17), and once they believe, then to encourage them to obey the commands of the Lord that they might be saved (Acts 2:38). Another way of putting this is that through preaching the gospel, including the commands of the Lord, they are attempting to convert souls to Christ or to change their thinking, their actions, and their state from being a sinner to that of being saved (Acts 3:19).

The world is a big place, so how can the average Christian, or even the preacher, go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature? Of course they must begin where they are, preaching and teaching the gospel, as well as using their influence, to their family members, their friends, and the people living in the cities, villages, and communities around them. In continuing, they grow in numbers and in strength, so they just keep moving and reaching out to more and more. This is the way the gospel spreads and finally covers the earth.

Since the preacher in many cases is giving his full time to the Lord's work, or more than the average member of the church, then we are going to talk more about the preacher and his work of converting souls to Christ. Naturally, he must be converted himself and fully believe what he is preaching if he is going to be able to influence anyone for Christ, and to encourage them to

obey the Lord.

First, one is going to have to know and understand the truth concerning what one must do to be saved. He must know that one must hear the truth, since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). He must know that one must believe in God and that Christ is the Son of God and that without such faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1). He must know that one must repent of all of his sins or turn from them, and that without repentance one will perish (Luke 13:3), and that God commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). He must know that one must confess Christ as the Son of God to have Christ to confess him before the Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32). And he must know that one must be baptized, buried in water to be saved or to have the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Now one must not only know these truths, along with the scriptures, and cases of conversion found in the book of Acts that he can refer to as an example of what people did to obey God and to be saved, but he must also be able to convincingly present these truths to the individual with whom he is studying, or to the people to whom he is preaching. And to do that, he must put forth an effort to go out and meet people and to create situations where he will have the opportunity to teach them. The same is true with preaching. He must arrange to preach to a congregation of the church or go out and find groups to preach to. The opportunities to do this will be as many as the preacher can handle, provided he has a desire to preach Christ and he takes the initiative to do so.

But let's go on to stress the fact that the preacher needs to have a good knowledge of the Lord's church, where it began, when it

began, who built it, how many churches there are, the name of it, the foundation of it, who the head is, who the saviour of it is, etc. Of course Christ built the church (Matthew 16:18) in Jerusalem, in approximately A.D. 33 (Acts 2), He built one (Ephesians 4:1-6), it wears the name of Christ (Romans 16:16), its foundation is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), Christ is head (Colossians 1:18), and Christ is the saviour of it (Ephesians 5:23). One will also have to be aware of the denominational teachings to justify their churches, and to prove from God's word that the Lord's church is the one that they must be members of to be saved and to go to heaven. Point out that Christ adds the saved to His church and to no other (Acts 2:47). The church doesn't save, but Christ does, and therefore He saves the church, and that means that one must be in the church to be saved.

Going on, the preacher will need to know what the Bible teaches about worship, that the Lord's people are to meet on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), that they are to study God's word (2 Timothy 2:15), that they are to pray to their Father (Acts 2:42), that they are to sing praises to the Father, and that should be vocal only (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15), and that God's people are to give each first day of the week as they have prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2).

The preacher must be able to convince his hearers that the Christian life offers more than anything that the world can give. He must be able to convince them that they need to prepare now to meet God, that one day they will die, appear before the judgment of God, and spend eternity either in heaven or hell (1 John 2:15-17; Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:46).

The preacher will need to know many other truths, as well as

how to answer a whole variety of errors, if he is going to be able to convert souls to Christ. It will take a lot of study and work. It will mean that he will have to sincerely be concerned about the lost, find them, and convince them of their need to obey God. He can't do that by being lazy, indifferent, unconcerned, spending all of his time in an office, not following up on his contacts, and not showing interest in people. Neither can he do it if he is going to argue, fuss, and fight with every one he meets. Rather he must have love for people, enjoy his work, and seek out souls to teach and convert to Christ. He can be successful if he wants to be. If he will do his job right, the Lord will bless him, and his efforts will win souls for Christ.

Lesson 29

Establishing New Congregations

In a part of the world where the church is still young and growing, having already had a remarkable growth rate, it is necessary to have preachers who have an evangelistic spirit, not only in converting souls to Christ, but also in establishing new congregations of the church. Every area of every large city needs to have a local congregation, as well as all neighboring cities and villages. That means that we need lots of preachers to work with those congregations already in existence, but also to go out to begin new ones. And with every soul converted, and with each new congregation established, they can not only add to the work force, but also they can help to support the work that is being done. For instance, it shouldn't take a thousand members to support a preacher, or even several hundred, or even one hundred. Actually, it shouldn't take all that many members of a local congregation to have enough funds to support a preacher; that is, if they will give as the Bible teaches. They can also help the preacher in other ways, such as helping with food, clothes, etc. When we really have an evangelistic spirit then things begin to happen to enable the cause of Christ to spread.

As a preacher, you must not only be able to convert souls to Christ, but if you are in areas where the church does not exist, then you must be able to help them to get organized to have a local congregation. Even if you are working with a local congregation, you should be looking for opportunities to begin new ones.

Evangelism is the very life of the church. It gives the members a mission, a purpose for existence, a goal to work toward.

We live to help others to live. We must be able to reproduce ourselves wherever we are. Preachers and missionaries may take the lead in this, but all of the members are to support it. To have a part in it, and to see what it produces, brings joy and happiness, encouragement, and strength.

If you will read through the book of Acts you can see how the church began in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Then as you go on reading you will find that as the gospel was taken to other cities and areas, and as people obeyed the Lord, other congregations were established. Paul and those who accompanied him made three missionary journeys, preaching in Asia and Europe, and everywhere they went the church of our Lord was planted. Not only with them, but the same was true of the other apostles and many preachers as they went forth to spread the cause of Christ. It spread so rapidly, as a matter of fact, that the gospel was taken to every creature under heaven in less than thirty years (Colossians 1:23). Hundreds, and even thousands and thousands of congregations were established.

No, it was not easy in that day to preach the gospel and to establish congregations. They met with opposition, were persecuted, many were even killed for their faith, but this did not stop them. That only added fuel to the flames of evangelism, conversion, and the establishment of congregations of the Lord's church throughout the world. Again, you can read of a lot of this in the book of Acts, such as with Peter and John (Acts 3,4), the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), the killing of James (Acts 12), and all of the things that Paul suffered.

Neither did they have a lot of wealth with which to work. Preachers weren't put on salaries, although some were helped

here and there. Certainly, they didn't have some foreign country to underwrite their expenses. They didn't have church buildings, since they met in homes, in stadiums, or other public meeting places, and neither did they have Preacher Training Schools, Christian Colleges, and many other things that we think we must have today. Yet, they went out and did the job.

I will tell you, though, what they did have. They had faith in God, love for the Lord and the souls of men, zeal to spread His cause, and determination and willingness to work. They were willing to suffer, die, or whatever it took to do the job. They were not willing to take no for an answer. They believed it could be done and they did it. They would not stop, quit, give up, turn back, offer excuse, or refuse to go on. What a great people they were and what an example they set for us! They changed the world and we are still enjoying the benefits of it.

The Lord is still telling us today that we should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15,16). People are still lost and need to be saved. We who are saved are the ones that have been commissioned to do it. If you will read through the book of Acts again, you will find that the apostles and their converts preached the gospel, the same gospel everywhere they went, and when there were those who would believe, repent of their sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of their sins, then the Lord saved them and added them to His church (Acts 2). You will also note that the scriptures are constantly talking about thousands obeying, many being added, and of their numbers growing. As a result, each time two or more obeyed the Lord in one of these areas, a congregation of the church was established. Each congregation usually began with several members. That is, they would then begin to meet each week to worship, and as they grew and they

had men who could qualify to be elders and deacons, then they were appointed by the members to give leadership to the congregation. There were also preachers, teachers, etc., that likewise developed and then they would begin to spread the gospel around them and maybe even other congregations were established.

Now that is what is needed today. Preach the gospel, convert some souls, and establish a congregation wherever you are. Those who obey can begin to worship and work where they are.

The Lord has given His people today everything they need to go out and to evangelize the world. More important than money, buildings, transportation, and many other things is faith, zeal, love, courage, and determination to serve the Lord and to spread His cause. If you can't do that, what are you worth to the Lord?

Lesson 30

Goals of Preachers

A preacher needs to set some goals for himself and his work. Life is short and there is much to be done. If you don't have any future plans, if you don't set some goals, you will never amount to very much. It is not that you are in competition with anyone or that you are too ambitious. The fact is, you are a Christian and you want to accomplish as much as you can for the Lord while you can. You must therefore set a pace for yourself, drive yourself to excellence. Don't be satisfied to just get by. You can do far better than that.

I would suggest some personal goals and some goals for your work. Let's begin by talking about your personal goals.

First, I would suggest that you decide that you are going to continue to study and to grow spiritually. You can do that through several methods. You can set aside some time each day to read and study. You might want to attend a preacher training school. For your secular education, maybe you can take some courses in a local college. Then there are correspondence courses offered by brethren in different parts of the world. Some of these are college type courses. So you can advance your education if you really want to. You will have to work at it, and it might cost you some money, but it would be worth it.

Second, set aside some time each week to devote to your family. Use that time to be together, to do things together at home, or away from home. You might want to go on a picnic, shop together, visit relatives or friends. When you work to the point of neglecting your family, then all will be hurt.

Third, spend your personal time wisely. Don't waste it. You cannot call it back.

Admittedly, it is difficult to separate personal goals from goals for the Lord's work when you are a preacher, but here are some goals for your work.

First, make a program for yourself for each week, who you are going to visit, how many studies you are going to have, and where you are going to preach. Surpass those numbers if you can, but at least try to do that many.

Second, set a goal as to how many you are going to convert during the coming month. Don't set the number too high, not to be able to meet it, and then to allow that to discourage you. Set it at a level that you can meet and perhaps pass. If you go beyond that number then you can always increase the number for the next month. If you don't have any goals, it will be easy to let things drift and not to accomplish what you might otherwise. By setting a goal, you will be challenged to put forth some extra effort. Try it, and I think you will find that it works.

Third, how about setting a goal for establishing some congregations of the Lord's church. All you need to do is to see the need and go out and do it. Actually, you can do what you want to with the help of the Lord. Most of us go no further than we aim for.

Fourth, you may have as a goal to move to another city or part of the country to work, or to go to a neighboring country to start the Lord's work. Why not dream some and make some plans in that direction.

Fifth, you may have as your goal that of building the largest congregation of the church in your city, area, or even the whole

country. You may have heard of the denominational preacher in Korea who dreamed of having the largest church in the world. He worked at it, and perhaps many thought he was wasting his time. But he succeeded. But how wonderful to help the Lord's church to grow and to let the congregation where you work be a place to send forth the truth to the country and to the world.

Sixth, what about setting your goal to build a self-supporting congregation. What an example that would be to many other preachers and congregations all over the country!

Seventh, another goal might be to see elders and deacons appointed in the congregation where you preach. That would be another worthy goal and one that would encourage many other brethren to put forth an effort to do the same thing.

As you follow Christ (Luke 9:23), and seek first and put the Lord's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33), there is no end to what you can accomplish. Don't limit yourself or let others set limitations for you. The preachers who get things done are the ones who are busy, who have vision, who have zeal, and who go out and go to work. They are able to do that because they make plans and set goals for themselves and then they don't stop until they reach those goals, and then go on to other goals.

If you do your part, the Lord will be with you, bless you and help you to succeed. Try the Lord. He will not disappoint you.

