

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



**Forest Hill
Church of Christ**
3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd.
Memphis, TN 38125

Office: (901) 751-2444
Fax: (901) 751-9711
Info Line: (901) 531-8849
www.foresthillcofc.org

Elders:

Anthony D. Callahan
Jim D. Crowe
Floyd M. Hayes
Gregory D. Mangrum
Harold D. Mangrum
Keith B. McAlister
Leonard Watson

Minister:

Barry M. Grider, Pulpit

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

**HOME OF THE
MEMPHIS SCHOOL
OF PREACHING**
www.msop.org

Missions Supported:

Far East/World Evangelism
Gospel Broadcasting Network
Hispanic Work (Getwell)
In Search of the Lord's Way
Kakinada, India
Manila, Philippines
Murmansk, Russia
Truth for the World
Words of the Master (Memphis
ComCast Cable ch17)

WOULD YOU LIKE A FREE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE?

Email: carolha365@bellsouth.net
Include "Free Course" in
the subject line.

Volume 36

April 7, 2009

Number 14

"TO SEEK AND TO SAVE"

Barry Grider

[Editor's Note: The following manuscript appeared in the 2009 volume of the Memphis School of Preaching Lectures. If you would like to purchase the book containing all of the manuscripts, please contact Christian Family Bookstore at (800)782-8175 or email tyromw@comcast.net]

INTRODUCTION

Anything that we desire to accomplish in life that is worthwhile in purpose requires WORK! Earning a living, building better homes, developing a local congregation all requires work. Man should not be surprised that God commands him to work because our God is a working God.

God works. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made..." (Gen. 2:2).

Man works. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15).

Jesus works. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Elders work. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work (1 Tim. 3:1).

Preachers work. "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).

All are to work. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

What is the mission of the church? Missions. A New Testament church has soul saving as its top priority. Everything the church does should center around the saving of souls. Generally the work of the church has been categorized under the following: evangelism, edification, and benevolence. This writer would submit that evangelism is our sole purpose for existing and that edification and benevolence are part of our evangelistic mission. For example, when a preacher preaches an edifying sermon to the congregation is he not helping save the souls of the members of that congregation? When benevolence is extended to one in need, are Christians not trying to win a soul to the Lord. Yes, Christians have an ulterior motive. Paul stated, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). By taking advantage of the opportunity perhaps a soul can be saved.

Jesus and Soul Saving

Jesus names means savior. Speaking to Joseph, the angel proclaimed concerning Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21).

Jesus used every opportunity to help people so that he might be able to save them.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers

(continued on page 2)

“To Seek And To Save (continued from page 1)

into his harvest (Mat. 9:35-38).

On one occasion while Jesus passed through Jericho, a man named Zaccheus, a publican, was interested in seeing and hearing the master teacher. Being short of stature, he climbed up into a Sycamore tree so as to see Jesus. The Lord desired to go to Zaccheus' house. On this occasion the Lord stated his mission.

“And Jesus said unto him [Zaccheus], This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:9,10).

Realizing what man needs, Jesus invites himself into our lives. Man needs salvation and that can only be found in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 11:16).

Three Primary Passages

Three primary passages should be considered as the church considers its mission “to seek and to save.” First consider Jesus and the great commission.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Mat. 28:18-20).

Companion passages to this text are found in Mark 16:15,16 and Luke 24:46,47. From the great commission we learn that our creed is Christ and His word (Mat. 28:18). For “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Paul stated, “And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

Christ also gives the church its charge (v. 19). “Go ye therefore” is the charge given to the apostles and all those who follow Christ. Until I learn that go ye means go me I do not understand the great commission. We have been saved to save others. The evangelized must become the evangelists. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so...” (Psm. 107:2). Now it should be noticed in the passage that the Lord did not specifically tell us how to accomplish His mission. He just wants us to do it. He uses ordinary people to get the job done. What were the apostles to do? Having been taught by the Lord they were to turn around and teach others. It is the duplication process. Paul stated, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). Among the disciples of the Lord, Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all fisherman. Jesus compared soul saving

to fishing.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mat. 4:18,19).

Andrew learned this lesson early for he was always bringing others to Jesus. Our mission is to preach, teach, practice, and publicize the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:10), which salvation can be ours when we obey the gospel (Acts 2:37,38).

The great commission also speaks to comfort us. He will be with us always (v.20). Jesus' promise to the apostles was direct divine guidance. He said to them, “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). Christ is with us today as we arm ourselves with His word (Eph. 6:17).

Second, consider the plan given by Jesus to the apostles for accomplishing the mission. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It is useful to follow the pronoun **they** as the Bible student peruses the book of Acts.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common (Acts 2:42-44).

Now notice what **they** did following Saul's persecution. “Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). They were busy accomplishing the mission.

The plan of evangelism given by Jesus is still useful today. The mission “to seek and to save” begins at home—our Jerusalem. Then a congregation reaches out to the region it surrounds—Judea and Samaria. Then it seeks to take the gospel to the uttermost part of the world. Yes every congregation has an obligation to someone else. Elders should look at the programs of work they oversee. Is the focus on soul saving? One congregation cannot do all the work, but it can accomplish some of the work.

The question sometimes arises, “Can we really evangelize the world?” God commanded us to do so in the great commission. It has already been done before (Col. 1:23). True there are more people to evangelize today, but we also have more evangelists. Likewise, we have the means and the technology to do it. What is the key to the church being more evangelistic? **CONVERSION!** The church must realize that people are lost without the gospel and we are lost if we fail in our mission of taking the gospel to the lost.

Third, Jesus gave a simple illustration when speaking of the mission of the church. “A sower went out to sow his seed...” (Luke 8: 5). What is that seed? “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God” (v. 11). No need

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 2)

to try something different. God has promised that His word will not return void (Isa. 55:11). "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:5,6). What do we know about the soils in Jesus' parable. The soils were different. The seed could not grow in every soil. Paul understood he could not save everybody, but he would try.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

What did Jesus say about the harvest in his parable? "But on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). The church can never give up its mission. The psalmist stated, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psm. 126:5,6). Do not be surprised when only few accept the message (Acts 17:32-34). Rejoice when more than you expected receive it (Acts 18:8). Always be patient. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Conclusion

To seek and to save the lost is the noble obligation of every Christian and the mission of the church as a whole. Soul saving was the very reason our Lord came to this earth. How can we accomplish this in our lives? Live your life in harmony with the message you profess to believe, teach it to others, support every good work that encourages the spread of the gospel, pray regularly for the salvation of souls, and stay positive expecting God to give the increase.

The Forest Hill News
Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit
US POSTAGE
PAID
GERMANTOWN, TN
PERMIT #94