



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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THE 1996 FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING LECTURESHIP A LOOK BACK

By Billy Davidson

An almost full house was present at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 15, for the beginning of the annual lectureship program. It was most fitting that the son of a long time instructor and supporter of the school should open the program. Maurice Davis Jr, of Orlando, FL, spoke on the theme YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID, *"BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION."* The dynamic presentation of the Bible teaching truly set the stage for what was to follow. Brother Davis is the son of Maurice Davis, who preaches for the 6th Street congregation in Lakeland, and he serves on the board of directors for the school and has been one of the instructors for many years. No doubt he was (and is) thankful to have a son stand so powerfully in defense of the truth.

This year might become known as the "year of the substitute." The scheduled speaker for Monday, 9:45 a.m., was brother W. E. Wardlaw. His recent death made it necessary to get a substitute. Brother Adron Doran did a masterful job. He likened himself to a pinch hitter

in a ball game, but said he had never seen a pinch hitter that early in a game. Maybe not, but brother Doran hit a "home run" and by his well prepared lesson set a very high standard for all others to follow.

Brother Winfred Clark was to have spoken at 10:45 a.m., but he had been ordered by his doctor to curtail his activities because of health difficulties. His nephew, Jeff Clark, filled in and did wonderfully well with the subject of Grace.

Brother David Brown, of Spring, Texas, was unable to appear at 2:30 p.m. on Monday and Jackie Stearsman took his place. This writer ceases not to be amazed at how clearly and powerfully brother Stearsman handles any subject and this was no exception. So, there were three substitutes the first day of the program and if anything, the lectureship program was strengthened. Why? Because the manuscript of the intended speaker is printed in the lectureship book and the substitute speakers lesson is on tape, both audio and video.

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The theme for this program was: YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID... BUT, THE BIBLE SAYS! Under this banner various false teachings were carefully examined, exposed and the inspired teaching in God's Word was held high. There was not one uncertain sound nor were we left to wonder just what the position of the speaker was when he had finished. Recognized and reliable versions of the Bible were used and the only time any other kind was used it was done by a speaker to show the error it taught.

I could detail my thoughts in regard to all the speakers I heard and I missed only two, that being on Wednesday evening when I had responsibilities with my home congregation, Central in Clearwater. But, rather let me speak of two - brother V. P. Black and brother B. C. Carr.

Brother Carr was the first director of the Florida School of Preaching and without doubt brought it over some rough spots during its formative years. Many

are preaching the gospel today who sat under his teaching, and his influence in our brotherhood is seen and felt perhaps more than any would be able to tell. Brother Carr delivered two strong, Bible-centered lessons on this program. These two lessons prove that retirement years do not take away from one's knowledge and ability to "contend for the faith." All of us in the Central Florida area, yea over this entire brotherhood, ought to give thanks to God for the good brother Carr has done in his many years with the school. To have him on this program is simply right and all of us were made better as a result of hearing him.

Brother V.P. Black is one of the most loved men in our brotherhood and has done as much, or more, than any brother living, for Christian education. He has been, and continues to be a strong supporter of the Florida School of Preaching. He brings to the pulpit years of knowledge and experience and holds the audience in rapt attention. This writer has heard him many times over the years and I have never heard him when it seemed he wasn't well prepared for the task at hand. He stands tall and straight physically and spiritually. What a pleasure to sit at his feet as he speaks from God's Word.

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Again this year the lectures have been published in a very attractive book of 542 pages. This book is priced at \$14.00 and is a bargain. Go into any book store and notice the price of books and you will quickly conclude that it just may

be under priced. The material here is second to none and it is based on the inspired teaching of the Bible and stands in defense of that truth and in opposition to every error of man. It will serve our brotherhood in a more permanent way and I would urge every person not having a copy to immediately contact the school for one.

Brother J. H. Blackman spends the entire lectureship program taping everything, both audio and video. These are available through the school and many such are sold annually. It is no small task to control the speaker system and do all the taping, but brother Blackman does it. Our appreciation to him for a job well done.

I cannot bring this to a close without a word concerning the director of this program, brother Jackie Stearsman. It is a big job and responsibility just to put such a program together. There is the selection of a theme, the subjects to be covered under that heading, the speakers to be selected and contacted and to try to accommodate all as to when they can appear. This year he had the added burden of securing a large number of substitutes to fill in for those unable to appear. His is a task not many of us could do, but he does it better than any I have seen. Brethren, express your appreciation to him for it. All of us in attendance have been so richly blessed by this program as he put it together.

The lectureship program concluded on Thursday evening with a "State of the School" address by brother Gordon Methvin, chairman of the board

of directors. Even this was a substitute, but, in this writer's opinion, a very good choice. Those in attendance were more fully informed of the school, support for it, plans for the future, etc. Comments made by listeners were very positive and it would seem a greater appreciation for the school resulted.

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I have expressed to a loving Father in heaven my appreciation, not just for this program, but for the School of Preaching. Great good has been done by this school and there is no reason why more good will not come from it. Such strong lectureship programs help the church in the Central Florida area as well. The warm fellowship of brethren from various localities, the enthusiastic singing and praying, and the faithful preaching of the gospel message - brethren it is a taste of heaven on earth! While the theme and speakers have not been selected for the 1997 program I am already looking forward to it. Why not make your plans to be in attendance and reap the spiritual benefits?

The Harvesters

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