

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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JAMES WINFRED CLARK

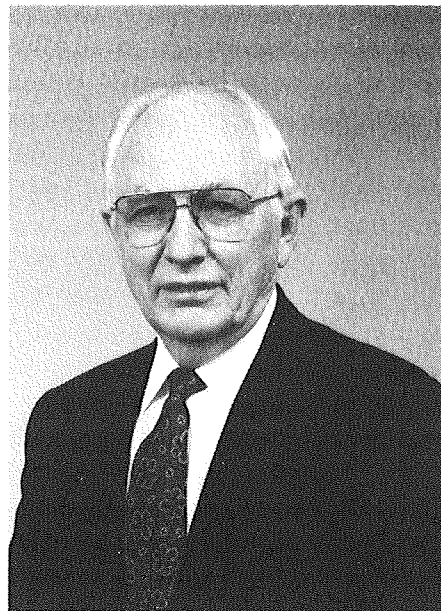
"A Tribute From a Son to His Father"

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). To a Christian family there are no more certain or comforting words to contemplate than these. The body of James Winfred Clark rests in a lowly grave in Talladega county, Alabama, awaiting the resurrection. The Lord knew when it was time for Winfred Clark to rest from his labors. The Lord also knows the works which continue to progress after his death. He will be missed by many and such is a compliment to anyone who leaves this life for the life to come. Any grand comment that I may write about him would be embarrassing to him. He never liked anyone to magnify him. Hoping that my father will forgive me for what I am about to write, let me honor him with these thoughts.

1. Preacher's Preacher

I have heard on many occasions my father addressed by this expression. When I was young, I did not really appreciate it. I knew that preachers from everywhere would call him for advice of thoughts on some Bible subject or verse. As I have gotten older and been preaching for twenty years, I found myself

talking to him about the same kinds of things that other preachers would ask him. He was constantly



James Winfred Clark

interested in the work of preachers, especially my work. Many years ago he took me into his office after he had learned that I wanted to preach and showed me a drawer full of sermon outlines. He told me that he had enough sermon outlines in the one drawer to last me for twenty-five years. I could hardly read his handwriting and especially

his abbreviated comments for illustrations to sermons. I would often ask him after reading one of his outlines, "What does this place or person's name mean as far as and illustration of this point?" I learned that I could take his outlines and get many thoughts from them, but the sermons which I would actually preach had to be my own. He, like Uncle Franklin, knew that there was no substitute for personal study. He often spent hour upon hour in his study reading the Bible and books that aided that study. He was a constant source of pertinent information and people knew it. I can read his outlines today and still hear his voice in my mind. His sermons were from the heart and easy to understand. Any sermon which was unscriptural or was not supported with scripture was abomination. It has been some kind of life, being a preacher and the son of Winfred Clark at the same time, but I thank God for bringing me into the world into the hands of such a preacher.

2. Powerful Influence

I remember many well-known gospel preachers coming into our home. There were men like Gus Nichols, G.K. Wallace, Guy N. Woods, Batsell Barrett Baxter, etc. Many preachers still living have

graced our home and aided the church in its work. All the preachers which came into our home respected my father and what he stood for in the brotherhood. My father has preached countless funeral sermons, performed numerous wedding ceremonies, conducted multitudes of gospel meetings and lectures all over the country, and prayed may a prayer for and with others. I heard people talk of my father with the same honor that was given to men who graced our home. I sometimes wondered whom they were talking about, because I knew his strengths and his weaknesses. I will never forget the expression he used to describe other people to me. He would say, "All men have clay feet". He was including himself and me in that expression to try to instill humility in my mind. His influence will live on through the lives of people who were touched by his wit, wisdom and ways.

3. Precious Husband and Father

My sister and I never had reason to question whether Winfred Clark loved Polly Clark. Though words of affection were not spoken as much in our family as in others, we all knew that Daddy loved Mother and Mother loved Daddy. They both demonstrated to us what a Christian home was like and strove to see that our homes would be like the one we were brought up in. He knew how to balance the time between the work of the church and the building of his home. When I was young, he would take me with him to gospel meetings that he was conducting. I would often stand with him at the back of the building after the service and "shake the brethren out the door". He would often use his family as illustrations in sermons whether we liked our private lives being revealed or not. His two worlds were the church and his family. By the grace of God I was begotten by

Winfred Clark. By the grace of God I was brought up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord by Winfred Clark. By the grace of God I was led to Jesus Christ by the preaching and teaching of Winfred Clark. By the grace of God my wife and I were joined in marriage by God with Winfred Clark officiating the ceremony. By the grace of God I was encouraged to preach and guided I in that work by Winfred Clark. By the grace of God I stood with my wife, mother, sister, brother-in-law, and other family members and friends to see Winfred Clark leave this world to go to a "better country" (Heb. 11:16). By the grace of God, Winfred Clark lives in me and through me.

James Winfred Clark, Jr.



JAMES WINFRED CLARK

By

B. C. Carr

On Wednesday morning, August 13, 1997, funeral services were conducted for brother Winfred Clark at the Hobbs Street church building in Athens, AL.

He had bravely battled cancer for several months until it spread throughout the body claiming his life. Winfred was 73 years old. Most of his life, he had served as a gospel preacher. For the last several years, he also was an elder of the Hobbs Street church.

Brother Clark is survived by his wife, Polly, one son, Jimmy, and a daughter, Phyllis. The Clarks' have 3 grandchildren. A number of relatives mourn his passing. Gordon Methvin, Chairman of the Board of Florida School of Preaching married one of his sisters.

It was my privilege to be present for this most impressive funeral service. There were several things that impressed me. Things I

will remember for a lifetime.

1. I was impressed with the large crowd of people in attendance. Although it was in the middle of the week when most people would be busy at their jobs, the large auditorium was filled to capacity. It was reported that more than 500 people came for the viewing to pay their respect on Tuesday night. In a day when few attend funerals, this great crowd of people who came to express their love and respect was impressive. A great host of gospel preachers came from many places. These were requested to sit together near the front as honorary pallbearers. My estimate is that 60 or more were in this group. Others were in the crowd and not counted in this group. They came from many miles away and from several states. Some were engaged in gospel meetings at various places but they came for this occasion. Winfred Clark was a preacher's preacher. They loved him.

2. I was impressed by the words spoken. Bobby Duncan from Adamsville, AL spoke of Winfred as his preacher. Everyone needs a preacher to whom they can go for advice and counsel. Brother Duncan related how he had been encouraged in his ministry from the beginning by our brother. (Continued, Page 4)

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~ Lectureship Schedule ~

Monday

9:00 Tests Faced by Those in Poverty
9:45 Tests Faced by Bible Preaching
10:45 Tests Faced on the Mission Field
11:30 LUNCH

Preachers Forum

1:30 Tests to Grow Spiritually
2:00 Tests To His Family
2:30 Tests Relating to Elders
3:00 BREAK
3:30 Questions
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Tests Faced by Jesus
7:45 Tests Faced in Soul Winning

Ben Radford
V. P. Black
Joseph Worndle

Kenneth Randolph
Jimmy Clark
David Hartbarger

Bernard Cooper
B. C. Carr

Wednesday

9:00 Tests Faced in Police Work
9:45 Tests Faced by Bible Preaching
10:45 The Tests of Truth and Conscience
11:30 LUNCH

Crisis Forum

1:30 The Loss of Mate, Child or Parent
2:00 The Loss of Income
2:30 Loss of Health and Aging
3:00 BREAK
3:30 Questions
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Tests Faced by Abraham
7:45 Tests in James I

Earl Anderson
V. P. Black
Freeman Green

Billy Lambert
John Griffis
Rex Dutton

Jeff Booth
Dub McClish

Tuesday

9:00 Tests Unique to Those in Power
9:45 Tests Faced by Bible Preaching
10:45 Tests Unique to Employees
11:30 LUNCH - (Faculty, Student, Alumni Photos)

Worship Forum

1:30 Worship: Authorized Acts
2:00 Expediency
2:30 Unauthorized Acts
3:00 BREAK
3:30 Questions
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Tests Faced By Joseph
7:45 Tests Come to All Stages of Life

Kenneth Randolph
V. P. Black
Sam Conley

Tom Holland
Jimmy Clark
Jeff Clark

Robert Pirant
Tom Holland

Thursday

9:00 Tests Faced by Peter
9:45 Tests Faced by the Restoration Plea
10:45 Tests Faced in Restoring the Wayward
11:30 LUNCH

Church Forum

1:30 Fellowship
2:00 Leadership
2:30 Avoiding New Fads
3:00 BREAK
3:30 Questions
4:30 DINNER
7:00 Tests Unique to the Young
7:45 Tests Faced in Marriage

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Adron Doran
B. C. Carr

Billy Lambert
Landis Suggs
Dub McClish

Mike Elledge
Roy Dicks



Landis Suggs



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Attend the annual lectureship the third full week in January.

Many times he had studied difficult passages of scripture with him. Many hours were spent on the telephone in love and edification. Many of us could have said the same thing. Brother Clark was troubled about the many issues that face the church, but he would not allow himself to become bitter. He maintained a balance.

Brother Tom Holland spoke tenderly of Winfred. He could not restrain the tears as he told of encouragement that had been given him when he needed it most. Winfred sought to lift up the down trodden. Brother Holland said that like Abraham of old, Winfred Clark had been gathered to his people. Gen. 15:15; Gen. 25:8. The same thing was said of Isaac and Jacob. Winfred has not ceased to exist, but has been gathered to his people and to be with God. Brother Holland also reminded us that Christ had abolished death (2 Tim. 1:10). Not that death was no more, the occasion denied this, but that rather Christ had rendered death ineffective. Death has no real power over the faithful child of God. Brother Holland said we were present for a celebration of Winfred's transition to a better place. He then asked, "Why then the tears?" His conclusion was that we were shedding tears for ourselves. The family will miss his presence. The church will miss his strong influence. A host of preachers and friends will

miss his encouragement; but for Winfred it is far better to depart to be with Christ.

3. I was impressed with the very beautiful congregational singing. The whole audience sang with much feeling the beautiful songs about Heaven, The Family of God, the place where there would be no more tears, and the sweet by and by.

4. I was impressed by the courage and hope of the family. They sat up front in a group and joined heartily in the singing. They lingered in the hallways after the service to hug and greet friends. They boldly spoke of their faith that Winfred had gone to heaven. What a blessed hope.

5. Winfred meant much to the Florida School of Preaching. He was a regular speaker on our Lectureship for many years. At first, he came with his Uncle, Franklin Camp. Once he came, we kept asking him to be a featured speaker. Winfred also came to the school for several special studies with the students. He had great ability to analyze and outline the scripture in a powerful way. Brother Clark was generous in giving of his time and money to help the school. He never accepted pay for his efforts. Often he helped us find support from others. He was our friend.

6. He spent his last years devoting much energy to his work of

training and helping other preachers to render a greater service to God. He was a remarkable man. The Brotherhood will not soon forget him. Truly a prince and great man is fallen this day (2 Sam. 3:39).



[Brother Winfred Clark meant much to the Florida School of Preaching. He was always a joy to be around and presented lessons that were practical and Biblical. His special lectures were loved and appreciated by student and faculty. We know that many who attended the January Lectures each year and who read our publication would want to know of his passing and some of the commendations made by others. Jimmy, his son, and B.C. Carr have provided the words of commendation we have printed here. To his family and hosts of friends, we extend our deepest sympathy. Editor]

In Appreciation

To
The Midway Church of Christ
Sarasota, Florida
For
Your Support and Encouragement
To
The Florida School of Preaching

~
Board of Directors
October 9, 1997

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