

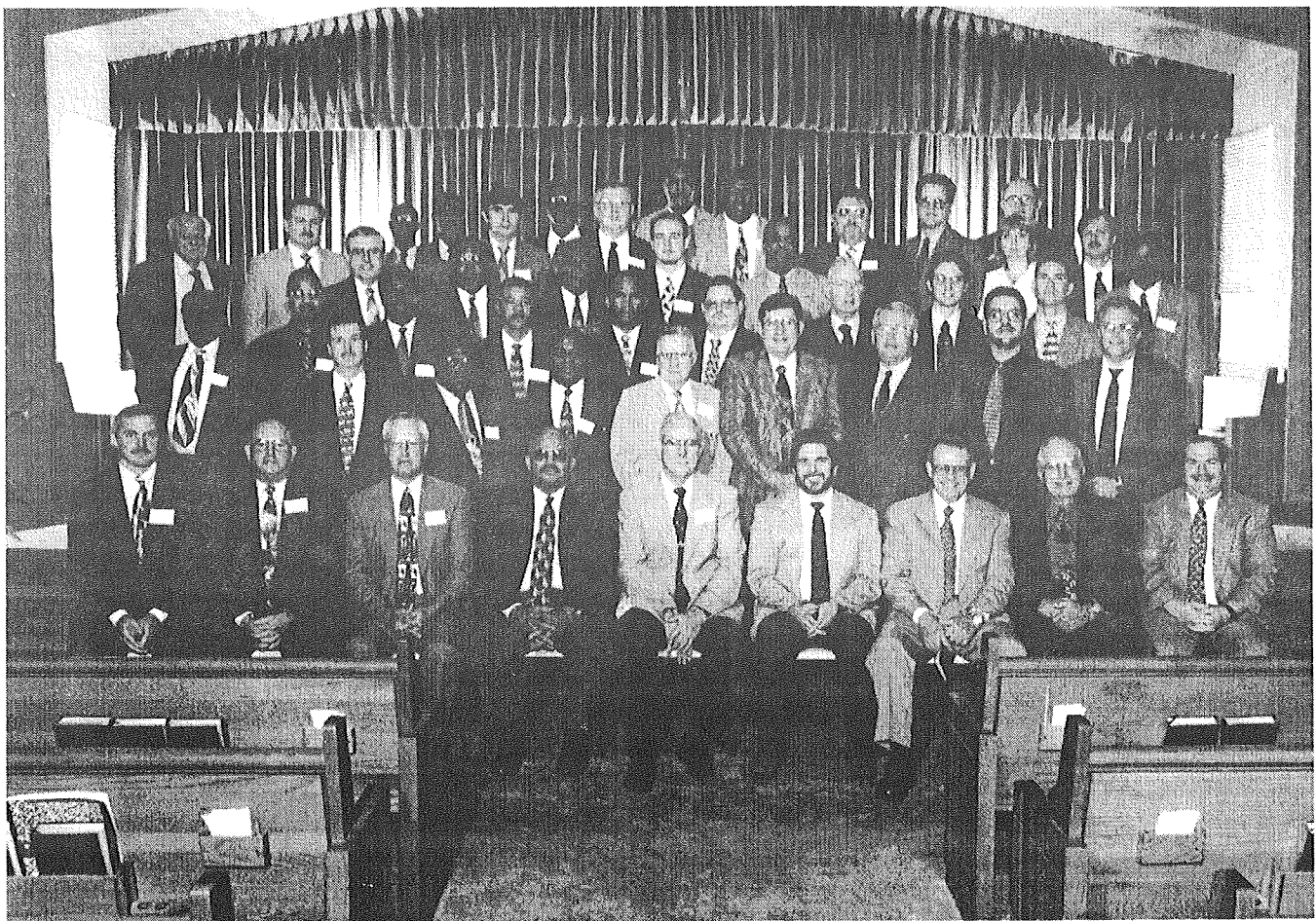
Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XVIII

February 1998

Number 7

SCENES FROM THE 1998 LECTURESHIP



The 1998 Florida School of Preaching Lectureship is history. We have received a number of letters and phone calls from those wishing to attend but due to situations peculiar to them were unable to be here.

The pictures in this issue will provide a partial visual presentation of the week. We plan to prepare an album for our display taken to different locations with students and staff.

Many have requested tapes and copies of the Book. In fact, this year we used all the blank tapes we had ordered for the series and had to borrow from others in order to fill the requests. .

We registered people from twenty (20) different States, four (4) countries and seventy-four (74) cities in Florida.



The Harvesters

Published Monthly
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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

Religious Essentials

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

Religion is a part of the very nature of human life. Wherever you may travel, you will observe objects of religious devotion. Some religious actions bring immediate harm to the practitioner. Some are solely materialistic in devotion. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines religion as, "human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, spiritual, or divine. Religion is commonly regarded as consisting of a person's relation to God or to gods or spirits." The religious person tries to integrate life around that which is considered most sacred or worthy of his or her devotion. When the center of life is materialistic, pursuits of that religion are doomed to failure. Material things are uncertain (I Tim. 6:17). When the material is gone, to whom and/or what shall one turn? Reverence for youth may also be an object of great devotion. Time has a way of playing havoc with youth. When age changes our abilities, thus, altering our lives, will our religion sustain us?

We need religion that is true and objective (Jer. 10:23). We need a religion that does not leave us in times of success or in times of sorrow.

Questions

Will your life's devotion sustain you now and through any and all eventuality? What do we need to have such a religion? Are not the following items essential?

Desire

People pursue what they desire. With no appetite or desire, there will be no genuine quest for true religion. The Lord said the "will to know" was essential to know if He was genuine in His religious demands upon us (John 7:17). He also stated that "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" would bring about being filled with the same (Matt. 5:6).

Pain and sorrow have a way of stopping us and making us evaluate the issues of life. Loss and tragedy have a way of refining our objectives. David reflecting on his afflictions could say it was good that trouble had come to him (Psalm 119:67, 71). Some, like Judas, will not adjust their devotions even though the end result is devastating failure. Religious tragedy is no uncommon malady. What is our desire? If we obtained it, would it sustain us in times of success and/or times of distress? Do we need to adjust our religion?

Reliable Bible

The Bible means The Book. We have an objective source of all religious issues in the Bible. However, we must have a reliable text. Many texts that are produced today are far from reliable. Many Bible translations are perverted in the way they render the sacred text. It is essential that we have a text in our

mother tongue, if we are to study and develop our lives in harmony with the mind of God. While the original text of the New Testament was being produced by the inspired prophets and Apostles, the Lord placed in the native tongue the message of true and genuine religion (Acts 2:1-12). In the school we have men from Africa, Haiti, Jamaica and the States. Some of us can function well in English but others are at home in French. True religion must have a genuine Bible. Without a trustworthy text we are at the mercy of false teachers and false teaching. Do you know if your Bible is reliable? Can you trust it to lead you in truth and righteousness?

Bible Dictionary

We live many years from the days of Bible events. We live in different cultural environments. It is essential that we have a good Bible Dictionary that will help bridge the gap between the First Century and our time and culture. Like the text of the Bible we need to have help in our mother tongue. We think and reason in the language that is most common to us, and for most of us that is the tongue we grew up speaking and reading.

Bible Knowledge

It is essential that we know the text of the Bible. Without knowing the text ourselves we will

never be sure if what we hear is true to the text or not. A primary goal of the school is to get before the students the overview and meaning of each book of the Bible. With this foundation students will be able to study and to help others study the Bible. There is no way we can know the meaning of sections of the Bible if we do not know the text of the Bible.

In America, there is no reason for individuals to not know the text of the Bible. You can purchase tapes of the Bible and have the text read. You can find copies of the Bible in most book stores and there are groups who will even give you a text of the KJV from which to read. Bible classes are available to help a person study and come to know the text of the Bible.

Do you know the text of the Bible? Do you know the fate of the ignorant and untrustworthy (II Peter 3:14-18)? Would you know if you had fallen from your own steadfastness? How can your religion be trustworthy if you do not know the Book upon which it is to be founded?

Application

All the knowledge in the world will avail nothing unless a person makes application of what

is known. To know the Master's will and not do it is no innocent matter. "And that servant, which **knew his lord's** will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes* (Luke 12:47). The person sins that knows to do good and does not do it (James 4:17). It will be worse for those that turn their back upon truth and return to error. Peter states it would have been better never to have known than to know and depart (II Peter 2:20-22). Many rulers in Jesus' day believed but would not confess it because they desired the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:42-43).

There can be no development of genuine religion without application of truths learned. Learning becomes an exercise in futility if there is no application of truths to life. How many things have we left undone that should be done? Is there any wonder that we are not growing in our religion.

Do you know preachers who have learned little since finishing school? Do you know preachers that would be no help with difficult passages or issues? How may we assist others if we are deficient ourselves? When we fail to apply truth, how may we

expect to grow?

Conclusion

Some essential things are more important than others. There are those who have a great knowledge of the Bible but have no desire to apply it. Some seem to feel that if one is a Doctor in some field of knowledge that makes a person competent in other fields, especially in religion. Not so, the issue comes back to the question, is a person qualified to function in the field under consideration?

Again, one may have all the study tools and helps available, but, if that person does not apply, and have a desire to apply truth, the tools are of no ultimate value.

One passage that should be sobering to all comes from Paul. "*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess. 2:9-12).

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