



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“IT IS WRITTEN”

Reflections from Matthew 4:1-11

By

Gaylon West, Elder

If God were to speak to us directly today, we would, I suppose, say that what He says is important.

God spoke directly to Moses. If God were to write with His finger His message, we would likewise say that is important. God wrote the 10 commandments on tablets of stone.

But God also told Moses to write. God told His prophets to “write.” Should not that also be important?

The point of this lesson is that Jesus tells us how important the Sacred Writings are. The Sacred Writings of O.T. Scriptures are pointed out by Jesus to be the Message He and others were to use to resist the devil with. [Subsequently, Jesus added the New Testament to the Sacred Writings (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)].

Jesus is our example (I Pet. 2:21; I Cor.11:1). In the Judean wilderness, Jesus was face to face with the devil with His temptations. Three times Jesus answers the

challenges or trials with “It is written.”

First, Jesus, by His example, teaches us to use the Scriptures when we are faced with the decisions of life. “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:3-4 KJV).

Jesus was beginning His public ministry. Was He to indulge in His desires, pleasures, and fleshly wants, or was He to follow God’s



Gaylon West

will? Jesus’ example shows us to use what is written for our decisions of life. The words translated “answered and said” are two thoughts. The word “answered” [ἀποκρίνομαι] means “to *conclude for oneself*, that is, (by implication) to respond” (Strong’s). Jesus, using the Scriptures, gave attention to the devil’s remarks, and promptly He gave His reply to the devil.

Second, when we are faced with an interpretation of Scripture and we want to know if that is a true interpretation of the Scriptures, do as Jesus did. “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the

In Memory of Don Matthews

1929–2005

Don Matthews, a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching and a generous supporter of our work passed away, June 10, 2005, from lung cancer.

Brother Matthews was interested in world evangelism. He made a number of trips to Guyana as well as providing support for others to carry the gospel there and to other parts of the world.

There was a memorial service for brother Matthews, at 10:30 A.M., Saturday, June 18, 2005, at the University City church of Christ in Gainesville, FL.

temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:5-6 KJV).

Jesus harmonized all Scriptures on that subject. The devil quoted Scripture. But his interpretation would have Jesus violating another Scripture. And Jesus told him so. Jesus' reply is "It is written AGAIN." Truth does not contradict itself. What do we learn from Jesus versus the devil in this confrontation? We should check and see if an interpretation given to us contradicts other Scripture. Put it all together; harmonize them and then you can believe and act.

Third, Jesus used Scripture to tell how His worship and service was to be directed. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:8-10 KJV).

Worship and service is not to be directed to the devil. Nor, to ourselves. But we are to direct our worship to God. "It is [so] written." People want to entertain themselves "in

worship" instead of "worshipping God." It is, "what pleases me?" Not, what pleases God. How do we please God? The answer is found in what "is written." If we can't give book, chapter and verse for our worship and service to God, we are in trouble.

In conclusion: Our lives should pattern that of Jesus in responding to the challenges of life. (1) Our decisions must be based on what "is written." Ponder over God's Will in the respective matters, decide what God would have us do, and follow that course. (2) Our interpretation of Scripture must harmonize with all passages on the subject. Let us make sure our conclusions are based on all that is written. (3) Our worship must be based on "it is written." And all of our service to God must be Scripture based. (Brother West serves as one of the elders of the Orange Street church of Christ, Auburndale, FL.)

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THE GOSPEL IN GHANA, WEST AFRICA

By

Brian R. Kenyon



Brian R. Kenyon

We cannot pray, "Lord, use us in thy service," or sing, "Here am I, Lord, send me," and then not go to the mission field when opportunity arises. People in the United States need the Gospel just as much as people overseas (Rom. 3:23; 6:23); thus, when the opportunity arises, here or there, we must take advantage of it. Due to the willing oversight of the Orange

Street church of Christ and the gracious support of brethren, an opportunity to spread the Gospel in Ghana, West Africa, was afforded this writer, along with four others: Bob Bauer, Jim Hall, Daniel Stearsman, and Chad Tagtow. Below is a summary of our mission trip.

The Gospel And Culture

As one might expect, the culture in Ghana is much different than that in the United States. However, one beautiful attribute of the Gospel is that it works and applies in any culture. There were three cultural items that took a while to get used to. First, the left hand is considered somewhat unclean. It is generally unacceptable to greet another person with one's left hand and/or handle food when eating with the left hand (of course, Ghanaians are a bit tolerant of American visitors). Second, formal greetings were necessary on many occasions, and some took 30 minutes or more. Whenever the missionary team met specific families, we were required to enter their home or yard, with specific chairs assigned, and then be introduced to the head of the

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1807 South Florida Avenue
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(863) 683-4043

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

household. Third, closing announcements at church services often lasted longer than the sermon itself. If you thought congregations in America took a long time making closing announcements, what would you think about waiting an hour and fifteen minutes after the sermon to hear the final "Amen"? A theme of survival would be, "When in Ghana, do as the Ghanaians." Paul exemplified this by saying, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake" (1 Cor. 9:22-23).

The Gospel

And

Our Schedule

We arrived in Ghana Saturday night, May 21. Each of us preached in a different congregation the next day. Four baptisms occurred in the congregations for whom we preached. For the next three days, we conducted a lectureship on leadership at the Prampram congregation. The average attendance was about 70, most of whom were area preachers, some traveling far distances. On Thursday and Friday, we conducted a medical clinic in Dawa, a nearby village. Daniel Stearsman, a pharmacist by trade, was instrumental in organizing the clinic and purchasing medications. While people waited to see the doctor, we taught the Bible. At night, we "street preached" in that village. We visited church members and conducted Bible studies on Saturday, and each of us preached at different congregations on Sunday.

The next Monday through Thursday, we went to Ada-Foah, where a congregation was planted last year. We conducted Bible studies house to house during the day and "street preached" on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Rain cancelled our preaching Monday night. On Friday, we

visited an orphanage, Village of Hope, located in Fetteh, to donate left over medicine from the clinic. We spent a few hours touring the campus, and we were impressed with their work, which is completely supported by churches of Christ, even being self-supported in some areas, but receiving no funds from the government. Following that, we went to Elmina Castle, the oldest standing structure in sub-Saharan Africa. It was originally built by the Portuguese in 1482 as a warehouse to store goods for trade. However, it soon became the major slave trade depot for about the next 300 years. It was somewhat eerie to visit its dungeons and to hear of the atrocities that occurred within its walls. Blame for the slave trade cannot be placed on any one specific group. Many had a part in the cruelty, including the Africans themselves. On our last Sunday morning, June 5, we again preached in different congregations and then packed our belongings for a Sunday evening departure.

The Gospel

And

Building the Body of Christ

The main purpose of our mission was to build up and strengthen congregations that were already established in the southern part of Ghana (cf. Acts 15:36). It is one thing to baptize hundreds of people, but it is quite another task to keep those people faithful, especially when the congregations are often made up of babes in Christ! The lectureship on leadership helped to build up the body of Christ in that region. When the preachers apply what they learned from God's word, the church will be strengthened wherever they go. Although our main purpose was to encourage the church, wherever the Gospel seed is sown, it has the potential of bringing forth conversions (cf. Mt.

13:23). In all, there were at least twenty baptisms and at least 260 Bible studies. The cooperation of brethren was astounding. In the Ada-Foah campaign, area preachers came and also went door to door, conducting Bible studies. In addition, several sisters in Christ helped by preparing meals for the local campaign workers. It was refreshing to see the body of Christ, though made up of many members, functioning as a single unit for the Gospel's sake. There was much "planting" and "watering," and we trust that the Lord will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

The Gospel

And

Florida School of Preaching

Although the school had nothing to do with organizing and/or financing this campaign, the school's impact is seen in many ways. The Orange Street congregation continues to be one of our most consistent supporters. The four members from Orange Street have attended classes, and Bob Bauer, who led the campaign, serves as an extension class instructor. Your support of the Florida School of Preaching reaches far beyond the classroom. It gives men, like those on this campaign and hundreds of others, the necessary training to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

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Important Dates

➤ Fall Semester Begins

August 15, 2005

➤ Annual Lectureship

January 16-19, 2006

If you need information, consult the web site or contact the office.

Note: Incoming students will need to arrive in time to make housing and transportation arrangements before classes begin.

Gene Burgett Report

Do you remember when you were a kid and summer break meant leisure time? Those days are gone. With no classes to bring me back to Lakeland every week, summertime is an ideal time to take extended trips. In May it was my honor to speak at the Burlington-Santa Fe church of Christ in Branford, Florida. This congregation has supported the school for many years and we are grateful to them for their help. Their elders, Don Warner, Horace Rose and Landis Suggs are fine men. Landis is a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching. I also visited with the Black Creek church in the month of May where Steve Atnip, one of our board members, serves as both an evangelist and an elder.

June began with a trip to

Alabama. The Randolph Street church has faithfully supported the school for many years. Their support goes back to the days when brother B.C. Carr was still working with us. The Randolph Street church is probably the oldest congregation in Huntsville, having been established in the 1880's. Many highly regarded men have spoken from her pulpit over the past one hundred years.

While in Alabama it was also my privilege to speak twice at the Lord's church in Double Springs. My family and I began visiting with the Double Springs congregation several years ago after my parents moved to that area. They are a warm group of people and it doesn't take long to feel at home with them. I spoke in their Wednesday night summer series and taught a Sunday

morning Bible class. I always look forward to visiting with them when I am in Alabama.

Many men have inquired about enrolling in our classes in August. Our classes are tuition free thanks to the financial contribution of churches and Christians who see the need for more preachers to be trained. But every month we find our budget strained, and each new student adds to that financial burden. Won't you please consider helping us in this work? The churches of Christ desperately need men sound in the faith to fill their pulpits. We offer men who wish to preach a course of study that reveals respect for God's word and love for God's church. We need your help.—Gene Burgett, Director of Public Relations, burgett@atlantic.net, 352-339-3195

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