

A Mission and an Honor

Prior to His ascension back to heaven, Jesus instructed His apostles to, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15). A few decades later, the apostle Paul wrote, “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.” (II Timothy 2:2). Titus was told, “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” (Titus 2:1). Timothy was exhorted to, “Preach the word.” (II Timothy 4:2).

The primary focus of the church of Christ has been since the first century, is today and throughout time will be to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the world. Jesus once looked out upon a multitude that was following Him and, moved with compassion, said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:36-38). With that same compassion, Christians must look and see the fields of lost men and women that are ready to be harvested for the Lord (John 4:35). This must ever be our reason for being. The Gospel was never meant to be hidden under a bushel or tucked away in a corner. Indeed, as the first century church was scattered from Jerusalem because of persecution, these brethren took the saving message of Jesus Christ and “went every where preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4). So intent was the first century church on spreading the Gospel that Paul spoke of that Gospel having been “preached to every creature which is under heaven.” (Colossians 1:23). It’s apparent that the church in that time shared the conviction stated by Paul in I Corinthians 9:16. “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” The teaching of God’s truth was the mission of the first century church. Any effort to restore New Testament Christianity must embrace this same mission.

Beyond a mission, though, the teaching of God’s Word is an unparalleled honor. When Paul stood before King Agrippa, he began his message by saying, “I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews.” (Acts 26:2). He then proceeded to give his defense and even to urge the Jewish king to obey the Gospel Himself (Acts 26:27-28). Just think about it. If you are a Christian, you are such by virtue of your obedience to the commands of the good news that Jesus Christ “died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” (I Corinthians 15:1-3). As a Christian, you have been redeemed from past sins (I Peter 1:18). You have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:18). This was all made possible by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8) and the willing sacrifice of Jesus (I Peter 2:24). As a Christian, you have the hope of heaven (I Peter 1:3) and daily enjoy the multitude of spiritual blessings that can only be found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). AND, as a Christian, through the teaching of the Word of God, you have the honor and privilege of telling others how they themselves can obtain salvation and how they can “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18). What better way to use our mouths or our pens than in telling others about the offer of eternal salvation that is available to them?

There are times when we consider ourselves honored to fulfill a request by another person. For instance, in preparation for a wedding, a preacher is asked to conduct the ceremony, singers are invited to use their talents and men and women are asked to be members of the bridal party, be they groomsmen or bridesmaids. In each case, those being asked consider just the invitation itself to be an honor. Their participation affords them an opportunity to show the bride and groom their affection for them. On a much grander scale, teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives the Christian an opportunity to show his or her love for the One who has saved them from past sins and given them hope. In teaching the Gospel, we obey God’s command and we demonstrate our love for Him as well (John 14:15). What a great and happy honor it is to be able to speak God’s Word, either publicly or privately (Acts 20:20). May we never tire of this privilege but ever be mindful of the mission we have to lead the lost to Christ through His Word.