



THE BEACON BEAM

October 2015

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

'I Believe in Preaching'

By R. C. Sproul

History shows us that the greatest periods of revival and reformation the church has ever seen occur in conjunction with the frequent, consistent and clear preaching of God's Word."

Over the years, I've made no secret of my admiration for men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, who were so instrumental in the recovery of the gospel during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. I'm amazed by their towering intellects and their ability to stand firm amid much danger. Their love for biblical truth is an example to follow, and as I approach 20 years of weekly preaching at Saint Andrew's Chapel, I'm particularly grateful for their pastoral model. Both of these men were "celebrities" in their day, but neither of them spent his years traveling Europe in order to consolidate a movement of followers. Instead, both of them devoted themselves to their primary vocation of preaching and teaching the Word of God. Both men were tireless preachers—Luther in Wittenberg, Germany, and Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland. They took the ministry of the Word of God seriously, so when they talk about the task of the preacher, I pay close attention.

More than a decade ago, I was invited to give a lecture on Martin Luther's view of preaching, and I found that preparing for that exercise was invaluable for my own work as a preacher. I also discovered that what Luther

had to say about preaching was not only for the pastor but also for the entire church, and it's amazing how timely his words remain in our day.

One of the emphases that we find again and again in Luther's writings is that a preacher must be "apt to teach." In many ways, this is no great insight, for he's just restating the qualifications that are set forth in the New Testament for church elders (1 Tim. 3:2). Yet given what we expect from our preachers today, Luther's words—echoing biblical revelation—need to be heard anew. The concept that the primary task of the minister is to teach is all but lost in the church today. When we call ministers to our churches we often look for these men to be adept administrators, skilled fundraisers and good organizers. Sure, we want them to know some theology and the Bible, but we don't make it a priority that these people be equipped to teach the congregation the things of God. Administrative tasks are seen as more important.

This is not the model that Jesus Himself commended. You remember the encounter that Jesus had with Peter after His resurrection. Peter had denied Jesus publicly three times, and Jesus went about restoring the Apostle, telling him three times to "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-19). By extension, this calling is given to the elders and ministers of

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Schedule of Services:

Sunday
Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday
Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

Beacon Highlights for October

Special Events for October

04-07	Fall Bible Conference ESL	18	Members Meeting ESL
05	Tri-State Particular Baptist Fellowship	20 22	Coffee n' Courage Men Sharpening Men
10	Teen Homeplace Ministry	25	ESL
11	Lord's Table ESL	27 31	Coffee n' Courage Father/Son Breakfast
13	Coffee n' Courage Elders/Deacons Meeting		
14	Teen/Parent Focus		
15	Silver Saints Piedmont Rescue Mission Greater Vision Banquet		
17	Fall Festival		



October Member Birthdays

01	Jerry Jarrell
04	Paul Holt
06	Carly Karns
8	Paul Ellis David Freeman
9	Sabrina Gilley Jack Lowe Christa Wilson
12	McKinnley Lowe
13	Dale Evans
15	Martina Boudreault
16	Otis Holland
17	Wayland Loftis
20	Randy Counts Darin Rhue
21	Peggy Bolton Betty Vestal
22	Ken Crumpton
23	Dolly Benesch
25	Henry Campbell Robert Ector Don Ingold Aimee McDorman
27	Denise Marley
28	Bob Hendry
29	Pam Faust

You are Invited...

Please join us for our **Fall Bible Conference**
October 4-7, 2015, with Dr. John McKnight,
from Darlington, Maryland.
Dr. McKnight will be speaking on
"Christ in the Psalms."

Sympathy ~ We express our heartfelt sympathy to the family of:

Darrell Champlin
 Ruby Clayton
 Charles Farrah

Mary Holt
 Opal Kenner
 Bryan Rorke

Wade Satterfield
 Mike Spencer

The Beacon Broadcast

Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.

Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV)	10:05 a.m. 10:05 p.m.
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Sunday

WPCM 920 AM (Burlington, NC)	9:00 a.m.
WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WSML 1200 AM (Graham, NC)	8:30 p.m.
WLES 560 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards 1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	9:30 p.m.

October Missionary Birthdays

12	Joel Weaver
15	Tim Easley
16	Jonathan Vaughn*
23	David Chapman*

*Children of Missionaries

Beacon Pastors

Gregory N. Barkman	Senior Pastor
Michael R. Karns	Minister of Christian Education
Robert F. La Tour	Minister of Families
Gerald J. Counts	Minister of Visitation
Gregory L. Phillips	Minister of Music

In part, I think most Christians could see it coming, but it still took us by surprise. I am referring to the recent Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage in America. We had no difficulty realizing that the homosexual movement had gained incredible momentum, but I'm not sure we were prepared for a legal ruling of such sweeping proportions. Especially when it is based upon nothing except the opinions of five judges. It could have gone the other way, with five ruling against and four in favor, but because the majority chose to carve a new "right" out of the United States Constitution where none had existed before, one judge has changed the moral landscape in America. This may prove to be the most momentous ruling ever handed down by the highest court of our land. It will take some time to work through all the legal ramifications.

HOW QUICKLY THINGS CHANGE.

Five years ago, who could have imagined that we would be where we are today. Incredible as it seems, just five years ago, President Barak Obama was still on record as opposing gay marriage. But now, that seems a far distant memory. The barrage of well-orchestrated propaganda succeeded in changing the political landscape so quickly that now, we can scarcely remember when the vast majority of American citizens and politicians opposed same-sex marriage. Gay marriage, unheard of in all of human history until now, has become legal, and those who stand in the way have suddenly become criminals guilty of breaking the law. Who could have imagined that in America someone could go to jail for opposing gay marriage, but the unimaginable has become reality. The tables have turned with lightning speed. America is no longer a nation based upon Christian

principles. Indeed, America is no longer governed by a Constitution. When five judges can read new rights into the Constitution which never existed before, constitutional government is dead. We are not governed by law, but by prevailing opinion, which has no foundation.

*“America needs
a spiritual
awakening, and
until that comes,
we can expect
further decline.”*

POLITICAL SOLUTIONS CRUMBLE.

With this ruling, the realization that America is no longer governed by majority vote becomes painfully obvious, if it wasn't already clear. Many States, North Carolina included, determined, by majority vote, that same-sex marriage would not become legal. But what do the votes of millions of citizens mean if the majority can be over-ruled by a handful of judges? It seems that when the majority votes to the approval of powerful interests, we are reminded that we must all bow to the will of the majority. But when the majority votes to the disapproval of these same powers, the majority is forced to submit to the will of a few. That's a neat arrangement if you can pull it off, and evidently some can. Not only is the Constitution dead, but so is majority rule. The political process seems increasingly like a game whose rules change constantly to favor certain ideologies. No wonder

many Americans have abandoned politics. We are told that voting is a civic duty, but why vote if your vote can be overturned by a judge on a whim?

Please do not misunderstand what I say. I'm not advocating this sentiment. I believe Christians should vote in every election. Even if our vote can be negated at times, it still counts for something, and is a tool given us by God to influence America for righteousness. We ought to utilize our vote as a stewardship granted by God to be used for His glory at every opportunity. But surely we realize by now, if we didn't before, that political solutions are not able to turn America around. Something much more profound is needed. America's greatest problems are not political, but spiritual. Christians were naïve to think we could change America through the ballot box. America needs a spiritual awakening, and until that comes, we can expect further decline. Sinful people as we are, unrestrained by the Spirit of God, always drift further from Truth. No one moves toward the light unless drawn by the Spirit of God. We are told in God's Word that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Do we need any greater proof of this than what we see happening in our beloved United States of America today?

WHAT'S THE MAIN PROBLEM?

It's not too difficult to identify many godless influences that have pulled America downward. We could fault public education in this country, tracing the gradual change from a Bible-based curriculum to a humanistic philosophy of schooling. Children of darkness were wiser than children of light in recognizing the potential of public education, and determining to reshape it in the interests of Atheism.

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Some Thoughts on Christian Liberty

Bob La Tour

The world has given less offensive labels to many activities that the Bible calls sin.¹ Much that was once considered wrong by most community standards has slid dangerously into a position of tolerance or aggressive justification. Some who profess to be Christians have followed suit in an effort to be “culturally relevant.” Others have even made some of these issues a matter of Christian liberty.

More than ever, Christians must be very careful not to excuse or condone that which the Bible condemns. Believers are to direct their daily lives by the moral precepts that God has given to us in His Word. Psalm 119:9-11 “How can a young man cleanse his way? By *taking heed according to Your word*. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!” (Also Psalm 19) We are not saved BY fulfilling God’s moral law, but we are saved TO fulfill God’s *moral law* through His empowering Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” [John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14; 1 John 5:3; Also Ephesians 1:1-2:10].

Christians are at liberty to participate in that which God does not forbid either by general principle or by specific prohibition. Example. God does not say, “You shall not speed.” God does say, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” (Rom. 13:1) If something is not forbidden in Scripture, does that give a Christian an automatic green light to participate in it? Not necessarily. The exercise of Christian liberty must at all times be governed by four guidelines—

1. A desire to acknowledge God in all our ways and to demonstrate a fear of God in our efforts to glorify Him (I Peter 1:17; I Cor.10:31-33).
2. A care for the welfare of fellow Christians by seeking to edify them and to guard against offending their conscience (I Cor. 8:9; Rom.15:1-3).
3. A desire to be a mouthpiece for the gospel who evangelizes the lost with full dependency upon the Holy Spirit to bring about God’s will (I Cor. 9:19-22).
4. A sincere desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of God and Christ, and to demonstrate that growth by controlling our thoughts, speech and actions (Rom.13:14; I Peter 2:16).

“If something is not forbidden in Scripture, does that give a Christian an automatic green light to participate in it? Not necessarily.”

It should be understood that refraining from involvement in an activity should steer clear of a legalistic devotion to man-made prohibitions and a prideful display of self-righteousness. Example: for years I would not wear shorts out-and-about because of a handed-down presupposition that “serious Christians” did not do so. The real issues are modesty, and appropriateness for the setting at hand. While I do not indiscriminately wear shorts anywhere and everywhere, when they are appropriate for the occasion, I wear them with an eye towards modesty and the potential impact that my wearing them might

have upon others at the particular activity. We are to guard and guide our speech, appearance and actions by the Word and by the welfare of others (Rom.14:12-15:3).

What are some reasons to consider refraining from questionable areas or areas that might cause offense?

Restraint can demonstrate and further develop a God-conscious mindset (I Cor.10:31; Prov.3:5-7).

Restraint can demonstrate sensitivity to the spiritual well-being of others. (I Cor.10:32-33).

Restraint can encourage others to be driven by principle and not by popularity or pleasure. [Versus an “is-it-sin-yet” approach to life].

Restraint can demonstrate a desire to pursue holiness of character and conduct by pursuing excellence for God’s glory and the eternal good of others.

Restraint can quicken the Holy Spirit’s work in our life when we refrain from anything that is “not of faith.” [Failure to refrain from that which is not “of faith” can quench the Holy Spirit’s work and weaken our testimony].

What are some principles to guide us in making right choices in general?²

Exaltation: Can I participate in this activity and not offend the glory of God? (I Cor.10:31).

Emulation: It this activity in keeping with the character and conduct of Christ? (I Jn.2:6).

Excess: Could this conduct be a weight that encumbers the effectiveness of my testimony? (I Cor.10:32-33; Heb.12:1. It may not be wrong, but it may be unwise or inappropriate).

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'I Believe in Preaching'

R. C. Sproul

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the church because the people of God who are assembled in the congregations of churches all over the world belong to Jesus. They are His sheep. And every minister who is ordained is consecrated and entrusted by God with the care of those sheep. We call it the "pastorate" because ministers are called to care for the sheep of Christ. Pastors are Christ's undershepherds, and what shepherd would so neglect his sheep that he never took the time or trouble to feed them? The feeding of our Lord's sheep comes principally through teaching.

Typically, we distinguish between preaching and teaching. Preaching involves such things as exhortation, exposition, admonition, encouragement and comfort, while teaching is the transfer of information and instruction in various areas of content. In practice, however, there is much overlap between the two. Preaching must communicate content and include teaching, and teaching people the things of God cannot be done in a neutral manner but must

exhort them to heed and obey the Word of Christ. God's people need both preaching and teaching, and they need more than 20 minutes of instruction and exhortation a week. A good shepherd would never feed the sheep only once a week, and that's why Luther was teaching the people of Wittenberg almost on a daily basis, and Calvin was doing the same thing in Geneva. I'm not necessarily calling for the exact practices in our day, but I'm convinced that the church needs to recapture something of the regular teaching ministry evident in the work of our forefathers in the faith. As they are able, churches should be creating many opportunities to hear God's Word preached and taught. Things such as Sunday evening worship, mid-week services and Bible classes, Sunday school, home Bible studies, and so on give laypeople the chance to feed on the Word of God several times each week. As they are able, laypeople should take advantage of what is available to them by way of instruction in the deep truths of Scripture.

I say this not to encourage the creation of programs for the sake of programs, and I don't want to put an unmanageable burden on church members or church staffs. But history shows us that the greatest periods of revival and reformation the church has ever seen occur in conjunction with the frequent, consistent and clear preaching of God's Word. If we would see the Holy Spirit bring renewal to our churches and our lands, it will require preachers who are committed to the exposition of Scripture, and laypeople who will look for shepherds to feed them the Word of God and take full advantage of the opportunities for biblical instruction that are available.

R. C. Sproul
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In his day, the prophet Amos warned of an approaching famine, a deadly drought that would cover the land. But not an absence of mere food or water, for this scarcity would be far more fatal. It would be a famine for hearing God's Word (Amos 8:11). Surely, the church today finds itself in such similar days of shortage. Tragically, exposition is being replaced with entertainment, doctrine with drama, theology with theatrics, and preaching with performances. What is so desperately needed today is for pastors to return to their highest calling—the divine summons to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

—How Biblical Preaching Brings True Revival, Steve Lawson

A friend, by definition, is someone to whom we choose to entrust our heart to the degree that we can be significantly influenced by them.¹

I'd had her with me all day, this outgoing and engaging four-year-old. Her mommy was working and she needed a place to stay. I had volunteered, not realizing it would be the day for some rather tedious work ~ the kind of work you wouldn't choose to do with small children present. But the friend at whose house I was working kindly gave an invitation to this little gal and was ready with toys for her and lunch for both of us. The day had gone well, and I'd accomplished a fair amount, but when the time came for us to leave, I was more than ready. I'd heard enough of those musical toys playing their chipper tunes and had answered too many questions, most of them about what I was doing ("The same thing I was doing five minutes ago.") and whether or not I was done. ("No.") With a sigh of relief at having reached this time in my day, I fastened her into the car seat and was enjoying the prospect of a quiet ride home. But to my dismay, chatter continued, and she peppered me with a whole new line of questions. Then just as I was ready to tell her she had to be quiet, she announced in a very loud voice, "I'm your friend!"

It's hard to tell your friend to be quiet.

Friendship ~ like most blessings ~ is a mixture of work and pleasure. How does one work at friendship? How important is the nature of our friendships, really? On a recent Tuesday morning a group of us gathered to study the matter of wisdom in friendship,¹ a subject usually reserved for our



younger daughters, yet vitally important for women of any age. The deeper we got into the subject, the more clear that fact became. Remember, friends entrust their hearts to one another *and are thereby significantly influenced*. There are so many levels of friendship, all the way from "I remember you from third grade open house last year and now here we are at fourth," to "How could we *not* be friends after a lifetime of shared joys and sorrows!" We recognize the nurse from the doctor's office when we see her at a restaurant, but we don't entrust our hearts to that nodding acquaintance. And the closest of friends with whom we share our life? That is who influences us at a heart level and who is influenced by us. To affect the course of someone's thinking or action is not a light matter. Have you ever stopped to consider just how you and your friend change each other's thinking and actions? These are some of the questions we considered:

~How does time with my friend affect

our walk with God? Proverbs 27:9 says *Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel*. Time together should enlarge our view of God and leave us in a joyful frame of mind, with a desire to know God better. Time spent complaining about the actions of others hardly reflects the character of Christ, never leaves 'the heart glad'.

~How does time with my friend affect our relationships with others? A God-honoring friendship should not weaken our relationships with others in the body of Christ, should not build walls that separate us, but build bridges that join. Our friendships should be a strengthening asset to the whole, not just good for the two of us. Is our shared friendship an asset to our larger group or is it all about the two of us?

~Are we accountable to one another for our sins? Or do we just commiserate and make each other feel better about our failures? Proverbs 27:6 says *Faithful are the wounds of a friend....* Yes, it is ok to tell a friend to be quiet... if that is what she needs to hear. But if you must tell her, don't forget the perfume and oil! Remember, she has entrusted her heart to you! Don't crush it!

~We choose our friends on the basis of commonalities...common life styles, likes, dislikes. What are the common traits that brought us together as friends and are they good traits? A shared love of materialism might bring us together, but wise and godly women will grow beyond that. A shared dislike of someone else also makes for friendship, but surely we left that behind in Junior High...or did we?

¹ A Woman's Wisdom by Lydia Brownback



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Too many Christians were oblivious to these changes, and greatly underestimated the powerful potential this yielded to the enemies of Christ. The churches of America were slow in identifying this danger. Now, it may be too late, so firmly entrenched is Atheism in the classrooms of America.

We would not be far off base to point to popular entertainment's enormous influence upon the minds of American young people. Sinful practices that were largely unknown a generation or two ago are now considered normal behavior. But they are normal only to the utterly depraved. Sadly, depravity is so mainstream today that morality is largely a thing of the past, to be ridiculed and scorned. Hollywood has been amazingly successful in turning public morals upside down. But what good is accomplished by railing against Hollywood? Sinful hearts will push sinful behavior as far as they can. When sinners act like sinners, should Christians be surprised? We can blame Hollywood for America's demise, but I wonder if we are missing the main problem.

What's the main problem in America? God has withdrawn His blessed influence from our nation,

“The greatest problem with America is not sinners acting like sinners, but Christians not acting like Christians.”

that's what. And why is that? Because God's own people have become lukewarm. The greatest problem with America is not sinners acting like sinners, but Christians not acting like Christians. When God's people are half-hearted towards God, what influence does the Church have on society? When Christians have so little time for prayer, and so little appetite for the Bible, is it any wonder that God has withdrawn His blessing?

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION? The great need is for revival, not of the world, but of the Church. Judgment must begin at the house of God. If God's people would become serious

about serving God, who knows what influence we might have in America again? If Christians would deal with their own sins, more so than fretting about the sins of the world, who knows what God might do. If churches were more serious about the Bible, and less enamored with the latest fads and techniques, there's no telling what changes might take place. What we need are Christians who are hungry to know God's Word, and pulpits that are determined to preach it. We need Christians who are more interested in truth than entertainment and churches that insist upon God-centered worship. We need Christians who know what the Bible says and are committed to living in the light of it, and churches that proclaim God's Word without compromise or apology. In short, America's greatest need is for Christians to renew their faith in the Word of God and their confidence in the power of God. When Christians become more concerned about what God thinks than what their friends think, we will be on the road to genuine Heaven-sent revival. And that's America's only hope.

Charles Haddodn Spurgeon said, “I would rather speak five words out of this book than 50,000 words of the philosophers. If we want revivals, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God. If we want conversions, we must put more of God's Word into our sermons.” This remains the crying need of the hour.

A heaven-sent revival will only come when Scripture is enthroned once again in the pulpit. There must be the clarion declaration of the Bible, the kind of preaching that gives a clear explanation of a biblical text with compelling application, exhortation, and appeal.

—How Biblical Preaching Brings True Revival, Steve Lawson

Some Thoughts on Christian Liberty

Bob La Tour

(Continued from page 4)

Expediency and Edification: Does this activity make a profitable contribution to others? (I Cor.6:12; I Cor. 10:2) Edification.

Example: Could my involvement incite wrong thoughts or actions in others? (I Tim.4:12).

Encouragement: Does this activity encourage the 'new man' that I am, or the lingering influences of the 'old man' that I was? (put-off/put-on principle).

May God give us the wisdom and grace to be lights in an ever-darkening world. May we think, speak and act like the holy nobility that God's grace has made us!

¹ adultery/affair; abortion/pro-choice; sodomy/alternative life-style

² Alliterated words by MacArthur

I Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Holy Nobility

God has purchased us, His people,
With the blood of our dear Lord,
And made us a royal priesthood
Through the merit He affords.
Privileged people, holy nation,
Come exalt our Great High Priest.
E'er proclaim His wondrous glory
In all things, greatest to least.

Once vile slaves to sinful passions,
Helpless debtors to God's Law,
Blind to wrath and to salvation,
We knew neither guilt nor awe.
But the Father, rich in mercy,
Gave us life and faith to see.
Grace abounding, love unending,
Christ's atonement set us free.

Called into God's mar'vous brightness,
We are children of the day.
He has led us out of darkness,
To the Life, the Truth, the Way.
Prince of Peace left heaven's splendor
To invade death's dark domain!
God the Son came down to rescue
All who will confess His name.

Royal priesthood, e'er extol Him
Through lives set apart for praise
Consecrated, blameless, holy,
Let us joyful tribute raise.
May His beauty be reflected
In hearts filled with holy love.
May Christ find us pure and blameless
When He comes from heav'n above.

BLT '03

Rev.1:5-8; I Peter 2:9; I Thess. 5:5, 8



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