THE BEACON BEAM

October 2025

TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS



WHY PREACH THE WORD?

John MacArthur

or many reasons, faithful and full proclamation of the Word is the only right way to preach.

First of all, such preaching lets God speak rather than man, because it declares God's own Word. And it is an incredibly thrilling privilege to give voice to God!

Second, preaching the Word is the only right way to preach because it brings the preacher into direct contact with the mind of the Holy Spirit, the author of Scripture. It is for that reason that the preacher of the Word finds the process of study and discovery to be even more rewarding than the preaching that results from it, gratifying as that can be.

It is tragic and puzzling that so many preachers who recognize Scripture to be God's own Word spend more time investigating and interacting with the limited and imperfect minds of other men than delving into the infinite and holy mind of God. Part of the reason, of course, is that many hearers do not

really want to delve into the depths of God's righteousness and truth, because it exposes their own shallowness and sin. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul warned his son in the faith about the danger of those who hold "to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power" (2 Tim. 3:5). Later in that same epistle he would warn again that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;. . . and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3–4; cf. Acts 20:29–30).

Third, preaching the Word is the only right way to preach because it forces the preacher to proclaim all of God's revelation, including those truths that even many believers find hard to learn or accept.

Fourth, preaching the Word is the only right way to preach because it promotes biblical literacy in a congregation, not only through what is learned from the sermon itself but also through the increased desire to study Scripture more carefully and

consistently on their own. The faithful pastor, and all other faithful believers, love to learn God's Word because they love the God of the Word.

Fifth, preaching the Word is the only right way to preach because it carries ultimate authority. It is the complete and perfect self-revelation of God Himself and of His divine will for mankind, which He has created in His own image.

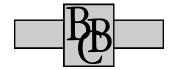
Sixth, preaching the Word is the only right way to preach because only that kind of preaching can transform both the preacher and the congregation.

Seventh, the final and most compelling reason that preaching the Word is the only right way to preach is simply that it is His own Word, and only His own Word, that the Lord calls and commissions His preachers to proclaim.

John MacArthur/Pastor-Teacher Grace to You

Beacon Baptist Church

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Gregory N. Barkman, Senior Pastor Michael R. Karns, Minister of Christian Education Robert F. LaTour, Minister of Pastoral Care Gregory L. Phillips, Minister of Music N. Hunter Strength, Minister of Youth

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

THE BATTLE FOR SEXUAL PURITY

by Greg Barkman

Most Christians think of I Thessalonians four as the "Second-Coming chapter," which is true, and vitally important, but the first eight verses address another subject which my Bible entitles, "Plea for Purity." I can't think of a more important topic for the sex-crazed day in which we live. How can Christians prepare themselves against assaults which come from every direction? These verses suggest four God-ordained fortifications.

SCRIPTURE. The first line of defense is God's Word. "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word." We need regular input from the Bible, both to reveal God's will initially, as well as to remind us of God's standards continuously. In a day when many Christians adopt the world's standards of immorality, and justify it by community consensus, it is vitally important that we saturate ourselves with Scripture. This we do by regular attendance at a church where the Word of God is uncompromisingly proclaimed, as well as daily Bible reading and prayer in our God's Word will inform, homes. guide, convict, and cleanse, but only as we give heed to what it says.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP. God has designed the fellowship of the saints to aid us in our battle with sin. We need to be held accountable by the church, a local body of believers, of which we are committed members. We need to be instructed by the pastors of the church. We need to be encouraged by fellow members of the church. We need examples of believers who face and overcome sinful temptations. We need examples of believers who fall, and are rescued and restored, by the grace of

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God, and the faithful ministry of the church. We need the prayers of others, especially a faithful friend or two, who know our weakness, and will stay "in our face" to keep us from sliding slowly down the slippery slope of failure. How spiritually poor is that Christian who has no one to strengthen him, and how spiritually rich is the believer who is humble and transparent enough to seek help to stay morally pure. The maverick who simply attends, but never joins, deprives himself of much of the aid God programmed into His church. Becoming a member is, among other things, declaring your desire to be held accountable. As a nonmember, you signal your resistance to Biblical accountability. We all need accountability within a loving, Biblical, body of like-minded believers.

SELF-DISCIPLINE. Paul teaches us "to know how to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion or lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God" (vs. 4,5). This requires a well thought-out plan of action, and the discipline to follow

through. It requires the ability to say "No" to whatever we suspect will tempt us to sin. It requires the purposeful avoidance of anything that produces impure thoughts. In short, it requires that we develop and maintain self-discipline. Self-discipline is usually first learned by imposed discipline. Those parental regulations, often resisted when we were young, are designed by God to help us develop self-discipline as we grow older. Pity the person who failed to receive such help as a child. But it's never too late. We can always begin to learn discipline, and the right time to start is now.

THE HOLY SPIRIT. "For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit" (vs. 7,8). Immorality is contrary to the Holiness of God. Habitual uncleanness is irreconcilable with the indwelling Holy Spirit. God has given us His Spirit to provide power over sinful lusts of every kind. Unbelievers have no such aid, and are therefore enslaved to their sinful passions. Not so for God's children, who have both a new heart, as well as the indwelling presence of God Himself. With these four assistants, designed and bestowed by our loving Heavenly Father, we can live in moral purity as redeemed Sons of God. Let us do so to the honor and praise of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Originally published in August, 2005

Don't Go Chasing Waterfalls

The Tragedy of Church Hopping

by Hunter Strength

Few things wound the witness of Christ's church and starve the souls of professing Christians more than the restless pattern of church hopping that we see in the States. When believers treat the local church as a temporary stop rather than a covenant community, the entire body suffers. Shepherds labor in vain to disciple those who refuse to remain. Congregations struggle to grow in love and unity when members slip in and out like revolving doors. Relationships, which are a grace of the Lord to provide accountability and encouragement, are torn apart as though they never mattered. And the hoppers themselves are left malnourished, always tasting but never feasting, always sampling but never savoring the steady nourishment of Christ through the Word and sacrament.

Church hopping is not harmless. It weakens the church, it undermines discipleship, and it imperils the spiritual health of those who chase novelty instead of faithfulness. Many Christians live their church life this way, hopping from one congregation to another, chasing novelty, excitement, or perfection, only to end up disillusioned and spiritually parched. What they are really chasing cannot be found in any church at all—it can only be found in Christ, the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13; John 4:14).

Over the years, I've noticed that church hoppers tend to fall into a few familiar patterns. Let me describe a few:

1. The Honeymooner or The Shooting Star.

These radiant bursts of energy arrive suddenly and brightly, overflowing

with excitement. They introduce themselves to everyone, volunteer for everything, and emphatically announce, "This church is *exactly* what I've been looking for!"

But like the seed that springs up quickly with joy and then withers when trials come (Matt. 13:20–21), their zeal is shallow. As soon as the newness fades and they're no longer the "special newcomer," they disappear. Their attendance tapers off, their joy dims, and they quietly move on to repeat the same cycle elsewhere.

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If this is you, friend, the problem isn't the Church. Rather, it's that your heart seeks an experience instead of a Savior. Honeymoons are sweet, but marriage is where love is proved. When my wife and I went on our honeymoon, we enjoyed some delicious and lavish meals, but what has sustained us over the years? Her cooking. In her eyes, it might not be flashy (although I'd put her cooking against anyone else's), but it keeps us nourished and happy. Similarly, the local

church is not meant to keep us in perpetual infatuation, but to train us in covenantal endurance with the faithful, ordinary means of grace.

Beloved, you're not meant to be the dazzling light and center of attention; Christ is. If that doesn't sit right with you, Heaven is not going to impress you very much. The Church is His, and the healthiest thing Honeymooners can do is to realize that they are simply a brick in the wall, a glorious, blood-bought brick, but a brick none-theless.

2. The Mountain Climber

I am a big fan of hiking. What is it that motivates me when I'm gassed and staring up a mountain trail? The view. Like that, the "Mountain Climber" in question is always looking for a church with momentum. They thrive on the energy of growth, buzz, and innovation. They want to be where "things are happening." If a congregation is small, steady, or ordinary, they're unimpressed. But if the numbers are up, the programs are fresh, and the atmosphere feels like an ascent toward something grand, they're all in—until the slope levels off, and then they're gone.

But Christ never promised that His kingdom would be built on hype. He compared it to a mustard seed—small, unimpressive, almost invisible—yet destined to grow into a tree that shelters the nations (Matt. 13:31–32). The Mountain Climber forgets that God often does His deepest work, not in surges of visible success, but in the slow faithfulness of Word and sacrament.

(Continued on page 4)

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Dear Mountain Climber, what could possibly be more momentous than the cosmic war against evil that we participate in in corporate worship? What is more exhilarating than staying the course in one place and making eternal investments in the saints around you? To those disgruntled with a rather small congregation, think of it this way: At these small outposts of Heaven, God grants you the opportunity to make a noticeable impact on the makeup of that body for His glory. Rejoice in that.

3. The Goldilocks

Goldilocks approaches the church with folded arms and raised eyebrows. She's skeptical at the start and constantly evaluating the assembly with a demeanor that says, "I'm an aficionado of churches." Goldilocks is always asking: Is this church too hot? Too cold? Too soft? Too hard? She's looking for the perfect fit, and when (inevitably) she doesn't find it, she leaves in bitterness expressing frustrating that there is no church out there good enough to grace with her presence.

Goldilocks forgets what we all need to remember: the church is not perfect because it is full of sinners herself included. As the old saying goes, "If you find the perfect church, don't join it, because you'll ruin it." Scripture calls us not to demand perfection from the body of Christ, but to bear with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:2-3). Goldilocks will never be satisfied until she learns to look past the flaws of God's people to the perfection of Christ, who loved His church and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:25).

4. The MC Hammer

The MC Hammer hopper's theme song is "Can't Touch This." They show up with a Bible in hand and a head full of knowledge, but they

bristle under authority. No pastor can teach them anything they don't already know.

But Scripture is clear
that part of God's care for
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At first, they may seem faithful and even zealous — until a pastor or elder dares to press in on their life with loving correction. Whether it's confronting a sin pattern, urging them to reconcile with a brother, or simply reminding them to submit to the body, they suddenly vanish, moving on to a church where no one "touches" their private life.

But Scripture is clear that part of God's care for His people is the gift of shepherds who watch over our souls "as those who will give an account" (Heb. 13:17). To reject correction is not a small thing. To reject accountability is to despise the very means Christ uses to sanctify and protect His people. As Proverbs warns, "Whoever hates reproof will die" (Prov. 15:10).

The MC Hammer hopper needs to see that the church is not a stage for their spiritual performance but a family where discipline, exhortation, and grace are meant to keep them in the way of life.

My Pastoral Exhortation

Each of these church hoppers is chasing the illusion that ultimate satisfaction can be found in the right circumstances, the right people, or the right atmosphere. But "waterfalls" will not sustain the soul. Only Christ, through His appointed means of grace, can.

The local church is not a consumer product, nor is it a spiritual amusement park. It is Christ's household, His flock, His Bride. To despise her in her weakness is to despise Him who loves her. And to chase one "perfect" church after another is to wander restlessly in search of what Christ has already provided in Himself.

Yes, there are times when leaving a church is necessary—when the gospel is denied, when shepherds abuse their sheep, or when biblical worship is abandoned. But these are the exceptions, not the rule. More often, people leave not because Christ is absent, but because their own expectations are misplaced.

So, burn the boats. Build your life around the local assembly. Get to know your pastors and invite them to speak into your life freely and often. When things happen that rub you the wrong way, pray that you might handle it with grace. And in 30, 40, 50+ years, when you're burying members that aren't strangers, but family, you'll rejoice that God placed you where you are.

On the Feminine Side

by Marti Barkman

You thought December was the busiest month of the year...but I think it's been upstaged by September. When nature begins to slow her growth rate and lush green is turning gold, summer break comes to an end and activity around Beacon bursts into new life. From Impact Clubs for Kids all the way to the silver-haired saints, regular schedules once again call us to meet, greet, and eat! And the dessert is always sweet fellowship.

Coffee n'Courage is in full swing again, with the fireplace room nicely filled, and a packed out-nursery. Thank God for babies, that sweet sign that life goes on. But don't think erroneously there's no room for you! We can always put one more chair at a round table.

Our subject of study this session is Contentment. As of today, we've covered two chapters and already I'm overwhelmed at the way this subject can be applied to every area of life. If you are unable to attend, or for those attendees who run short on memory space, here's a quick summary of what we've learned so far. Note how many times references there are to 'learning'.

CONTENTMENT...not a new subject, it has been written about for centuries. Why so oft-considered? Isn't contentment one of those qualities we might describe as 'nice if you can get it but not to worry if you can't'. After all, it's just a personality trait, right? Some are born with it, others, without.' No, contentment is a quality we are instructed to live out in the day to day, a commandment, not an option. Not something we pick up at the local grocery, it must be learned, and that takes place as we learn about the character and attributes of God (coming in Lesson three) which allow us to rest in, and trust God.' Understanding that God is both sovereign and good—completely powerful and completely good-- elicits our trust, resulting in contentment.

THE SOURCE OF CONTENTMENT: Like a thirsty woman standing at oceans edge, cup in hand, going to the wrong source for contentment can be deadly. Contentment is sourced from within our hearts, not an external source. Finding contentment in plenty is just as difficult as finding it in days of extreme trials. As drinking salty ocean water leads only to more thirst, so looking for contentment from outside sources will lead only to longing for more of the same.

Contentment is the knowledge that God is at work in whatever our day brings...and having learned of the goodness and power of God, we can submit to His choice. A life with no unmet longings or fears, a carefree life with no relational problems or conflicts with others may look like the source of contentment, but it is in trials that we learn, as we learn to rest in God.

Contentment has a sweetness of spirit that keeps one in an *equal poise*...I love this phrase that describes a content woman as being on an even keel, not an emotional roller coaster. Her friends and family don't have to wonder what mood she'll be in today because she hasn't been knocked off course by external issues. There is no scowl on her face that signals extreme unhappiness with her circumstances, for having learned contentment, she has also learned to radiate this "gift from God that is in the roots, not the bud." In time, this inward, gracious, quiet spirit will become a habit as more and more she enjoys rest in the providence of God."

Want to know more? Join us in the Fireplace room on Tuesday mornings!

*The bulk of the material is taught by Melissa Kruger ona DVD produced by Ligonier Ministries. Quotations are from Kruger, Jeremiah Burroughs, and Thomas Watson.

HOW SWEET AND AWFUL IS THE PLACE

by Greg Phillips

When we come to the Lord's Table, our pastors encourage us to give careful thought ahead of time about the seriousness and magnificence of all that is represented in this ordinance. Our colonial ancestors typically held a communion preparatory service before communion Sunday which was devoted to a rehearsal of what Jesus accomplished by His atoning sacrifice and the need for selfexamination to make sure those who approach the table do so with renewed repentance and faith, and a fresh commitment to obedience. At that preparatory service, it was customary to distribute pewter "tokens" to each adult. On communion Sunday one needed that token to be allowed a seat at the table.

While most do not practice this today, the requirement remains to examine one's self before partaking of the elements, and that the table is open only to those who have repented of their sins and placed their trust in Christ, and whose profession of faith has been deemed credible by virtue of their being members in good standing of an evangelical church.

As part of the order of worship in coming to the Lord's Table, it is typical in our churches to sing hymns that prepare our hearts for this wonderful blessing of communion with the Lord. Among these hymns is Isaac Watts' "How Sweet and Awful Is the Place." Written in 1707, its lyrics give eloquent expression to the attitudes and understanding that should dominate our thinking as we come to the Table. It is a much-appreciated and often-used hymn at communion services.

The original text of this hymn penned by Watts begins, "How Sweet and Awful is the Place." In many hymnals today the text has been modernized to read, "How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place," but that falls short of Watts' intent: that this place where we meet the Lord is filled with awe, with an attitude of deep reverence, recognizing that our God is present, as Psalm 29:2 and Psalm 96:8-9 say, "in the beauty of His holiness.' Perhaps an alternate spelling to convey the meaning in our modern ideas would be "awe-full," as in "full of awe."

Stanza 1 speaks of the moments when believers gather for worship to celebrate the Lord's Supper, most It is both sweet specifically. (pleasant and attractive, drawing us in a relaxed spirit) and awful (in some ways terrifyingly fearful in reverence, causing us to pause and consider where we are, spiritually) in the very presence of God Himself. Watts spelled it out, that Christ is in our midst as we enter the doors of the sanctuary. Here we find Him to be administering not His anger, but His everlasting love, demonstrating the most wonderful ("the choicest") dimensions of His character.

How sweet and awful is the place with Christ within the doors, while everlasting love displays the choicest of her stores.

Stanza 2 describes how our hearts respond to this awful moment, with amazement that we who are so unworthy have been invited to this feast at the Lord's Table. We are thankful, but we are also incredulous, asking Him directly, "Why was I a guest?" The fact that we would ask this is the very thing that best demonstrates that we indeed are welcome to come: that we realize that we are undeserving. We admire what we find here, and at the same time stand stunned that we have actually been admitted as a guest.

While all our hearts and all our songs join to admire the feast, each of us cries, with thankful

tongue, "Lord, why was I a guest?"

Stanza 3 continues the question, "Why? Why me?" I would not have been able to hear His inviting voice unless He had enabled me to do so. Why did He? I was deaf to the invitation that came from His lips. Why did He give me hearing? The room where His presence is found is limited. Why did He grant me admission while there was still room? These questions become even more intense when I remember how many "thousands make a wretched choice." And knowing that the one who is the bread of life offers Himself for spiritual food, why was I called out from among those others who "rather starve than come?"

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice, and enter while there's room, when thousands make a wretched choice and rather starve than come?"

Stanza 4 answers the question in part; not the "why" but the "what." The only reason the Bible gives as to why any of us who have been invited to come have received that effectual call is nothing other than His loving and sovereign decree. It was "the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced us in." Although many modern hymnals substitute a softer "sweetly drew us in" for "sweetly forced us in," Watts' original text did not avoid the affront to man's pride and arrogance. Had God not irresistibly called us, "we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin." There could be no more kind or sweet divine decree than to rescue men who did not wish to be saved.

'Twas the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced us in; else we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Stanza 5 addresses the Lord in prayer, acknowledging that while we do not know why He has called us to Himself, pleading that He would "Pity the nations," those multitudes that are still lost and hopeless in the darkness of sin, apart from His sovereign mercy. As we come to the Table, how appropriate that we would ask Him to "send Thy victorious Word abroad, and bring the strangers home." Let the occasion of the celebration of the Lord's Supper be a renewing of our prayer for the salvation of the nations, so that, as we sing in Psalm 67, "Let the peoples praise You, O God, let all the peoples praise You!"

Pity the nations, O our God, constrain the earth to come; send Thy victorious Word abroad, and bring the strangers home.

Stanza 6 concludes our prayer in the same theme and sentiment, a hopeful longing for the day when we will "see Thy churches full, that all the chosen race may, with one voice and heart and soul, sing Thy redeeming grace." We are assured that such a day will come, as Jesus promised in John 6:35-40 that all that the Father has given Him will come to Him, and that He will not lose one of them. And remember that He spoke this in the context of His offering Himself

as the bread of life, the same context in which we sing this communion hymn.

We long to see Thy churches full, that all the chosen race may, with one voice and heart and soul, sing Thy redeeming grace.

Adapted from Lawrence Roff, editor, Trinity Hymnal. 1990. www.Hymns4Him.org

In Christ we have a love that can never be fathomed; a life that can never die; a righteousness that can never be tarnished; a peace that can never be understood; a rest that can never be disturbed; a joy that can never be diminished; a hope that can never be disappointed; a glory that can never be clouded; a light that can never be darkened; a happiness that can never be interrupted; a strength that can never be enfeebled; a purity that can never be defiled; a beauty that can never be marred; a wisdom that can never be baffled; and resources that can never be exhausted.

—Author Unknown

THE BEACON BROADCAST

WNAH 1360 AM (Nashville, TN)	2:00 p.m.
WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WBAG 105.9 FM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
10:00 a.m.	
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
10:00 a.m.	
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC)	7:15 a.m.
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.

Monday thru Friday

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

Sunday

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.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.

WGNQ mixlr.com/wgng-radio (M-F)

8:45-9 a.m. & 4:45-5:00 p.m. (Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)

Saturday

WNAH 1360 AM (Nashville, TN) 2:00 p.m.

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCTOBER

CALENDAR

01	IMPACT Clubs
05-08	Fall Bible Conference
05	ESL (English as a Second
	Language)
12	Lord's Table
	ESL
14	Coffee n'Courage
	Elders/Deacons Meeting
15	IMPACT Clubs
16	Silver Saints
19	Members Meeting
	ESL
21	Coffee n'Courage
22	IMPACT Club
23	PRM Greater Vision
	Banquet
26	ESL
29	IMPACT Clubs

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

04 Paul Holt

06 Carly Karns
08 Paul Ellis
Olivia Verroi
09 Jack Lowe
Christa Wilson
12 McKinnley Hinshaw
14 Mollie Harmon
15 Martina Boudreault
Cathy Easter
17 Michael Wood
20 Darin Rhue
23 Dolly Benesch
25 Donald Ingold
Aimee McDorman
27 Denise Marley
28 Bob Hendry
29 Pam Faust
31 Carol Ann Barnt

MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

01 Rachel Vahala*15 Tim Easley27 Grace Gudeman*

*Children of Missionaries

The Beacon Beam

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