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THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING “The Need of Praying in Laborers”

by
Bruce Barnes

I was talking with a pastor just this past weekend at a local conference meeting, and he asked this question, “Where are the new preachers being called?” Just like him, I have an increasing burden for men of God not only to be called but for them to answer that call. With that concern in heart, I want to address the subject through a series of articles in each of the successive *Plumblines*. This burden concerns the ministry, those called to it, and the effectiveness of God’s man in it.

At the outset, there is an overriding need before us, and it concerns the number of laborers in the gospel ministry. For there to be a ministry, men must respond to God’s call for involvement. But where does it start, and how does it work? There is a process given in Scripture that is truly an untapped resource for seeing more servants called to the field. We find that “formula” given in Matthew 9:38 and Luke 10:2 where Jesus says, “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” The first need before us is the praying in of laborers.

In this passage Jesus shows,

1. The Need Facing Us: A Limited Supply in Light of a Great Harvest

The older I become, the more I am burdened for a new generation of preachers to answer God’s call. I know I’m not alone in that desire; however, we are by no means seeing young men answer the call equal to the world’s need for the gospel. What we see even nationally is that the shadows of spiritual darkness increase steadily as the gospel light slowly dims. We recognize that numbers of people are *in*

the ministry, but we also realize that many of them could not be considered true and faithful gospel preachers.

From the perspective of eternity, Jesus not only perceives all that is possible but how that the limited supply of workers hinders the potential. As difficult as it might be to understand fully, this one fact remains: there is a harvest of souls ready that will only be met by more servants.

Oh, how greatly we need to see a Holy Spirit fire burn in the hearts of young men fully surrendered to the preaching of the gospel! How greatly we need to see that fire burn once again throughout our Free Will Baptist denomination and here in Virginia. The burden of Christ’s heart must become ours, and that burden must come through our preaching to those who might answer the Lord’s call to this great work!

2. The Method Assigned to Us: A Request for the Lord’s Appointment

Within the context of both passages, Christ’s directive arises from His compassion for people. He knows that additional servants added to the field will remedy their needs. But to get those servants into their place of needed service, He requires that those who know the Lord ask for more laborers.

Prayer for laborers is, in my opinion, one of the most neglected and untapped resources within the church; it follows this reasoning. Consider, we all want to have our prayers answered. Now, if we knew that God always answered our prayers in the way we prayed them, we would pray much more! One of the ways of making sure that our prayers are answered is for the prayers to be part of God’s known will. If something is God’s

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will, and not in violation of a person's free will, prayer for those things will be answered.

In Christ's statement, He asks us to pray for what He already wants to see accomplished which is more laborers. It is not our place to question why He wants us to pray for something He explicitly states He wants. It is our place (and privilege!) to involve ourselves so that the will of God will be done in that area. The result is that more laborers will be called to the field.

3. The Answer Waiting on Us: A Response to the Lord's Call

We are brought back, then, to the response factor that also involves the free exercise of a man's will. If prayer for laborers has been followed as requested, God will answer the prayers by calling more into the field—no doubt! God will not ask the righteous to pray for something that is His will and then refuse to answer that prayer when the prayer itself is in obedience to what He requested to be prayed.

The first response needed is our praying in the manner He requested of us. The second response is for people to answer the Lord's call. In keeping with the spirit of this prayer as well as the need because of the prayer, let us pray that the moving and conviction of God's Spirit continually draw those to whom He is speaking. As long as there is a need, there is a need for praying. As long as there are those to whom God might be speaking, there is a need to continue praying for conviction to be strong.

The light of the gospel needs to go into all the world, and the Lord has laid much of the responsibility on us. We are responsible to carry that message ourselves. But we are also responsible to pray that calling upon others. May we fall under a renewed burden for "The Need of Praying in Laborers."

(The next article in this series will be "God's Consistent Method of Calling.")

STATE CONVENTION & MOTEL INFORMATION

The state meeting this year is June 18-19 and will be held at Woodland Heights Free Will Baptist Church in Martinsville, VA. The address of the church is 1995 Old Chatham Rd., Martinsville, VA 24112. Rev. Stanley Waddell is the pastor. Please see the motel information provided below as well as the full schedule published online (www.vafwb.org) and look for the "information" tab).

The theme for this year's convention (June 18-19) is "Discipleship" and the special speaker is Dr. Robert Picirilli. The message times and themes are as follows:

- 11:00 a.m. Thursday: "The Discipleship Model"
- 1:00 p.m. Thursday: "Faith & Works"
- 2:00 p.m. Thursday: Q & A with Dr. Picirilli
- 7:00 p.m. Thursday: "Discipleship and Sanctification"
- 11:00 a.m. Friday: "What is a Follower of Christ?"

The twenty rooms we blocked at the Baymont Inn in Martinsville have all been booked. Some additional rooms might be available at the Dutch Inn in Martinsville. If you tell them you are with Virginia Free Will Baptists, you will get the rate of \$64.95. Here is the information:

Quality Inn Dutch Inn
www.qualityinn.com
2360 Virginia Ave, Collinsville, VA 24078
(276) 647-3721

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 1, John Wheeler Annual Association Meeting
- May 1-2, Sandy Valley Annual Association Meeting
- May 2, Harmony Annual Association Meeting
- May 2, Northern Virginia Association Meeting
- May 2, SW Virginia, West Wise Conference
- May 3, Dr. Barnes preaching at Occoonita FWB Church
- May 9, Clinch Valley Annual Association Meeting, Mabels Chapel FWB
- May 10, Dr. Barnes preaching at Lifegate FWB Church
- May 12, 26, Dr. Barnes helping Unity FWB Church with GRACE Outreach
- May 13, Dr. Barnes preaching chapel at Great Bridge Christian Academy
- May 13, 20, 27, Dr. Barnes teaching soul winning at Unity FWB Church,
- May 16, Southwest Virginia Annual Association Meeting
- May 17, Dr. Barnes preaching at Victory FWB Church, Pennington Gap, VA
- May 24, Dr. Barnes preaching at New Durham FWB Church
- May 30, Revitalization Seminars by North American Missions at Shiloh FWB in Bristol
- May 31, Dr. Barnes preaching at First FWB Church, Richmond
- June 7, Dr. Barnes preaching at First FWB Church, Richmond
- June 13, John Wheeler, NE Quarterly
- June 14, Dr. Barnes preaching AM service at Venia Chapel FWB Church
- June 14, Dr. Barnes preaching PM service at Heavenly Hope FWB Church
- June 18-19, Virginia State Association Meeting at Woodland Heights FWB Church, Martinsville
- June 26, John Wheeler, SW Quarterly at Shiloh FWB Church, Bristol

LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

“A Message to Youth” by Rev. James Bradley

I find it very intriguing when people refuse to cling to true happiness. They grasp at temporary appeasement or momentary humor only to lose it again and again. However, I know of a place where the Christian can be happy, and the sinner can be changed. It's a place where one can hold on to the promise of goodness and protection and where people unite and care for each other's needs spiritually and physically.

The problem is not that people don't know where it is; the problem is that too few people desire to go there. Of course, this place is none other than church. Be assured that there are more than a few of us who have endured “boring” and “dull” services. However, let's take a positive perspective and look at some of the things church attendance can do for us that we can't find anywhere else.

The first value is that of fellowship. Fellowship is one of the few things that your church thrives on. There is a group of people at church who love each other and consider themselves more than friends. As a matter of fact, I have attended few churches where they did not call each other “Brother” or “Sister.” A hug from a friend, a prayer warrior on your shoulder while at the altar, and even a piece of candy from the old man in the back of the church helps build a feeling of closeness.

These people are not only there to improve the mood of the service, but they are willing to be there for you even during the week. In my twenty-eight years, having gone through high school, college, and various workplaces, there have never been closer friends than the ones that I have made at my church. It is these people who share an everlasting bond with me as we worship the Christ of our salvation.

Another aspect of fellowship is the fellowship with God. It is true that Christ is everywhere, but I have found that when I sit under the Word of God with the people of God I find myself in the midst of God's presence. As a Christian, I promised myself that I would spend as much time with God as I could muster. By being at church I know I am fulfilling that promise.

The second great value is prayer. We all pray our bedtime prayers and blessings over our food, and for some of us even a prayer of repentance after a good devotion. But some of the most impactful prayers will be made

in the House of God. There is nothing special about praying in a certain place other than Christ told us to make places to pray. It has also been said, “Prayer and church go together like brownies and ice cream. One is good without the other, but MAN is it good when they are together.”

If God told us that His house was intended to be a “house of prayer,” then we should look forward to doing the one thing He intended for it. Prayer is powerful, it can pull the ear of God to your needs, and He is more than happy to hear and do them.

I personally believe that out of all places we could pray, church will be one of the few places that God will do some amazing things through prayer! When we pray together in church not only do we become more knowledgeable in our prayers for others, but it makes us know we are making a difference in the lives of others.

Lastly, I'd like to help you understand that **the church can give peace where no other place can.** There are no bigger epidemics in the hearts of most people today than depression and a lack of self-worth. I know this firsthand. Before salvation, depression and suicide were almost common thoughts in my early teens (even as young as 11). I was medicated, sent to a psychiatrist, and still . . . alone. It was not until I gave my past and future to God that I quit wallowing in my depression and became relieved.

Anybody who has dealt with depression will tell you that the hardest thing about it is staying out of it. Church became to me a place where I could pour out all the pain and hardships of my life on an altar to God. “The joy of the Lord *became* my strength” and the Prince of Peace truly helped me battle the difficulties of my life. God gave me joy, peace and happiness. And none of that could have been possible except for a Wednesday night prayer meeting.

So what are the reasons you should go to church? Why would you not? Church is the place where you find lasting happiness and joy. Fellowship, prayer, and peace are just a few of those values. There are many other blessings around every corner of your church service like music, love, and forgiveness. You name it! All good things come from God, and all good things can be found in the House of God.

Rev. James Bradley is pastor of Calvary Free Will Baptist Church, Crewe, Virginia

“GRINDING AN AX”

Someone recently mentioned this axiom to me in reference to a point another was trying to make. If people you know are “grinding an axe” about something, it means they are usually letting sparks fly about something they dislike. Yet in the overall picture, they are sharpening the ax head in preparation of a greater attack in the future. The sparks of an adversary are not nearly as harmful as the sharpened ax soon to be wielded. While the “sparks” fly in someone's tirade, be careful not to let your spirit become kindling for it. Your testimony does not need to be singed when you have to deal later with the underlying issue that brought the person to the grinding wheel in the first place.

CHRISTIAN NEWS & VIEWS

LGBT ACTIVISM HITTING CLOSE TO HOME & THE CHURCH

Recently, LGBT supporters made an attack on two churches in North Carolina. The first was Bales Memorial Wesleyan Church in Jamestown, and the second was Grace Baptist Church in Greensboro. Both incidents caused thousands of dollars in damage. The church's doors and walls were spray-painted with pro-LGBT messages as well as the Bales church having their church sign vandalized. They went on to damage a church bus, tear up flowers in the parking lot, and break windows. At the Grace church, these activists broke windows, egged the building, and toilet papered areas on the church property. This church also suffered spray painting around the church.

Rev. Carl Pulliam, the pastor of the Bales church, said that the LGBT attempt to silence their message through hatred and persecution has not succeeded. He went on to say that it will have the exact opposite effect. Rev. Paul Coward, the pastor of the Grace church, commented that acts of vandalism were the result of a sinful heart that is in all people. He went on to say, "Yes, it's true that Satan opposes God and he is probably laughing about this vandalism," Coward asserted. "But God shows us the destructive sin nature found in all mankind — including each One of us!"*

More and more we are going to face the persecution that comes along with simply believing the Bible's message. But this is no time for retreat! The truth is still the truth even when public opinion promotes a lie.

(<http://www.onenewsnow.com/persecution/2015/04/24/homosexuals-ransack-tag-nc-churches-with-pro-gay-slogans#.VTqBqxtoyUk>)

COMMENTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN FLAG

Are you getting a little more than disgusted in seeing the craze that hit the news and now social media where people are lauding their desecration of the American flag? They are showing their disgust for the very country that gives them liberty. Mind boggling!

Here is an interesting quote from Chuck Norris.

"Am I missing something? Do you remember the days when Americans not only used to be proud to fly Old Glory but frowned upon neighbors who did not? These flag-flying travesties wouldn't be so tragic if they weren't becoming so prevalent and symptomatic of an America gone awry from its original mission and founders' intent.

So, for this July 4, I say we not only fly Old Glory proud and high but also remind our families, friends, co-workers and neighbors exactly why we do. And what about those who oppose Old Glory's posting? Take your orders and never forget the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur: 'I see that the old flagpole still stands. Have our troops hoist the colors to its peak, and let no enemy ever haul them down.' Then don't hesitate for a moment to place your hand over your heart and say loud and proud for all to hear: 'I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.'"

(<http://www.inquisitr.com/1342905/chuck-norris-american-flag-haters-prove-the-u-s-has-gone-awry/>)

FIRST FWB RICHMOND CALLS JAY BAINES AS PASTOR

First Free Will Baptist Church of Richmond has just called Rev. Jay Baines as pastor. He is set to assume the pastoral duties sometime in June.

Rev. Baines currently serves as Associate Pastor at Pleasant Acres FWB Church in New Bern, NC. He is a 1987 Graduate of South-eastern FWB College and received his Masters Degree from Liberty University in 2008 and currently finishing up his M.Div. from Liberty University. Jay is married to Annette (28 years) and they have three boys, Jonathan (25), Caleb (21), and Matthew (18). He answered the call to preach at age 15 and has been in full-time vocational ministry for 27 years. He spent 21 of those years pastoring in the state of Delaware. He is 49 years old. He and Annette just became Papa and Mimi to Kenlee Marie Baines, their first grandchild!

