

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

September 6

2009

## PREACHING IN AND OUT OF SEASON

Everyone who would preach the gospel ought to have branded in his heart and soul Paul's great admonition, "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Timothy is charged to "preach the word." The *urgency* of preaching and the *manner* in which it is to be preached are also stressed. At times the tendency may be to "let up" at certain seasons and under unfavorable circumstances. A great tragedy in the church today is "seasonal members," and one thing that has contributed to that is "seasonal preaching." It may seem futile to preach the word, but preach it we must. It may not seem to do any good, but we must persevere. "Just as the fountains, though none may draw from them, still flow on; and the rivers, though none may drink of them, still run, so must we do all on our part in speaking though none give heed to us" (Chrysostom). Preaching "in and out of season" demands certain things.

**It demands a spirit of readiness.** Paul told Titus to "*be ready to every good work*" (3:1). He himself was "*ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also*" (Romans 1:15). In the process of his preaching, he was even "*ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 21:13). Peter says we are to "*be ready to give an answer ...*" (1 Peter 3:15). We are persuaded that the spirit of *readiness* is lacking in many who have the ability to preach the word. We need to learn this lesson and learn it well. We are laboring for the Lord in the matter of preaching and teaching, and should always be ready to do it, and not only when it

may please us.

What is it to preach "in season?" Simply that it should be done in all times of opportunity. Teachers of the word sometimes let these slip from them. Note the apostles - they used their opportunities (Acts 13:42-46; 2 Corinthians 2:12). It is to preach when times are convenient. A good example of this was on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It is shameful that some only want to preach the word when it is convenient for them to do so. They are like the Pharisees - depends on where they are! To preach "in season" is to preach when it is easy, and that is a pleasure - but such occasions are rare. Preaching "in season" is doing it when one *wants* to preach. On preaching "out of season," we might turn each of these squarely around. Preach when it is inconvenient. If no opportunity comes, make one! Preach when we must "go out of our way" to do so. The apostles "hazarded their lives" for the sake of Christ (Acts 15:26). Preach when times are difficult, for the Lord never promised that it would be easy.

**It demands a spirit of constancy.** We ought never quit. It is not very commendable to quit in the middle of a worthwhile project! In fact, Jesus said such a one was not fit for the kingdom of heaven (Luke 9:62). The importance of constancy in preaching is seen in that now may be the only time to do it (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). Tomorrow, the preacher or the hearer - or both - may be gone. Procrastination has stolen many souls. The sad statement, "*the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (Jeremiah 8:20) will be on the lips of many people because that which could have saved them was delayed. Notice Paul's attitude toward constancy. It is expressed in many ways to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. He was with them at "*all seasons*" (v. 18). He "*kept back nothing that was profitable*" for them (v. 20). He "*taught publicly and from house to house*" (v. 20), "*both to Jews and Greeks*" (v. 21). He "*shunned not to declare ... all the counsel of God*" (v. 27). He "*ceased not to warn everyone day and night with tears*" (v. 31). Shall we do any less?

**It demands the proper way of preaching.** First, Paul said preaching the word demands that we "reprove," a word that can mean "to convict." It means to "prove or find guilty - to convince of one's wrong doing or error" (Webster). Hence, our preaching must include an exposing of error - a false religious system, or in the lives of

people. Failure to reprove is failure to preach properly. Then preaching is to include "rebuking," a word that means "to censure severely." The preacher who won't do this when needed is not doing his job, and the hearer who doesn't like rebuke in preaching does not appreciate strong preaching. We note also that to preach is to "exhort." This implies encouragement; urging. Exhortation must also be included in "preaching the word." The welfare of the hearer is always to be considered. Preaching is not to be done with a spirit of vindictiveness or to gain a personal victory, nor is the pulpit to be used as a "club" to pound the hobby of some preacher into the heads of his hearers. Patience is to be exercised. Preach with "longsuffering," Paul said. Preaching must be done using "doctrine," or the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16). Even though preaching must contain reproof, rebuke and exhortation, it must also be done with "longsuffering and doctrine."

Paul goes on to say *why* preaching is necessary. Some would "...turn away their ears from the truth, and shall turn unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:4). Just because men do this, we are not relieved of the responsibility of preaching "in season, out of season." The preached word is all that will save men. Let us be concerned with the urgency of "preaching the word." ✍ Bill Moseley



## Stuff About Things

A preacher, "trying out" for a place" was given the third degree. "Have you any bad personal habits? Do you live within your income? How many "calls" will you make each week? What do you believe about "hats?" How much preparation do you put into each sermon? Will your children put "church" ahead of school activities? Etc. etc."

Well, a church has the right to know something about the preacher they plan to support. Even his personal habits may greatly affect his work; although I doubt that such questions will produce an accurate picture. I think he should answer their questions as best he can – recognizing their right of investigation, in the light of the proposed partnership.

And then he should ask them a few questions. "Why did the last preacher move from here? Do you have any chronic "grippers," and

if so, what are you doing to discipline them? Does the present contribution fairly represent your financial strength? If not, why not? How firmly do you back, with personal labor and attendance, each gospel meeting? What percentage of the members prepare their lessons for the Sunday and Wednesday Bible classes? Will your social life, and that of your children, reflect favorably upon the cause of Christ in this community? How concerned are you for lost souls, and how do you show that concern?"

I doubt that these questions will produce a complete picture; but they certainly will upset a business meeting!! Yes Sir!!

"Professionalism" is not confined to preachers; it extends to congregations which look upon themselves as little more than worshiping societies and employers of "church workers." We see "professional" churches about as often as we see "professional" preachers – and in about the same places.

The collective role of saints in a local church does not remove their individual responsibilities. The "communication" of taught to teacher is an "association" "sharing with" "party to" and "implicated in" arrangement, whether the funds come from the individual or the church. (Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:15) When we learn that the preacher is just another member of the church, with the feelings and weaknesses of other saints; but one whom we support because we recognize ability and talent we wish to fellowship in uninterrupted work for the Lord; then these "trials" and "places" and unnecessary "moves" will cease. ✍ Robert Turner

***Belleville church of Christ***  
 5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258  
 www.bellevillechurch.net

<p><b>Schedule of Services</b></p> <p>Sun. Bible Study. . . . . 9:30 a.m.          Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.          Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.          Wed. Bible Study. . . . . 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Elders</b></p> <p>Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873          James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507</p>
<p><b>Evangelist</b></p> <p>James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507</p>	<p><b>Deacons</b></p> <p>Leon Nevins . . . . . (317) 272-2966          Don Perry. . . . . (765) 676-5825          Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514</p>