

The Bible Really Works!

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Wendell's saying: "People remember a good sermon for about a week or two; they remember a bad sermon for the rest of their life."
 - 1. Some truth to it; I attended numerous meetings in 1994.
 - 2. Five of them stand out in my mind; four of the five because they were among the worst sermons I ever remember hearing.
 - 3. But the saying is not entirely true; the fifth sermon was the most memorable of all.
- B. Preached at Caraway, AR by Lowell Blasingame
 - 1. A first principles sermon crystalline in clarity, simplicity, and purity; presented with heartfelt zeal, sincerity, and love.
 - 2. Like hearing the gospel preached again for the first time.
 - 3. Kind of sermon that makes you say, "Man, I wish I had preached that!"
- C. During the course of the sermon, he referred to a passage in Acts, and a sermon outline jumped right out of the Bible and grabbed onto my brain and wouldn't let go.
 - 1. Acts 11:19-24
 - 2. The Lord's way really works!
 - 3. In fact, it not only works best, it is the only way that works eternally.

I. ACTS 11:19-24 - THE LORD'S WAY WORKS IN SALVATION

- A. Acts 11:19-20... "preaching the word... preaching the Lord Jesus."
 - 1. 1Cor. 2:1-2 - Is preaching Jesus an option or requirement?
 - 2. Rom. 1:16; 1Peter 4:11; Jude 3; 1Thes. 1:5-9
 - 3. Rom. 6:17-18; 1Cor. 6:9-11
- B. Acts 11:21... "a great number believed and turned to the Lord."
 - 1. No wonder! The preaching of the truth does produce faith.
 - a. Rom. 10:10-21; 1John 5:13
 - 2. But is this faith enough by itself? Acts 11:21 says that they "TURNED!"
 - a. Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8-9 - Men misuse these and say, "faith alone."
 - b. Rom. 2:13; James 1:25, 2:14, 17, 19-23, 24, 26
 - 3. When the Lord Jesus is preached, faith is produced; when this faith works, it produces obedience resulting in salvation.
 - a. Saving, scriptural faith does not exist in the absence of works
- C. Acts 11:22-23... "with purpose of heart... continue with the Lord."
 - 1. Obeying the gospel is the beginning of life as a new being.
 - 2. Matt. 28:18-20; Phil. 1:6; 1Thes. 2:9-14, 3:7-8
 - 3. Keep going; never quit - Rev. 2:8-10; 1Cor. 15:58
- D. Acts 11:24... "and a great many people were added to the Lord."
 - 1. This is precisely what is supposed to happen when:
 - a. The Lord Jesus is preached,
 - b. Hearers believe and turn to the Lord,
 - c. And with purpose of heart, they continue with the Lord!
 - 2. Acts 2:41, 6:7

3. Cute anecdotes and emotional stories told by pulpit entertainers will not produce this effect.
 - a. Sermon in 1994; 40 minutes, 14 stories, 2 verses, one misused.
 - b. How many people will be saved by the stories?
 - c. How long can a church survive on a starvation diet of one or two verses a week?
 - d. "What do you have for the young people?" The gospel.
 - e. "I mean, what activities?" Bible study. Activities will not save, nor make them grow in strength and in spirit.
4. An endless diet of vitriolic diatribes on issues, attacks on errorists, and negativism will not lead to growth
 - a. "Brother, preach on... instead they get the above
 - b. The other extreme is not the whole counsel of God either
5. Rom. 1:16 - Paul was not ashamed of the gospel.
 - a. IT is the power.
 - b. We may not understand how it works, or why it works; IT JUST WORKS!!!
 - c. Without institutions, cooperative church efforts, fellowship halls, national ad campaigns, compromising the truth

II. THE BIBLE WILL WORK IN EVERYTHING

A. In the church: "The Church grew and multiplied."

1. Acts 6 - trouble over helping the Grecian widows."
2. Acts 5 - Ananias & Saphira lying.
 - a. Contemporary says that no one will come to a church where someone gets in trouble for lying.
 - b. Contemporary reasoning says that folks will leave a church that practices discipline, too.
 - c. Contemporary reasoning is trumped by the Lord's way!!!
3. Acts 4 - Peter and John arrested for preaching.
4. Acts 8 - The disciples scattered abroad.
5. Acts 9 - Saul the persecutor, converted.
6. Acts 11 - Controversy over Gentile conversions.
7. Acts 12 - Herod killed James and arrested Peter
8. Bible solutions to these problems brought growth every time.

B. In the home:

1. From the beginning of the Bible to the end, families that did what God said to do and who were organized God's way were the most successful, strongest, and longest lasting on earth.
2. Look at what abandonment of God's way for the family has done to this country. Abraham - Gen. 18:19 versus Gen. 21 Hagar and Ishmael

C. In our daily lives: Joshua 24:14-15, 29-31

1. What effect will your life have on others if lived the Bible way?

Conclusion: The Bible works. It is the only way that works in the here and now and in the here after - Heb. 13:8; Matt. 24:35