



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 10

August 25, 2024

No. 34

Sometimes it is Not Enough!

by Aubrey Belue

One of the earliest jobs my dad had was teaching school – he began while he was still in his teens, with a one room school in upstate Mississippi. Some of his students in the higher grades were as old and as big as he was, and more than one time he maintained discipline with the threat of a literal fist fight! He would tell me of a mother who brought her son to school and explained that he was very sensitive. She said, “whenever there is trouble, and discipline is called for, just hit the boy next to mine, and Junior will get the message. There will be no need to actually punish him.” (To this day, I am not sure whether this actually happened, or was one of his “made up” experiences). Whatever, I’m here to tell you it will not always work.

Early in my preaching “career”, not much older than my dad was as a teacher, I was in a work in central Illinois, and a Methodist lady started attending. For some reason she became attached to me, and continually praised my efforts, coming up to me after every lesson to tell me how much she appreciated my stand for truth. Believing (and I still do) that my work included identifying and opposing every stripe of religious error, I started including in my material lessons on sprinkling, and the error of salvation by faith only, as well as one or two other fallacies the church she was withheld to – and this continued for a number of months. No matter, she still held me high, and expressed her respect for me as a teacher who “taught the bible”.

After a while, it dawned on me that there was a disconnect between what “her church” believed, and the truths I advanced relative to those things. I had taken these issues in isolation, without being specific about who taught them. Eventually, I preached a lesson on Methodism, pointing out that the Methodist church taught sprinkling, faith only, instrumental music, and so on. That was the last time she commended my teaching, and soon after she quit attending... As long as I was “hitting the one next to her” (teaching without making a specific connection), she failed to get the message! When she realized these things had personal implications, her prejudices kicked in.

The lesson I learned? Teaching “general truth” falls short of the demands of gospel teaching! Biblically, teachers in the first century made it clear as to the application: “THOU ART THE MAN”....God doesn’t “blind side” folks, and neither should we. Becoming a disciple requires hard choices, and it does not help to withhold the implication of such alternatives. “Warning the wicked from HIS wicked way” (Ezek. 3:18-19) is an uphill fight if he doesn’t even know he is among the wicked!

Joyfully Disappointed

Shawn Bain

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.” — Proverbs 3:5
Did you ever try out for the basketball team and not make it? Did you audition for one of the school’s musicals but were not chosen? Have you interviewed for a job you needed and well qualified to fill yet not hired? The disappointment of not being chosen often crushes our spirit and desire. We often think there must be a “defect” in me. I must have done something wrong, or there is something I should have done differently. Regardless of any change you could make, you still may not have been chosen.

Not every opportunity leads to disappointment. Some people call you for your advice. Someone else wants you to teach a children’s class for six months. You are invited to a Bible study and attend and there you meet your future spouse. You

become a clerk at a retail store and learn the virtues of patience, kindness, and hospitality. A farmer has you work in his orchard to pick and deliver apples weekly for a local orphanage.

When we struggle with not being able to reach our “dream” opportunities, the reality is God is working to show us what is best. We assume our way is right. As we rest in Him, His purposes always prove to be for our good and His praise. Honestly, that is easy to see when the outcome is better than we had hoped, but difficult when we cannot see the good in a moment of disappointment.

We should give more credit to the words of the song, “Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah”. “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but Thou art mighty; Hold me with Thy powerful hand.” As wise King Solomon said, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). More trust is just what we need...

Rejoice and Be Thankful!

Paschall, Jeremy

For years, the same four men had played golf together every Saturday during the spring, summer, and fall. They used to play some during the winter months too, but the cold wind had gotten to be too much for them as they grew older. And so it had become their routine to begin the new “season” every year on the first Saturday of April at the same country club they had helped establish forty years ago.

After waiting through the long winter months, all four men were ready to be swinging their clubs again. You could see the anticipation in their eyes and hear the excitement in their voices as they enjoyed coffee together before the first round of the new season. Their tee time arrived, and they were on their feet, thrilled to be on such familiar and friendly ground.

Each man enjoyed a spectacular opening drive, hitting the ball with the same confidence he had forty years ago. But by the fifth hole, the excitement waned...

“I’m telling you, these hills get steeper every year,” one of the golfers complained as they made their way up to the fifth green.

After a disappointing shot on the sixth tee, the second man remarked, “These fairways are getting longer all the time, too.”

While preparing to hit his ball from a bunker on the seventh hole, the third golfer observed, “These sand traps keep growing, too.”

The fourth man, the oldest in the foursome, had heard all the griping he could stand. He sat his clubs down and said, “Gentlemen, just be thankful we are still on this side of the grass!”

Yes, we must all admit that there are times when we find it difficult to be thankful, to rejoice in the blessings we have. But isn’t that what we are told to do anyway? “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice! . . . Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4.4,6).

Let us never forget that we have been blessed beyond measure in Jesus Christ. We are sinners, worthy only of eternal destruction from the presence of God, but God gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins (John 3.16). So, whether we have abundance or lack in earthly things, we have blessed beyond what we deserve.

Let us resolve today demonstrate our gratitude in thanksgiving and in humble service to our God.