

The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,
holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



Volume 2

November 16, 2014

Number. 39

Challenging Ourselves

We are all faced with different challenges in life. Challenges to do well in school. Challenges to succeed in our careers. Challenges to reach our full potential in whatever endeavor we seek. Challenges are just a part of life. And these challenges should be welcomed for life without challenges is simply boring, the result of which is going through the motions of life in an indifferent way.

As Christians we have a challenge set before us as well. That challenge is to be all we can be as servants of Christ. Being challenged as Christians is nothing new. Christ challenged His disciples in many ways during His personal ministry on earth. He challenged His disciples to bear fruit (Jn. 15:1-7); to deny themselves (Matt. 16:24), and to preach the gospel to the whole world (Mk. 16:14-16). These were all noble challenges. We have these same challenges set before us. Let's look more specifically at a few challenges that we should take up.

The Challenge To Be Faithful To Christ

Faithfulness to Christ is the only way that heaven can be gained (Rev. 2:10). Faithfulness to Christ involves much. It has to do with the condition of our hearts. Anyone whose heart is not right with God is not faithful to Christ regardless of his or her actions. But, faithfulness does involve action. Christianity is not simply something felt; it is something lived. It is a particular kind of life. Let's look at a few things that faithfulness would involve from that standpoint.

1. Attending all services. We are urged by the Holy Spirit not to forsake the assembling of the saints in Heb. 10:25. There is a lot more to being a Christian than attending services; but generally speaking, you can tell those who have made a commitment to Christ by how they attend. The child of God who is too busy to give God three or four hours a week to gather together with other Christians and worship God certainly has not devoted himself to Christ. What is more important than worshiping God? A basketball game? A family picnic? An afternoon of rest and relaxation? The fact is the kingdom must come first in our lives (Matt. 6:33). Why not challenge yourself to be at every service, or why not plan to attend all services (*Sunday Bible class, worship services morning and night, Wednesday night Bible study and gospel meetings*). When you stop and think about it, we do not assemble all that often.

2. Participate in the work. We should all challenge ourselves to be involved in the work of the church (Eph. 4:16). Don't just have your name in the directory, be an active member. Get to know your brothers and sisters in Christ and help them when they are in need. Use the talents that God has given you to help the local church be a stronger unit (Matt. 12:14 ff). This is a challenge to

work. Remember, Jesus Himself once said, “*I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day...*” That’s the challenge that we all have—to work for the Lord.

Be More Interested In Saving Souls

Can you think of a more noble challenge than winning souls? Challenge yourself to win a few souls in the next year. Here are some practical ways of doing that:

1. *Make use of every opportunity.* We all sometimes let opportunities to win souls slip by. Challenge yourself to cut down those missed opportunities. Look for opportunities to win souls and when they come, seize them. That’s the challenge each one of us has.

2. *Use your time better.* One reason many do not win souls to Christ is because they don’t have time to engage in any kind of personal work. Using our time wisely can afford us with more chances to win souls (Col. 4:1-6).

3. *Be bold!* It takes courage to tell others about the Lord. We live in a society where you just do not know what kind of response you might get when you mention Jesus to someone. But the more boldness and courage we can develop, the more we will talk to others and the more success we will have. Challenge yourself to be bold in your efforts to win souls to Christ.

Let’s challenge ourselves to be all we can be as Christians. And let’s carry out those challenges. One thing is for sure: we will not accomplish our goals if we quit!

Don

Tell It Like It Is

Robert F. Turner

Following a sermon in a small mid-western community, a man wished to be baptized. The candidate, preacher, and a few others drove through the night to a small park that bordered a river where they hoped to assist the man in his obedience. But the park and the entrance to the water were cluttered with young people with radios blaring - a party in full progress.

After some hesitance, the preacher approached the revelers and pled his case. He told them that he had taught the man to love the Lord and to want to change his life and give himself to the service of the Lord. The man had repented of his past and now wanted to obey the Lord in baptism “for the remission of sins.” He said that he knew they had the prior right to the public park, but that there was no other access to the water immediately available. He asked if they would consent to a brief quiet recess in their party and allow him to baptize the man into Christ.

Something about the earnest plea, the man, or the message - or what is more likely, the scriptural combination of the three - got through to the young people. They quickly stopped the party and asked if they might be witnesses of what to them was a most unusual event.

Several cars turned so that their lights were upon the water. All were quiet and respectful as the preacher and the believing penitent “went down both into the water...and he baptized him” (Acts 8:30-39).. When they came up out of the water, the young people crowded about, wanting to know more about this “death, burial, and resurrection to a new life.” Did the Bible really teach it like that?

Why didn't the traditional churches of which they knew, and had rejected, teach such things? How could they learn these matters? Some gave their names and addresses and said they would welcome a visit from the preacher and further teaching.

This generation is wholly sensual and uninterested in spiritual things? Impossible to reach a bunch of "neekers"? Only politics and the social gospel are relevant" Hmmm! Has it ever occurred to you that we may be the material ones who lack the faith and courage necessary to "tell it like it is" today?