

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

November 15, 2009

The preacher's work

by David King

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless" (Titus 3:8-9).

Every preacher struggles occasionally with the question of what to preach to his audience. The Bible is his primary source, of course, but there is such a vast volume of material there that even in a lifetime he cannot preach it all. So what topics should deserve greater attention? Which issues should he dwell on, and which should he ignore? Which battles should he fight, and which should he walk away from?

In his letter to Titus, Paul gave the young preacher a simple pair of guidelines to help him decide these questions. One is positive, the other is negative. Together, they provide a simple — and thoroughly Scriptural — standard for ensuring the greatest possible success in a preacher's work.

First, Paul tells Titus to "constantly affirm" the instructions that he had just written in this letter. Do a careful study of the contents of this little epistle, and you will find three broad themes: church organization (1:5-16), personal character (2:1-3:2), and God's grace (3:3-7). Furthermore, these three themes are all tied to one very practical outcome: "good works" (**please read** 1:16; 2:7; 2:14; 3:1; 3:8; 3:14). The repetitive emphasis on good works in this letter is a strong clue regarding the goal

of preaching: to create a body of people whose daily lives glorify God before the world. Indeed, Paul reminds Titus that "these things are good and profitable to men"; that is, they promote happiness, peace, and prosperity among all men. This is what God wants His people to be, and the preacher is the one who is responsible for helping them accomplish it.

Conversely, Paul warns Titus not to get entangled in "foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law." Paul is not forbidding all negative preaching here. On more than one occasion, Paul himself disputed vigorously with false teachers who threatened the integrity of his brethren (Ac. 15:1-2; Gal. 2:4-5). Rather, the focus here is on **foolish** disputes—"preacher fusses" about the minutiae of the law that profit nothing and only stir up emotions. Like the Pharisees who lost themselves trying to figure out applications of the Sabbath law on the most insignificant human activities, a gospel preacher can become derailed in his studies and end up chasing conflicts that have little or no bearing on the daily lives of the people he is serving. When a preacher loses sight of his primary objective and heads off in this direction, Paul warns that his work will become "unprofitable and useless." Worse, he will become divisive, and should be shunned (v. 10-11, cf. 1:10-16).

A preacher can be a powerful influence for good in a congregation, or he can be a detriment and a drag. The difference is how well he understands and follows the advice an apostle gave a young preacher long ago.