

The Old Paths

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"An Extension Of The Pulpit"

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A good friend of mine once talked with me about teaching bulletins such as the one he was writing. As we talked about the value of such teaching tools, he said, "I consider teaching bulletins an extension of the pulpit." I thought that was a fair assessment, for I feel the same way about the bulletin being published here. I hope our dear readers see that this teaching tool is but an extension of the pulpit.

What is meant by that statement? First, let us understand that one of the definitions for "extend" is: *"to enlarge the scope of, or make more comprehensive..."* (Webster's). Therefore, the point being made is that this bulletin is written with the intent of enlarging the scope, or making more comprehensive, what is being taught in the pulpit on a weekly basis. It is my prayer that this bulletin will always be such.

Yet, as I thought more about my brother's true statement, I realized that the bulletin is just one extension of the pulpit. There are other things that ought to also be considered "extensions of the pulpit." Let us study a few more of these extensions.

Bible Study At Home

When we hear preaching

which stresses the need for studying our Bible, and *"handling aright the word of truth"* (II Tim. 2:15), do we take this home with us? Personal Bible study is a necessity if we are to grow and mature spiritually (Heb. 5:12-14; II Pet. 3:18). This is why it is stressed often from the pulpit. The preacher cannot do the studying for anyone but himself (II Tim. 2:15). While he tries to teach and instruct (II Tim. 4:2), he cannot learn "for" anyone, either! Learning involves a personal commitment, and it demands our spending personal time in the study of God's will. Have we "extended" the pulpit to include spending time in God's book at home?

Private Talks With Friends

When we as Christians are encouraged to take God's message to our friends, neighbors, and family who are lost (Mk. 16:15; II Tim. 2:2), do we make the necessary application to ourselves? Sometimes, it is because we have earned the confidence and respect of certain ones, that this opens a door for teaching them the gospel. Others may not be able to enter this "door", but at times, the one who knows them, can!

Think about it: Who brought Simon Peter to Christ (Jn. 1:40-42)? Who was it that brought Nathaniel to the Lord (Jn. 1:45-46)? When Peter came to Cornelius' house, who was there to greet him, and how did they know

Peter was coming (Acts 10:24)? Here are three examples which stress, among other things, the spiritual good that can be done when one shows an interest in another's soul. Are we "extending (i.e., enlarging the scope of) the pulpit" in this way?

Raising Your Children

The man in the pulpit can only do so much by way of teaching godliness to you and your children. This stems from the fact that the preacher sees your children (perhaps) 2-3 hours per week at most. Yet parents, you have your children the rest of the time. What are they being taught at home? Shouldn't they see godliness in our lives and influence? Paul said, *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* (Eph. 6:4). Parents, isn't reminding your children of a sermon or lesson learned from the pulpit just one way you could be *"teaching and admonishing"*? Another way to teach our children is simply in the application of what has been taught, so that our children see us changing to make our lives fit into Christ's mold (Matt. 5:16).

Radio Programs, Published Material, Websites, etc.

Our radio program continues to do well, I believe. We consistently have folks respond and call us or communicate by e-mail with us about the programs. (We have archived our programs archived on our website so that others can benefit from the Bible programs.) Since some would not "darken the door" of this church building, the radio program helps us to send the gospel message into the community. Certainly, this type of effort helps us to *"enlarge the scope of, or make more*

comprehensive” the teaching we’re trying to do in the pulpit.

Furthermore, such efforts as websites which teach the truth, or published articles (in the newspaper, bulletins, etc.) which can be read from time to time, only extend further the type of teaching we’re trying to do from the pulpit. Christ told His apostles to go and teach all nations (Matt. 28:19), and so long as there is sin in the world, people will need to be taught the truth that they might be made free (Jn. 8:31-32). In an effort to preach the gospel to every creature, we ought to remember that such things as radio programs, websites, newspaper articles, bulletins, etc., give many people the opportunity to hear, believe, and obey the truth. Truly, these things are an extension of the pulpit.

Conclusion

There are other “extensions” we could add to this list. Yet, these ought to be enough to impress us with the fact that as Christians, our primary responsibility is to make sure that the teaching going on in the pulpit is extended to those who need to hear it! Sometimes, we “hoard up” the teaching, and do not take the time to let others learn what we have learned. Such an attitude is selfish, not to mention negligent, when we know part of our duty as Christians is to teach others (II Tim. 2:2)! Let us not be selfish toward others, nor negligent in our work, but interested in the truth and in saving lost souls. Let us be about our Father’s business, and not be slack in our responsibilities.

Christ said long ago, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.” (Lk. 19:10). He told His disciples, “We must work the works

of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work” (Jn. 9:4). He truly had an urgency in His work; and if we are going to follow in His steps (I Pet. 2:21), then we need to be on fire with this same urgency!

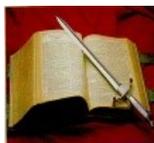
“Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Est. 4:14) Spiritually, could it be because of your invitation to our worship services that someone is saved? Could it be because you handed someone a bulletin, or told them about the radio program or the website, that one’s faith was strengthened? Therefore, let us understand that the true “extension of the pulpit” is none other than the Christian who is willing to leave sin and self and live for Christ all his/her life! This person is a living “extension of the pulpit,” and is a far greater threat to Satan than we realize sometimes! Therefore, “let us not be weary in well doing,” (Gal. 6:9; II Thess. 3:13) and let us move forward in an effort to extend the borders of God’s kingdom from this place, and be all God wants us to be, shining as lights in a world of darkness (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15).

It is not well to try to move faster than God moves. Some mistakes have been made along the line by good men and women. Abraham and Sarah tried to hurry up the fulfillment of God’s promise that a son should be born to Abraham. They tried to move faster than God, and got into trouble.

“Take time to be holy” is good advice. It took a long season of quiet living and meditation for Moses to become fitted for his work. People sometimes get in such a rush about the Lord’s work that they have little or no time left in which to think of him and to meditate on his word and his ways, or to give him much consideration. And that grows on people till doing things becomes more important to them than humble obedience to God. “Wait for Jehovah: be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea wait thou for Jehovah” (Ps. 27:14).

(R.L. Whiteside, Reflections, p. 226).

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