

Preaching in the Nude

In 1997, I suffered a Pulmonary Embolism. About 75% of those who experience one don't survive. Sharon and Aleah found me and got help. The paramedics hooked me up to Oxygen, and took me by ambulance to the Hospital. There, they got me to the point that I was stable enough to ask me questions for admissions. By this time, I was still hurting but was feeling like I would survive.

The nurse asked me my name. I said "Ron." She asked me if it wasn't really "Ronald" on my birth certificate. I was feeling enough better that my spirits had improved, so I said that it actually says "Ronnie, but I only let people who have seen me naked call me that." She reached into her pocket and clicked a pair of scissors and said very matter-of-factly "We'll get around to that in a minute. Right now I just want to get your name."

I hope no one came here expecting to see me start shedding my clothes. One of the grandchildren even told me. "I don't want to have to start calling you Grandpa Ronnie!" One of my co-workers asked if they could all start calling me Ronnie after tonight. I am going to remind her that people may look at her oddly if she does.

There is a reason why you just don't see nude statues, paintings, or photos of old men naked. It's not a pretty sight. Not even old men want to see it.

The only doctrinal question that seeing an old man naked would settle would to answer the question "Does God have a "Sense of Humor?"

No, I'm going to keep my clothes on. Clothes are a good thing.

Clothes provide protection:

They protect us from the elements.

They hide the things that we don't want others to see.

They hide things that others don't want to see.

What is this Preaching in the Nude, if not sans clothing?

Human nature is to seek protection for not just our bodies, but for ourselves:

We protect ourselves financially. (having a job & money in the bank)

We protect ourselves by banding together for safety and support. (bike ride)

We protect ourselves by well thought out and tested practices. (safety checklist)

We protect ourselves by keeping things about ourselves private. (right to privacy)

We protect ourselves legally (right to counsel)

We protect ourselves physically (police, locks & keys)

Preaching in the Nude is preaching that is so focused on delivering the message of the God, that the preacher gives up all forms of protection for himself.

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any consideration of gain.

Preaching in the Nude is not hiding behind anything; an organization, credentials, man-made religion, philosophy, association, method ...

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any thought of self; making no attempt to hide our own weakness and vulnerability; stripped naked of all pretence.

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any thought of security or self preservation. It means telling what needs told without regard to personal consequence.

The Sermons we find in the Bible were great because of the occasion, and because they were inspired by the Spirit of God, but they were also great because they were Preached in the Nude.

Don't think I am only suggesting how Preachers should act. Each of our lives preach lessons to others every day. I am really addressing how we should all act.

Let's look at some of the Sermons and think about Sermons you have heard that made an impact on you and others who heard them too. I contend that the most effective sermons are those Preached in the Nude.

Think of the sermons you have personally heard that had the greatest impact on you.

Were they delivered by a famous preacher?

Was he wearing either an elaborate robe or an expensive suit?

Did he have back-up singers and a slick multi-media presentation?

Was he wearing make-up?

Did he have a well rehearsed smile?

Did he talk for a long time?

Did he talk big and loud? Did he get excited and start shouting?

Was he effective using rhetorical devices? (intonation in rhythm, repetition, figures of speech)

Did he make impressive arguments that what you would like to be true was?

Did he have his own TV show? Was he on the Radio?

Did he pack in a big crowd? Did he make a really good living preaching?

Did he have a Public Relations firm to manage his public image?

In short, Was he all dressed up?

Or.

Was he someone that few had ever heard of?

Who wore his heart on his sleeve?

Who made no pretense of being any better than you are?

Who cried tears of joy and sadness?

Who laid bare his soul as he encouraged you to strengthen yours?

Was he even getting paid? Was he making a living preaching? And if he was, was he making a good living, enough to support a family?

Was he ordinary looking and ordinary sounding?

Did he have weaknesses and short-comings that you knew about?

Did he confess some of them in the sermon?

Did he put himself completely at risk to share God's word with you?

In Short, was he Preaching in the Nude?

The sermons we find recorded in the Bible were delivered by men who were more concerned with delivering the Word of God than they were with protecting themselves...

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any consideration of gain.

Jesus taught and preached to the people even though he knew it would draw the ire of the religious leaders of Judaism. He knew his preaching would lead to his death on the cross, but he never held back for a moment.

It may be difficult for us to understand what Jesus gave up for our sakes. Perhaps we can identify more easily with Paul. Speaking of his ministry, Paul said this:

1 Corinthians 4:11-13

¹¹To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; ¹²and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; ¹³when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.

2 Corinthians 11:7

⁷Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

Paul was not part of an organized professional Clergy. He worked to provide for himself and got just enough to get by from wherever the Lord provided it. None of the Gospel Preachers we see in the Bible were in it for the money.

Please don't take this as me saying preachers should not be paid. Paul himself said those who labor for the Lord should be supported.

What I am saying is that the human desire to have financial security, to be able to provide for the needs of self and family --- makes a preacher think twice, or three or four times before he preaches the sermon that goes to the heart of what his audience needs to hear.

Beyond this, we know that many have used the Church and the trusting nature of Christians to take advantage for illicit gain.

Preaching in the Nude is not hiding behind anything; an organization, credentials, man-made religion, philosophy, association, method ...

Jesus had no credentials. He did not use the power of Heaven to work his will. He did not build up a worldly organization to protect himself.

2 Corinthians 13:4

⁴For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

His disciples were not learned men.

Acts 4:13-14

¹³Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.

Paul himself had the Jewish credentials – but these he disowned to gain Christ.

Philippians 3:4-9

⁴although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

Every man-made religion has training institutions where a would-be clergyman must learn that religion's traditions, practices, and methods, and interpretations of scripture.

He has to show that he will teach these to others, as if true, before the institution will grant the credentials needed to pursue a career as a minister of that religion.

I won't name every religion and pick on them. Let me name two.

First, Academic Liberalism is a religion. You look at the things being taught on college campuses and shake your head.

How could anyone come up with the things taught as unquestionable truth?

I was listening recently to someone defending killing un-born children so we would be able to afford to house more inmates in prison. His argument was that many of the un-born children would have become inmates when mature.

That it is right to kill the Innocent to preserve the lives of the Guilty is something that has to be trained. No one would come up with something so absurd by himself! To become a college professor you have to learn all this foolishness and "profess" to believe it.

A candidate is tested to see if he or she will teach these things to others as truth!

Second, I am worried about us. Yes, churches of Christ. We have a strong history of steering away from man-made religion. We say our aim is to restore New Testament Christianity. But, do our Schools of Preaching and Colleges do some of the same things that other religious groups do?

I digress from the point, which is:

Religions train leadership recruits by giving them something to hide behind and teach them how to use it to protect themselves.

Like clothing, it is protection.

Jesus, Peter, John, and Paul preached without this protection

In the face of opposition they had no organization to fall back on to protect them. They had so network of trained followers to protect them.

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any thought of self; making no attempt to hide our own weakness and vulnerability; stripped naked of all pretence

Consider what Paul said of himself:

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

¹And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And He has said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”** Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Galatians 4:12-14

¹²I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong; ¹³but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; ¹⁴and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.

What kind of preacher would you hire to fill the pulpit here?

Would you hire someone who was often sick and was unimpressive to see?

Would you hire a preacher like Paul, who labored in spite of his weaknesses and admitted them freely?

Religions look for preachers who they can hold up as shining examples.

Preachers who they can make famous and point to saying "be like him!"

To mankind, this is the way to do it. Create an Idol and strive to be like him.

But God's way is not this way!

An honest man will admit that he has the same struggles as everyone else. But it's hard for a preacher to keep a job if makes a habit of admitting it.!

I think the Apostle Paul would have a hard time finding a job as a preacher.

Fortunately for us, to him it wasn't a job.

Preaching in the Nude is not giving other people the impression that the preacher is perfect and all you need to do is be like him. It is admitting the same weaknesses that the hearers have and striving to work together to overcome them with God's help.

Preaching in the Nude is preaching without any thought of security or self preservation. It means telling what needs told without regard to personal consequence.

When Stephen was accused by false witnesses, he made his defense before the Jews. He preached to them what they needed to hear, not what might have freed him.

He went all the way back to Abraham and told the story they all knew so well. He included Moses who they refused to follow and the prophets, who their ancestors killed. He told how the prophets spoke of the suffering and rejection the Christ would suffer. He summed up in this way – telling them what they needed to hear, but refused to hear; just as their fathers had refused to hear the prophets.

Acts 7:

⁵¹“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

⁵²“Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

⁵³you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

⁵⁴Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him.

Stephen was stoned to death. He went out contending for God.

When Peter and John were brought before the Jewish Council after performing an undeniable miracle. They were threatened and ordered to stop. Their Response -

Acts 4:19-20

¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

In Acts 21:10 ff We read that Paul was met in Ephesus by a prophet named Agabus who prophesied that Paul would be imprisoned if he continued to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:12-13

¹²When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul continued to Jerusalem where the Jews accused him falsely. Given the opportunity to defend himself – he used the opportunity to preach to his accusers and those looking on. But they would not receive his message.

The Romans arrested him because of the uproar, and when they learned he was a Roman Citizen they sent him to the Governor Felix.

In Acts 26 we read the account of Paul being given an opportunity by the new Roman Governor Festus to defend himself again. To help him understand the case Festus invited King Agrippa and his wife to hear Paul's defense. Paul said:

Acts 26: ²"In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; ³especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among *the* Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

Festus intentionally created an opportunity for Paul to defend himself. Paul used the audience to preach the Gospel to them. He assured his imprisonment as a means to preach the Gospel to an audience he could not otherwise reach.

He recounted his history and told the story of his conversion on the Damascus road. He concluded thus:

Acts 26: ²²"So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ²³that the Christ was to suffer, *and* that by reason of *His*

resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴While *Paul* was saying this in his defense, Festus said* in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! *Your* great learning is driving you mad."

²⁵But Paul said*, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. ²⁶"For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.

²⁷"King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."

²⁸Agrippa *replied* to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

²⁹And Paul *said*, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

I say these men were Preaching in the Nude, because they were delivering the message of the Gospel with no thought for their own protection.

They were so intent on the message, that they left themselves naked before their accusers.

They were clothed not in what they might have done to protect themselves.

Yet they were clothed. They were clothed in, they were protected by Christ.

Paul told the Romans (13:14) that they should “put on Christ”

He told the Galatians (3:27) that “as many of you who have been baptized have put on Christ”

He told the Colossians (3:10) to “put on the new self”

He told the Ephesians to put on the full armor of God:

Ephesians 6:14-17

¹⁴Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Preaching in the Nude is giving up all the protections we make for ourselves:

preaching without any consideration of gain.

not hiding behind anything

preaching without any thought of self

preaching without any thought of security or self preservation.

We give up these man-made things so that we may put on the armor God made for us, so that might fight the spiritual battle before us.

If you have not put on Christ in baptism, the church stands ready to help you do so.

If you have been relying on man-made protection that has kept you from preaching in the Nude, come and let us help you too ...

With this sermon's notes are a list of 30 New Testament Sermons.

Matt 5-7 - Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

Acts 2:14-40 - Peter's Pentecost Sermon

Acts 7 - Stephen's defense

Acts 13:14-41 - Paul in Antioch

Acts 17:22-31 - Paul on Mars Hill in Athens

Acts 22:1-23 - Paul's defense to the Jews

Acts 26:2-29 - Paul's defense before Festus and Agrippa

Acts 28:30-31 - Paul preaching in Rome (not the sermon itself, but described.)

The Epistles as Sermons

Romans 1-6 - Justification and Judaism

Romans 7-11 - Victory in Jesus

Romans 12-15 - Living Sacrifices

1Corinthians 1-4 - Unity in Christ

1Corinthians 5-9 - Take Care with Your Liberty

1Corinthians 10-14 - Instructions for the Assembly

1Corinthians 15 - The Mystery of the Resurrection

2 Corinthians 1-6 - Ministers of the new Covenant

2 Corinthians 7-9 - Generosity

2 Corinthians 10-13 - Paul's Defense of His Apostleship

Galatians - Walk by the Spirit not the Flesh

Ephesians - The Bride of Christ

Philippians - The Things that were Gain, now are Loss

Colossians - Let No One take you Captive

1 Thessalonians - Appreciate Those Who Labor Over You, Listen to them

2 Thessalonians - Don't be conned by "End of Time" Artists

Hebrews 1-8 - The Perfect Priesthood of Jesus

Hebrews 9-13 - The Old and the New

James - Testing your Faith

1 Peter - Be like the Holy One Who called You

2 Peter - Coping with False Prophets

1 John - Love One Another

Background Texts; Seven Sermons directly from the Word

Matthew 5:1-7:29 The Sermon on the Mount (less than 10 Minutes)

Matthew 5: ¹When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ²He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

¹²"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵"nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

¹⁶"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

¹⁹"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever

keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'²²"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

²³"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

²⁵"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶"Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; ²⁸but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

²⁹"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

³⁰"If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

³¹"It was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; ³²but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³“Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’

³⁴“But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

³⁶“Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

³⁷“But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

³⁹“But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

⁴⁰“If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

⁴¹“Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

⁴²“Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

⁴⁶“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷“If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

⁴⁸“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6: ¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

²“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

³“But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

⁵“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

⁶“But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. ⁷“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸“So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

⁹“Pray, then, in this way:

‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ ‘Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² ‘And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.’

¹⁴“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵“But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

¹⁶“Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

¹⁷“But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face ¹⁸so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

²⁰“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

²³“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

²⁵“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

²⁶“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

²⁷“And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life?

²⁸“And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

³⁰“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!

³¹“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’

³²“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

³³“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has

enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 7: ¹“Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

²“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

³“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

⁴“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye?

⁵“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

⁶“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

⁸“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

⁹“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?

¹⁰“Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

¹¹“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

¹²“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

¹⁴“For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

¹⁵“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

¹⁶“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they?”

¹⁷“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

¹⁸“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

¹⁹“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

²⁰“So then, you will know them by their fruits.

²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

²²“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’

²³“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

²⁵“And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

²⁶“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

²⁷“The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

²⁸When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;

²⁹for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

Acts 2:14-40 Peter's Pentecost Sermon. (Less than 4 minutes)

¹⁴But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them:
"Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

¹⁵"For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day;

¹⁶but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,

'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind;

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸ Even on My bondslaves, both men and women,

I will in those days pour forth of My spirit

And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above

And signs on the earth below,

Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ 'The sun will be turned into darkness

And the moon into blood,

Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.

²¹ 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

²²"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

²³this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

²⁴“But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

²⁵“For David says of Him,

‘I saw the Lord always in my presence;

For He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken.

²⁶ ‘Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted;

Moreover my flesh also will live in hope;

²⁷ Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades,

Nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

²⁸ ‘You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹“Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

³⁰“And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* of his descendants on his throne,

³¹he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID HIS FLESH SUFFER DECAY.

³²“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

³³“Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

³⁴“For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,

³⁵ Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’”

³⁶“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

⁴⁰And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

Acts 7:1-60 Stephen's Defense (about 8 minutes)

¹The high priest said, "Are these things so?"

²And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,

³and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.'

⁴"Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, *God* had him move to this country in which you are now living.

⁵"But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and *yet*, even when he had no child, He promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM.

⁶"But God spoke to this effect, that his descendants would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years.

⁷"'And whatever nation to which they will be in bondage I Myself will judge,' said God, 'And after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.'

⁸"And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *became the father of Jacob*, and Jacob *of the twelve patriarchs*.

⁹"The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. *Yet* God was with him,

¹⁰and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.

¹¹"Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction *with it*, and our fathers could find no food.

¹²"But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers *there* the first time.

¹³"On the second *visit* Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh.

¹⁴“Then Joseph sent *word* and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons *in all*.

¹⁵“And Jacob went down to Egypt and *there* he and our fathers died.

¹⁶“*From there* they were removed to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

¹⁷“But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,

¹⁸until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph.

¹⁹“It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.

²⁰“It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father’s home.

²¹“And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son.

²²“Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.

²³“But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel.

²⁴“And when he saw one *of them* being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian.

²⁵“And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.

²⁶“On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?’

²⁷“But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US?’

²⁸“You do not mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?’

²⁹“At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons.

³⁰“After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush.

³¹“When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look *more* closely, there came the voice of the Lord:

³²‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.

³³“But the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

³⁴‘I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt and have heard their groans, and I have come down to rescue them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.’

³⁵“This Moses whom they disowned, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?’ is the one whom God sent *to be* both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush.

³⁶“This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

³⁷“This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.’

³⁸“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and *who was* with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

³⁹“Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,

⁴⁰Saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us; for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt—we do not know what happened to him.’

⁴¹“At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

⁴²“But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, ‘IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?’

⁴³You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.’

⁴⁴“Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed *him* to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

⁴⁵“And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David.

⁴⁶“*David* found favor in God’s sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

⁴⁷“But it was Solomon who built a house for Him.

⁴⁸“However, the Most High does not dwell in *houses* made by *human* hands; as the prophet says:

⁴⁹ ‘Heaven is My throne,

And earth is the footstool of My feet;

What kind of house will you build for Me?’ says the Lord,

‘Or what place is there for My repose?’

⁵⁰ ‘Was it not My hand which made all these things?’

⁵¹“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

⁵²“Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

⁵³you who received the law as ordained by angels, and *yet* did not keep it.”

⁵⁴Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him.

⁵⁵But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

⁵⁶and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

⁵⁷But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse.

⁵⁸When they had driven him out of the city, they *began* stoning *him*; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

⁶⁰Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 13:14-41 Paul preaches the Gospel at Antioch (Less than 4 minutes)

¹⁴But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.

¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

¹⁶Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said,

"Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

¹⁷"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it.

¹⁸"For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness.

¹⁹"When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—*all of which took* about four hundred and fifty years.

²⁰"After these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet.

²¹"Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

²²"After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.'

²³"From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

²⁴after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

²⁵"And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶"Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.

²⁷“For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled *these* by condemning *Him*.

²⁸“And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed.

²⁹“When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.

³⁰“But God raised Him from the dead;

³¹and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.

³²“And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,

³³that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’

³⁴“*As for the fact* that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and SURE blessings* OF DAVID.’

³⁵“Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’

³⁶“For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

³⁷but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

³⁸“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,

³⁹and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

⁴⁰“Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon *you*:

⁴¹ ‘Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish;

For I am accomplishing a work in your days,

A work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you."

Acts 17:22-31 Paul addressing the Athenians in the Areopagus (less than 2 minutes)

²²So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

²³"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

²⁴"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

²⁵nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things;

²⁶and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

²⁷that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

²⁹"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

³⁰"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

³¹because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 22:1-23 - Paul's Defense before the Jews in Jerusalem (about 3 minutes)

¹"Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you."

²And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said^{*},

³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

⁴"I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, ⁵as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

⁶"But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, ⁷and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, '**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**'

⁸"And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, '**I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.**' ⁹"And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

¹⁰"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, '**Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.**' ¹¹"But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led

by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. ¹²"And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him. ¹⁴"And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.

¹⁵For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

¹⁶Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

¹⁷“And it happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, ¹⁸and I saw Him saying to me, ‘**Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.**’ ¹⁹“And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You. ²⁰And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.’ ²¹“And He said to me, ‘**Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.**’”

²²They listened to him up to this statement, and *then* they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!” ²³And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

Acts 26:2-29 – Paul’s Defense before Festus and Agrippa (less than 5 minutes)

²“In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; ³especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among *the Jews*; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴“So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my *own* nation and at Jerusalem; ⁵since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. ⁶“And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; ⁷*the promise* to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve *God* night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.

⁸“Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if God does raise the dead?

⁹“So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰“And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹“And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. ¹²“While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. ¹⁴“And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**’

¹⁵“And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan

to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

¹⁹"So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but *kept* declaring both to those of Damascus first, and *also* at Jerusalem and *then* throughout all the region of Judea, and *even* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. ²¹"For this reason *some* Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.

²²"So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ²³that the Christ was to suffer, *and* that by reason of *His* resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴While *Paul* was saying this in his defense, Festus said* in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! *Your* great learning is driving you mad."

²⁵But Paul said*, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. ²⁶"For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.

²⁷"King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."

²⁸Agrippa *replied* to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

²⁹And Paul *said*, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

Acts 28:30-31

³⁰And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, ³¹preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

Additional thoughts:

Being clothed in Jesus

Jesus said (Mt 6 25:33) to not worry about clothing.

2 Cor 5:1-5 whether clothed or un-clothed – not being limited by our physical bodies. This works into the point of being clothed by the immortal bodies.

Mat 7 – the people were amazed at Jesus' teaching because he taught with authority. He did not hide behind the devices used by the Scribes and Lawyers.

Paul had the academic credentials to be a Jewish Rabbi, but he regarded them as loss. Instead he relied on God.

Not judged effective by length of speaking or the appearance of the preacher.

Note how high profile preachers gather to themselves appearance. Costumes, make-up, practiced smiles, trophy wives, credentials, ways of speaking that give high intonations, talking for a long time, repetition, making grand arguments, Shouting and getting excited, adding background singers, playing with the lights and using multi-media presentations, ...

The sermons that have the greatest effect are usually delivered by someone who is not depending on preaching to support a family.

Luke 12:22-23

²²And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about *your* life, *as to* what you will eat; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on.

²³"For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

Being clothed spiritually:

Luke 24:49

⁴⁹“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

2 Corinthians 5:1-4

¹For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

⁴For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Galatians 3:27

²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Being without needs:

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸*we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

¹¹For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹²So death works in us, but life in you.

2 Corinthians 6:3-5

³giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, ⁴but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

2 Corinthians 7:5

⁵For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

2 Corinthians 11:7

⁷Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

²³Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

²⁴Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶*I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷*I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Not shrinking away from the message:

Acts 4:16-20

¹⁶saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷"But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." ¹⁸And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Acts 14:19

¹⁹But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

Acts 20:18-21

¹⁸And when they had come to him, he said to them,

"You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, ¹⁹servicing the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:25-27

²⁵"And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. ²⁶"Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

Acts 21:10-14

¹⁰As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and

hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹²When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

2 Timothy 3:10-11

¹⁰But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, ¹¹persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

Being without credentials, without the endorsement of leaders:

Acts 4:13-14

¹³Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.

2 Corinthians 13:4

⁴For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

Not impressive personalities or orators:

1 Corinthians 1:17

¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

¹And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And He has said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.**” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 10:9-11

⁹for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. ¹⁰For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible.” ¹¹Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons *we are* also in deed when present.

Galatians 4:12-14

¹²I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong; ¹³but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I

preached the gospel to you the first time; ¹⁴and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.

Philippians 3:4-9

⁴although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,