

WHAT DID YOU COME TO HEAR?

When the time came for the gospel to be taken to the Gentiles, Peter was the preacher chosen by God to carry it. Cornelius had been told by God to send to Joppa for Peter and that when he came he would speak to them (Acts 10:1-8). Peter, having been told by God to go with those sent by Cornelius, did so (Acts 10:9-20). Upon arrival at the house of Cornelius, Peter questioned why Cornelius had sent for him (Acts 10:29). After explaining his vision, he concluded, "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33).

Today begins a series of sermons presented to us by brother Ken Burleson of Cantonment, Florida. The question we might need to ask ourselves is "what did we come to hear"? If we came to hear a lot of jokes and stories and otherwise be entertained by brother Burleson's wit and humor, we have come for the wrong reason and will also be disappointed in that which we hear. If we have come to hear the deep philosophical ideas of the age, again we will be disappointed by what we hear. If we have come to hear someone tickle our ears by saying that we are all going to heaven, just because God is so gracious and merciful that whatever way we choose to serve Him is satisfactory with Him, so long as we are sincere in our beliefs, we will again go away disappointed and quite possibly, disgruntled as well.

The reason for all those disappointments just mentioned is because brother Burleson has come to do just what Cornelius wanted Peter to do; proclaim the word of God that we might know how to live in such a manner that we can have eternal life in heaven. Peter told Cornelius, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)", that word would be proclaimed by Peter. And, it will likewise be proclaimed by brother Burleson. He has long been a proclaimer of the truth of God's word. He has taken seriously and personally the command of the inspired apostle Paul to, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2), and has been doing so for quite a few years.

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16) and will save your souls (James 1:21) and is therefore what you really need to hear, no matter what you came to hear. LISTEN! *Robert*

IF YOU ARE TOO BUSY TO SERVE GOD, YOU'RE TOO BUSY

At one point in the history of the nation of Israel, during the reign of Ahab, he spared the life of Benhadad, the king of Syria after God had delivered him into the hands of Ahab. God sent a prophet to Ahab feigning one who had been left in charge of a prisoner who had allowed that prisoner to escape. He told king Ahab, "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it" (I Kings 20:40). Though the prophet was feigning the whole episode about guarding a prisoner, his words point to a major problem in our society and even in the church. We are all just as busy as a big bunch of brown beaver in a branch full of birch, but we are generally busy at the wrong task.

Our Lord said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37). Friend, there is nothing more important or more worthy of one's time and effort than seeing to it that their soul rests eternally in heaven rather than in torment for that same eternity. Using that which the Lord said, one could paraphrase that second verse to ask what you are willing to trade your eternal soul for? One might think that it would take a pretty hefty piece of this world's goods to entice one to do that, but it doesn't. Adam and Eve traded theirs for a piece of fruit. Judas traded his for just thirty pieces of silver. Among the chief rulers, there were many that traded their soul for the praise of me (John 12:42-43).

In our own society and even in the Lord's body, there are many people that have in effect traded their eternal souls for the material things and fleshly pleasures of this life. They are as busy as bees in the summer clover, but they are doing very little, if anything, in an effort to have a home in heaven. Peter told non-Christians to "...Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). And Paul told the Philippian brethren to "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). One must indeed be busy if he or she desires to have eternal life. However, what they are busy doing will ultimately determine whether they have that eternal life or not. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10)

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