

## Passing It On!

*"And the thing which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).*

The faithful transmission of God's word to man is imperative. The implanted word is *"able to save our souls"* (James 1:21). The word is bread (Mt. 4:4), light (Ps. 119:105), and seed (Lk. 8:11). It (the gospel) is God's power to save all who believe it (Rm. 1:16). But, if must be undiluted for a corrupted gospel saves no one; rather it brings damnation to the proclaimer of it and separation from God's grace to those who receive it (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4).

There must always be appeal to the scriptures to establish our teaching and practices. Transmitting from one teacher to another over a span of time can bring a vast chasm between the original message and the proclaimer which comes from one to another through several sources. Always we must return to the scriptures for the basis to establish every principle and precept we teach.

Yet, teaching a younger generation is the obligation of the older one. *"The things you have heard from me, commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also."* It is shameful that the acquired knowledge of an older generation should die without it being recorded. Surely the wisdom and knowledge that study has brought through long years should be shared with and passed on down to succeeding generations. Are not fathers to bring their children up in the nurture and chastening of the Lord (Eph. 6:4)? Are they not instructed to *"train up a child in the way he should go and even he is old he will not depart from it"* (Pro. 22:6)? The apostasy of Israel in its early years in Canaan came because *"there arose another generation which know not Jehovah nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel"* (Judges 2:10). Hosea lamented, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hos. 4:6) The Sadducees erred *"because they knew not the scriptures nor the power of God"* (Mt. 22:29). It is not surprising that in Paul's letters to young preachers, the charge is frequently to *"speak the things which befit the sound doctrine"* and *"these things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority"* (Tit. 2:1; 15).

The well being of the church in future generations depend upon our faithful presentation of the gospel to the present one and to the careful nourishing of future teachers in the sound doctrine.

The means and methods of illustrating and transmitting the gospel has undergone subtle change in my own life time of preaching (58 years of preaching to be precise). There were the "flip charts" popular with some (Remember Oliver Murray?); large charts on bed sheets that others preferred (Bob Franks). There was black boards; white boards; outlines on overhead projectors, now "PowerPoint". Some of us lost out long ago in modern methods. But while the methods may change, there must always be strict adherence to the doctrine of Christ for it has not changed and John warned, "*Whoso goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God*" (2 John 9). The prophet wrote: "*To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to these words it is because there is no life in them*" (Isa. 8:20). Peter said, "*If any man speak, speaking as it were the oracles of God*" (1 Pet. 4:11).

The need to commit to faithful men the word of God is an ever present one. Let us not be weary with imparting the teaching to other men because, after all, we are the products of an earlier generation who took care to teach us. Is it not significant the final charge of the grand apostle to the gentiles was this: "*Preach the Word. Be urgent in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Tim. 4:2)?

Jim McDonald