

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

A MAN STOOD UP TO PREACH

Pretendville church of Christ had all sorts of problems – problems well known by many faithful Christians throughout the country. The elders were unscriptural. The Lord’s Supper was being abused. Discipline was not practiced. “Unity in Diversity” was being practiced with regard to morality and doctrine. Many false concepts regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage were taking root in the congregation. The group gave wholesale approval to neo-institutionalism. In short, their candlestick had been removed (**Revelation 2:5**).

Well, not wanting to buck tradition, Pretendville church of Christ scheduled a preacher to host a spring gospel meeting. The preacher was well known and held in the highest of esteem by many saints. He was a polished speaker. He had been to Pretendville on other occasions. He always had the most captivating PowerPoint presentations. He was a wonderful storyteller. The youth loved him. Visitors loved Him.

Well, after making all of the arrangements the BNP (big name preacher) came to town. He never knocked upon a single door in the community the whole week he was in Pretendville. He had no studies with the members of the congregation. He did eat a lot of fine food, however. Oh yeah, let’s not forget, he “preached.” To hear the members of Pretendville tell it, the lessons were wonderful. Not only did they deal with “the issues,” but they were filled with the best illustrations and stories. Each lesson was recorded and put on the church’s website for others to benefit from. If one were to check the site, the lesson list is there for download. It reads as follows:

1. “Why Do We Not Have Church Sponsored Social Meals?”
2. “Why Do Local Congregations Not Fund Orphan Homes?”
3. “Why is Denominationalism Sinful?”
4. “Why is Mechanical Instrumental Music in Worship Sinful?”
5. “Is Water Baptism Essential for Salvation?”

Let me ask you question: are these types of lessons (minus the fluff) profitable? Yea verily! However, let me ask you another question: are they what Pretendville needed? Well, how about it? The answer is obviously a resounding, “No!” What did they need lessons on?

1. “The Qualifications of Elders and a Congregation’s Duty Toward Those Unqualified in Office.”
2. “The Proper Manner in Which to Partake of the Lord’s Supper.”
3. “What Does the New Testament Command Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?”
4. “How Romans 14 is Perverted by Professional, Political Preachers.”
5. “Why Saints Must Withdraw From Every Brother Who Walks Disorderly.”

Preachers need to preach what people need to hear, not what pleases people (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**). May all who stand up to preach each Sunday remember this! Preacher, listen up now: how can you stare **Ezekiel 3:18** in the face and still tell jokes, weave fascinating stories, and emote colorful illustrations pieced together with mere allusions to a few Scriptures? Why not try going back to gospel preaching? That is all that is authorized.

Just in case you’re wondering, Pretendville “church of Christ” continued to stand four-square on all of the non-institutional issues. They never did bring in a piano. They never did accept denominationalism. But, you know what? Joe Goodspeaker and his cronies never told them what they needed to hear. As a result: they never had their hearts pricked, they never did repent, and thus, they never did get their candlestick back. There is no happy ending for this tale that’s more true than made-up.