

## 6 Issues We Face Preaching the Gospel

In the month of July 1950, on a Sunday evening, I began a series of meeting with brother E.W. Johnson down in Pine Bluff AK. I brought a message that night and ten years later, I was through Pine Bluff and brother Johnson told me that that message split his church wide open. Just one message, he said the people went out of the service that evening about evenly divided; they didn't have a vote, they didn't come to a vote for 8 years. But he said his church was already split of course, but that one message was the meat axe and it took 8 years under his quiet way for it to come to its climax and then the people demanded the right to vote on it. Said the first time they extended him a call they needed a new building and he'd led a congregation to build a nice place somewhere else and so they called him cause they wanted him to build a new building. Ten years later they voted whether they wanted to support and say amen to, and help propagate what he had to preach. And he said that the thing came to a climax in just one service, and I remember asking him "well brother Johnson, was I in the flesh? I get that was a lot of times, was I wrong?" He said "No, I believe one time you were in the Spirit"

But He said the people went away believing in two different Gods. Half of them believed in a God who's God. We preachers call it a Sovereign God. That simply means "very God". The others went away with the god of 20th century, 19th century Christianity, a god who would like to do well but is unable to do so. And that's pretty well the message tonight. 1954 while I was listening to brother Ferrell Griswold over at the Pollard Baptist building at a Bible conference, I think it was the first one, I scribbled down on an envelope 6 issues that seemed to be worth facing and seem to carry within them what all of this controversy is about. And tonight (I guess I am letting the cat out of the bag) the only time I ever got an invitation in my life to come hold a meeting and the preacher dictated my sermon is this one, and I am glad to come.

How many folks were in the park meeting in nineteen hundred fifty-two or one? One? Fifty one. How many of you were in the Park meeting? Well, thank you. Well He's asked me to bring some of the messages but he wanted me to bring this one. And those of you who remember it (I dead sure don't) I haven't touched this since 1954 but when he wrote me the letter and outlined my sermon I began to dig and I came up on that old envelope and I still had it and here goes. Now of course, no man ever repeated sermons, no man ever preached from the same text the same way, the Scriptures' too big for that, but I appreciate this privilege and the confidence and the honor that your dear Pastors' paid me. And it's like coming home, and I just want to talk tonight, this prayer meeting night on 6 issues that still face us and we have to take sides, as individuals, as congregations, as public preachers, anybody that names the name of Jesus Christ living in this day. You've been living in a day when these 6 issues have about wrapped up the controversy in what Christianity's all about in your day and mine. And I remember, I got these points, I don't know what was said about them, I know if I don't remember them you dead sure don't but tonight on this prayer meeting night I want to leave them out. I appreciate the all out effort your pastor and I trust you are going to make for these days. We are facing the most tremendous opportunity I've ever seen, I bring you good tidings of great joy. Hell's just a

popping everywhere, doors are opening, preachers are seeking the truth of God's grace as I've never seen it and I rejoice. Especially with you people who have been in the battle and have stood by me and made my little ministry possible.

There are six basic issues that I bring you again tonight that we have to take sides upon and these issues will determine our gospel. The other day, I heard a godly man, brother James Stewart down in Houston Texas speaking to about 60 Baptist Pastors and he said that "he longed in his heart that true evangelism would make its appearance once again in America" He said "the evangelism that depends upon the sovereign Holy Spirit to bring men to Christ". And they had such prayer meetings as you wouldn't think possible today, as that dear man who has long lifted up his voice against the shallowness of what we've called evangelism in America and those preachers got on their faces and sobbed out their sins and their confessions to God. They were all Southern Baptist preachers, but they didn't fight the man's message, 15 years ago they would have. But they are coming up to the lick log now and the methods and message that looked like it was getting such wonderful results, they're not getting the results now and this generation of people in our churches and in our pulpits is open now to hear from God like I've never seen and I rejoice. For if I had a text tonight I would take that text in John chapter 3 verse 8 which reads like this "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one (every one) that is born of the Spirit. When the last words been said, evangelism that can get people saved without the blowing of The Spirit who blows when He wills and nobody can explain it or the evangelism that it absolutely helpless unless the wind blows, that pretty well sums up the whole shooting match.

I was reading one of the old puritans the other day, God shut him up in a little old village about 200 people for about 37 years, he wrote great books. He preached for 33 years and never had a convert and then the wind began to blow. I felt sorry for the brother, wouldn't it been wonderful if he'd lived in our day when we can get people converted without the Holy Ghost but he couldn't. The poor old man didn't know that there was any way on earth for men to be born into the kingdom of God except as the holy wind opened their hearts and applied the truth. And all he knew to do was to keep on plowing and breathing a prayer "O thou sovereign Spirit, we cannot command ya, but we pant for thy presence and we long for your blessing"

The six issues that I bring again tonight, the first, we have to take sides, not in our heads but in our hearts over this proposition "That man was utterly ruined in the Garden of Eden or that he was somewhat injured". Those of you who have heard me preach a great deal know that whether it's being backslidden or not I have tried as I've grown older to quit using men's terminologies. I do not know if this will strike you right or not but I have quit using the adjectives on what they call the 5 points. I no longer use the term "total depravity" because it takes 3 hours and a half to explain what we do not mean by the word total. But that does not mean that I do not take sides and this is the starting point where we deal with men and women who haven't been injured, they were ruined. When in the loins of Adam they willfully reached

up and sought to put God off the throne and sit there themselves and the penalty was death. Not injury but death, and that's where the whole thing starts. I remember in 1950, in July after I'd been here in April I think it was, I came to the parting away with a brother with whom I have had much fellowship in the ministry. He took the position by way of rebuking me that man was somewhat injured in the fall. Of course, he has to take that position in order to preach what he believes is so. That God has done his part in the salvation of man and now it's up to men. If man has some ability, alright, if he has no ability, alright. But I have learned long since that what we call the doctrines of election and predestination and those terms, that isn't what offends people. What offends people is to rob them of that thing they've been using to get multitudes of people thinking they're saved and that appealing to the big wills of men and women who have nothing but perverted wills. I heard a radio preacher who used to believe The Gospel and tried to preach it but the pressures of the hour got him, I heard him in Winston-Salem the other day, preached for 15 minutes to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that God's done everything He can do, now it's up to the sinner, now it's up to the sinner. Now the so called gospel upon which modern day churches in America was built has been built on a gospel that teaches that men got a pretty bad blow but they weren't ruined and that therefore salvation is God taking the first step and men taking the rest. We have to make up our minds there. When I brought this message in 1954, we hadn't heard about the fact that the first 11 chapters of Genesis ain't so, of course, we had to find that out in your day and mine. But if it ain't so, then there is no salvation. For if we were not ruined in Adam, Christ can't do a thing on God's earth for us if He did die. And so until further notice we'll still take the position and stay with it and fight for it if we must that we belong to a race that was utterly ruined. Not in need of a shove but O God, in need of a savior, utterly lost and utterly ruined and utterly unable to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps. We'll stay by that.

I watched this thing grow 1950, as far as this section east of the Mississippi river what happened at Pollard Baptist church had ramifications all over the South, out of it came your blessed young preacher. I've watched them as they stumbled, I've prayed for them when I thought they was going wrong, rejoice when God was blessing. It's been a struggle and we're not out of the woods yet, but anybody, anybody that's had a better time than I have, I couldn't imagine it. I've seen it as it just started and now it's breaking out all over the world and I'm almost persuaded, I may live to see the time when The Gospel will be returned to the churches of America, wouldn't that be wonderful.

The second issue that we have to take sides on is simply this that salvation is utterly of The Lord or only partially, utterly of The Lord or only partially. I remember your young Pastor many years ago, went down to Panama City to hold a meeting, had a little trouble with the Pastor (I forget all the details) in the connection with prayer Brother Mahan told me that he said to the young preacher "lets pray to sinners. According to your theology we ought not to bother God, if

salvation is up to man, we needn't to bother God, we just get down on our knees and say Bill save yourself, Suzie save yourself." This has been a battleground, men have taken it and become what we call hard-shells, there is always that danger. There is a thin line between truth and error and nothing's so dangerous as something that's got a lot of truth in it and a lot of error but the battleground is still being fought and with all of the conflict and all of the mistakes and all of the bone-headed (ly) things we've done, it's still been a pleasure to insist, in spite of everything that salvation, is God's work first, last and all the time and that no man if he lived a billion years would ever have whereof to glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is either altogether of The Lord or it's just part of the Lord and part of men. Now the popular gospel is still that salvation, God had something to do with it man casts the deciding vote but not so, not so. Wouldn't it be wonderful, wouldn't it be wonderful! This is what we're praying for, this is what we're sweating for, this is what we're groaning for, this is what none of us know the meaning of the word sacrificing (if we knew how to do it) for, wouldn't it be wonderful if The Gospel be returned to our churches and a sinner couldn't run from one church and have his wounds healed slightly somewhere else by preaching this damnable doctrine that God done part of it and now He's hoping that man will do the rest. No, you have to take sides... Salvation is either all of The Lord or its just part of it, and that's an issue. I don't want to stay here till midnight so I'll just mention these tonight.

167 times in the New Testament, the word "Kaleo" or its equivalent, it means called, 167 times in the New Testament. I've been going up and down the land a while subject to pastors, you looking at a miracle. How in the name of Heaven I stayed in the ministry beats me, beats me. And I've tried to preach that men are saved when God calls them and they're able to hear it. I've tried to preach that, to a church world that is still absolutely ignoring the fact that salvation 167 times in the New Testament is at the end of God's call. How on earth we could have built all our mission programs and our big churches and all of our denomination and leave out the fact that men are dead in their spiritual graves and there's only one voice that's got authority to speak and give dead men life but the whole outfit is built on it. God didn't put one word in the New Testament 167 times to be written off. Men are still saved utterly by hearing in The Gospel, as the Holy Ghost makes it effective, a voice that has in it authority to give life to dead men, that's the only way anybody ever did get saved. The other day down in Houston a young lady broke up the service and she came running down the front (you should have heard her), why sure, she heard Him. She heard through my voice, she heard His voice and Christ was made alive by the Holy Ghost and she heard him speak. Not with these ears but with an ear of faith just as plainly as He said Lazarus come forth, that girl heard it, that's the way people are saved. Salvation is God saving dead men and He saves men by The Word as He does everything else and men hear and are saved.

The third issue that we face is that salvation is a gift, not an offer. The old puritans used to use the expression "Christ is freely offered in The Gospel" which is so, but it's meaningless. It's that

same proposition as the scripture whosoever will may come (The scripture does not say that) but it is so that whosoever will may come but that's meaningless cause nobody will, nobody will. Somebody says "well, I believe that whosoever will may come" I do too, but nobody will so why fuss about it, why fuss about it? I say, they tell me "I believe that Christ is freely offered in The Gospel" I do too but nobody's interested so why fuss about it? But O, it's a little deeper than that, salvation is not an offer for men to decide what they will do about, salvation's a gift. And you better listen to me, you don't turn down a gift, cause nobody ever offers a gift to anybody until they're dead sure it'll be appreciated. You'd better get that, that's right this is back on this same issue, sure, my Lord Jesus was dealing with the woman from Samaria and He said unto her "If thou knewest" the what? "The gift of God" That brings us back to the same thing, the heart has to be prepared or the gift will not be offered. My Lord didn't put Himself up for barter. The most damnable thing that's perverted the Gospel of Christ all the days of our years has been this stuff about "you dear people, you make up your minds what you'll do with Christ." It's not given you to make that disposition of Christ, you're commanded to repent toward God, you're commanded to believe The Gospel but you're never given a choice, you're just faced with a duty, isn't that right? Listen to me, listen to me, I've had a little burden in my heart for my heart and for yours, and people I go to all over America, if there's anybody on the top side of God's earth that ought to have tender hearts, that ought to be able to weep in here it's men and women who've received the gift... You've received the gift. If God almighty would give you Christ, surely no sinner on God's earth could be as bad as you. I wish I could wrap up everybody that claims to believe in the grace of God that's lost joy, that still isn't in amazement for the unspeakable gift. He gives it to prepared hearts, to prepared hearts, to prepared hearts.

Shackled with a load of guilt, burdened clear up to the hilt, but He touched me. O, He touched me and O the joy that filled my soul... Something happened; He touched me and made me whole

Salvation is not an offer to be considered, salvation is God's gift to men. Thanks be unto God (with the Apostle Paul say) for the unspeakable gift. A Bible scholar told me that that Greek word was nearer if we translated it "thanks be unto God for his untraceable gift" You just can't figure it out, it just goes back to the heart of God. Thanks be unto God! Not that He fixed it so that we could consider the matter and use our little old brains and our will but it is all conquering grace, He gives eternal life to men and women. Salvation's a gift, it's not an offer.

And then of course the fourth issue is that salvation comes by revelation and not by a decision. Boy, we've had some scraps here! Mr. Spurgeon used to say "surely you must decide for Jesus Christ, but for a revealed Christ", a revealed Christ. A young preacher in Winston-Salem came to see me last fall one time when I was home, he and his wife liked to come over and talk with me, he said "brother Barnard, I sure wish I could have you in my church but" he said "I can't. The first time you went and said and told my crowd that unless God worked a miracle in their

lives they're gonna split hell wide open, well that scared my people to death." I said "well, isn't that so?" He said "Yeah" but he said "my people never heard it." I said "what do you preach?" Of course, I knew what he preached, he preached that a man gets saved when he decides to believe on Jesus whom he knows nothing about, now a man's a fool that trusts a hole in the wall. O yes, salvation comes not by Rolfe Barnard making up his mind but by the work of The Spirit of God making Jesus Christ who's alive, real to a man. So that if everyone in the world got shot before sunrise and you were the only one left, somebody asks you if Christ is alive you'd say yes sir, yes sir. I met Him, I walk with Him, He's real to me. Salvation comes by God working a miracle. Wouldn't it be wonderful if in our day I didn't have to jump out of my skin if The Gospel that preaches that faith, is Christ made real inside would be returned to America? I claim to be a Christian, I believe God saved me. I got 5 brother and sisters still living, they're all prominent church workers, only one of them would be comfortable if you talked about Christ. They're Sunday school teachers and deacons and this that and the other, they don't know a thing on God's earth about a living Lord. I never get to see them; they're products of this generation. They've made their decisions, and they're doing their best to stay out of jail and get to heaven when they die. And I long for them to be shut-up in their Sunday schools and in their pulpits and over the radio, they'll never be shut-up to the fact that you can't get saved without getting in touch by faith with a living Lord who died. Salvation comes by revelation and not by a decision.

The fifth issue that we still face can be put in words like this: salvation is made effective in a man's life by God bringing a man to repentance and faith or if men themselves will repent and believe. Somebody says "Well I believe that God saves anybody if a man will repent towards God and believe in Jesus Christ." So do I but ain't nobody gonna do it so why fuss about it? If that's all there is to it, the whole outfit'll go to hell. But thank God the scriptures teach much more than that. They teach that God almighty has set a man, the man Christ Jesus with the print of the nails in his hands and the print of the crown of thorns on his head and He's sitting on a throne, He's put him there and given him one task among others to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins. O, bless God, that's white horse of a different color. I shut men up the best I know how all over the country and I say "sinner, why don't you repent? Best way for you to find out you can't is start trying, just start trying to abhor yourself. You can quit chewing tobacco and you can stop cussing out the mule but you can't do a great deal about what's inside. Go on sinner, believe these preaches and you make up your mind what you're gonna do and you'll find out it won't work." It won't work but thank God we got good news; on the cross the Lord Jesus bought the right to give repentance and faith and He's in that business praise God! We got hope there, we got a hope there.

The sixth issue, Moffat translates Romans 11:29 "God never goes back on His call." The King James says "The gifts and callings of God are without repentance." That's pretty good; I like Moffat's translation "God never goes back on His call." He never does that one slot back.

There's several things wrapped up in this, I'll just mention them and I'll quit. Believers are gonna persevere in holiness cause that's what they were chosen for, they were chosen in Him that they might be holy. It's settled, but they must persevere in holiness. Believers are gonna be conformed to the image of Christ (but listen to me) they must be conformed to the image of Christ. I've studied the puritans and I've studied John Calvin, I've studied everybody I could find enough money to buy books or borrow it from. I differ with the puritans, and I differ with brother Calvin, I believe the warnings in the book of Hebrews are not to people who almost got saved but didn't. I wish I could believe that when it talks about people who've tasted and been illuminated, tasted the power, folks that almost got saved but I believe they got saved. You want to throw me out? I believe that New Testament salvation calls for you to spit on your hands and roll up your sleeves and see to it that these terrible warnings never take place in your life. That's what I believe. Now you can ask me questions about that that I can't answer. You say "brother Barnard are you gonna tear up our old Baptist doctrine about the eternal security of the believer?" I don't know what to do about it. But I am going to look you in the face and tell you now that the scriptures talk about crucifying afresh the Son of God and it's talking to God's people. It talks about putting him to open shame and it's talking to saved people. And I used an expression one time that shocked me; I believe that hell is hot on your trail tonight. I believe the devil will get ya if he can. I believe that God's people better quit getting the doctrines out of books and they'd better face the fact that salvation isn't something you can put in a tin can... It's a daily relationship! And if there ever was a generation of church people this side of hell that needs to be to be shocked out of this damnable carnal idea the security of the believer, live like hell and go to Heaven when you die no, no. Our forefathers thought they needed what they called the means of Grace. There is a cocksureness today that's gonna fill hell full of church members if we don't watch out. I don't know how to handle those passages; they just scare the living daylights out of me. If we sin willfully, that's talking to Christian people folks. How shall we escape if we treat lightly so great a salvation? That's talking to Christian people. You say "brother Barnard, are you trying to scare us into doing right?" The book of Hebrews will if you read it, it dead sure will. Ah, it impossible to renew them to repentance; that scares me, that scares me. But the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, God never goes back on His call. Therefore brethren beloved, we are persuaded of better things for you and things that accompany salvation. And I close with this description of the God ward/ man ward side of salvation: The Lord knoweth them who put their trust in Him and let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. Run from it, run from it. The child of God will be conformed to the image of Christ but he must be. Put on the whole armor of God dig in, dig in.

These choruses made me home sick, I love them, I love you people. Do your best; let's pack this auditorium out, lets have a good time in the Lord will ya go after people?