

Welcome friends to another broadcast of “Morsels for Zion’s Poor”

There are many who clamor to be pastors and teachers for the same reasons that the politicians seek office. In our modern day this “occupation” has become a profession that is pursued and carried out just like any other worldly endeavor, complete with salaries, pension plans, and paid vacations. Yet Paul has made it abundantly clear that this is a calling which cannot be escaped rather than an occupation one can be trained for by worldly wisdom and entered into for personal gain.

Paul plainly said that those who are called unto this work cannot choose to ignore it. He said, *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”* This is a calling which is not necessarily entered into gladly since the grave accountability that is attached to it is quite stern, yet when GOD intends that a man should perform it he cannot escape from it anymore than Jonah could circumvent going to Nineveh.

There are many well meaning men who enter into this work without this calling and even some who enter into it for the praise of men or because they think they can perform some work of righteousness which will please GOD. Others have the gift of gab and think themselves suited to this ministry. Some just like the thought of being in front of people and having them do what they tell them to do. I laugh to myself when I think of this because I am convinced that one of the burdens which those who are called to preach must bear is the seeming disregard of most of what they teach; by those who hear them. Even the LORD Himself experienced this. *“But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.”* The popularity of a man’s ministry is more often an indication of the shallowness of his doctrine than its depth.

It is difficult to instruct the saints of GOD on the fruits of the SPIRIT if those things are absent in the instructor. Therefore those who would be teachers must lead by example. The fruit of the SPIRIT is not something which can be produced by teaching. Apart from the LORD causing it to be found growing on the branch, no amount of fertilizer or effort on the part of men can produce it. Nothing but confusion results from those who would preach that we are to be kind to one another yet they demonstrate unkindness in their words and deeds. How can a man exhort men to forgive one another when he harbors an unforgiving spirit? Can a man admonish the saints of GOD to mortify the deeds of the body when he is engaged in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh? Paul made a bold statement when he said, *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.”* Such is the calling of those who would be “vinedressers”. One only need look at the “qualifications” of an elder to see this demonstrated. One’s ability to teach is a minor part of those credentials, but sadly that is usually the main criteria that men look for. This ought not so to be.

Those who are to be “vinedressers” (husbandmen) need to be aware that:

They are not the VINE nor the true HUSBANDMAN. *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”* They are only undershepherds of the flock and tenders of the vine. They have no real power to do anything profitable for the VINE or the branches.

They did not plant the VINE. The LORD said that HE is the VINE and we are the branches. HE is the source of all nourishment that can come to the branches. All things transpire for good to those whom HE is pleased to nourish, who are the called according to HIS purpose

They did not graft the branches onto the VINE. HIS skillful hand alone has caused those whom HE has grafted in to grow and to live. Many men overestimate their value to the branches thinking that they alone possess what the branches need. The need of the branches can only be supplied by the VINE.

HE alone can produce fruit on the branches. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”* Since they themselves are one of the branches they need not forget that HE alone can cause them to produce that fruit which is necessary for their ministry.

HE alone will have all of the glory in the harvest. Too many preachers think that they can share even just a small place of glory. But HE alone will be exalted. Let the name of all men perish from off the face of the earth but let HIS name endure forever, for HE is worthy of our praise. *“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”* Is CHRIST all of your glory?

“Thy free grace alone,” #11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthe poor@windstream.net**