

# POWER

"... the gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation ..." (Romans 1:16)

## LOVING THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD (PART 1)

by Allen Webster

**A**re there some prayers you refuse to pray? Would you pray this one: "My Father, if my congregation is lost, you can send me to hell with them?" Moses prayed it, saying, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32).

What would prompt one to make such a rash, dangerous statement? Was it a flash of hot anger? Was it youthful exuberance? Was it frustrated weariness? No, Moses' love for those he led was so great that he was willing to put himself in harm's way for them. Paul had a similar love for those he led. He once said, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2-3).

Love is the be all/end all of the Christian life. Love is what makes us like God. The Bible's simplest description of God and therefore God's own description of Himself is "God is love" (1 John 4:16). God the Father taught us to love by sending His Son (1 John 4:19), and God the Son taught us to love by giving His life and by commanding us to love each other (John 13:34-35). The Holy Spirit teaches us to love one another by pouring out God's love in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

Love is the most important theme in the 31,102 verses in the Bible. If one were writing a dust-cover synopsis for the Book of books, he could do no better than to chose,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40). The most important word in the Bible is a four-letter word. That word is l-o-v-e. "Love God and your neighbor" is a summary of every command to be found therein. It is the foundation of Christianity.

We are told to "pursue love" (New King James Version, 1 Cor. 14:1), "put on love" (Col. 3:14), "increase and abound in love" (1 Thess. 3:12; Phil. 1:9), be sincere in love (2 Cor. 8:8), be unified in love (Phil. 2:2), be "fervent" in love (1 Pet. 4:8), and to "stir up love" (NKJV, Heb. 10:24). Everything a Christian does should be done in love (1 Cor. 16:14). The more mature we become as Christians, the more loving we become. Since leaders are to have the most developed faith, they should exemplify the greatest love in any congregation.

How does a loving leader lead? He loves. What always does what is in the eternal interest of the souls under his care or influence.

### **A Loving Leader Is Studious**

Elders, deacons, and preachers must be men of the book. Paul wrote, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13). "Doctrine" in these passages means "teaching." Shepherds do much of their teaching one on one in meetings around a conference table. They are often

presented with the most prickly problems since Solomon had two prostitutes visit his office (1 Kings 3:16-28). If they do not know the Bible, they will give bad advice and critical times in their member's lives.

Preachers have an unparalleled opportunity. Scores of people assemble to give him two-and-a-half hours of undivided attention every week. Shallow, ill-thought-out sermons have little influence. Like a dull sword, they hardly prick the skin of the heart. Like a bland, low-calorie diet, they give little nourishment and less taste. To teach, one must learn. To learn, one must study. To study, one must dedicate the mental energy and the clock time to deliver four carefully researched thirty- to forty-minute gospel presentations. The average sermon contains about 5,000 words. Most preachers deliver about 100 sermons a year (not to mention another 100 Bible classes). This totals 500,000 words a year. An average full-length novel contains 50,000 words, so a preacher is producing the equivalent of ten full-length novels every year. Even Louis L'Amour did not do that! (He tried to write five pages a day and was considered a prolific writer). Most popular novelists turn out one or two novels per year. Needless to say, a few minutes on Saturday night with a sermon outline book or on SermonCentral.com is insufficient.

Teaching is an ongoing process (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 5:11-12). Hearing the truth is not a one-time vaccination against sin; it is a lifetime prescription

*Continued on page 2*

# LOVING THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD (PART 1)

Continued from page 1

dispensed in small doses. One church leader posted this Frederick Danker quote on the inside of his study door: "The Gospel is a fuel required constantly to produce and promote the life of the Spirit within the Christian. The fruits of the Spirit grow only where the Gospel is sown tirelessly and unremittingly."

The purpose of learning is to turn the hearts of the people toward God. Preaching is to bring about repentance (Matt. 3:12; Acts 2:38; Acts 11:18; Acts 17:30; Acts 20:21; Acts 26:20), which is turning from sin to the Savior (Acts 3:19; Acts 26:20; 2 Cor. 7:10). The last verse of the Old Testament described the purpose of John's work: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:56; cf. Luke 1:17). Paul described his successful evangelism among the Macedonians: "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9).

## A Loving Leader Proclaims

Across the front of many communion tables are the words, "This Do in Remembrance of Me." In the early days of the Restoration Movement, it was not uncommon to see inscribed across pulpits the exhortation, "Preach the Word." One definition of the New Testament word for *preach* is to "proclaim openly." Elders and preachers team up to see that God's words is proclaimed and followed (Mark 16:15; Gal. 1:89). More and more churches are receiving less and less of the gospel with each passing year. In some places, it has become unpopular to give a "thus saith the Lord." Some

believe that citing the Biblical reference in sermons hinders the presentation of the preacher. We wonder about a sermon that Biblical references hinder! Paul faced the problem at Corinth of men preaching themselves rather than the Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 4:5, Phil. 1:15-18). Such preachers are like Elymas who tried to withhold the truth from Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:8).

## A Loving Leader Is Urgent

The gospel message is **urgent** ("be instant," 2 Tim. 4:2; cf. Luke 7:4; Rom. 12:12). Accepting the message is literally a matter of life and death (Ezek. 33:11). That is why we often hear earnestness in the preacher's voice and occasionally see a tear in an elder's eye (Psa. 119:136; Jer. 9:1; Jer. 13:17; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:19; Acts 20:30-31; Rom. 9:2; 2 Cor. 2:4; Phil. 1:4; Phil. 3:18).

The purpose of this urgency is to reach the lost on time's side of eternity. God's leader is not out to look good, to save face, to impress, to gain influence, to earn a paycheck, to advance a political view, or to entertain. He wants to **save souls** (Matt. 16:26; Luke 19:10). E. Stanley Jones tells of a missionary lost in the jungle. He finally found a small village and asked a native if he could lead him out of the jungle.

The native said he could. "All right," the missionary said, "Show me the way."

For hours, they hacked their way through dense brush in an unmarked jungle. Beginning to worry, the missionary said, "Are you quite sure this is the way? Where is the path?"

The native said, "In this place there is no path. I am the path" (Blair). We are the path to salvation because we show the way to the only One who can save Jesus (John 14:6). One man asked a humble gentleman outside a

hotel in a small town, "Is this the best hotel in town?" His answer was to the point. He said, "It is the onliest one." Every servant can say to himself, "The one chance these people have of hearing the soul-saving gospel today is through me. For someone, it may be the first time; for another, it may be the last time. Do your best job."

## A Loving Leader Inspires

We joke about sleeping during worship. One lady named Gladys visited church one Sunday. The sermon seemed to go on forever, and some fell asleep. After the service, she walked up to a sleepy looking gentleman, extended her hand, and said, "Hello, I'm Gladys Dunn." He replied, "You're not the only one, ma'am. I'm glad it's done too!" A Sunday school teacher asked her children why was it necessary to be quiet in church. One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping in there?" A short poem reads: *I never see my preacher's eyes Tho' they with light may shine For when he prays he closes his, And when he preaches, I close mine!* (cf. Acts 20:9).

Some would rather have a root canal than attend a church service. Boring. Long. Tedious. Dull. Unimportant. Dreary. Irrelevant. Tiresome. The truth is, though, worship has the opposite effect on spiritually minded people. It awakens! It inspires! It fires! It stimulates, motivates, and invigorates. It "provokes unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). It encourages listeners to follow Christ and to use their talents, opportunities, and time adding to His kingdom.

Consider the power of the gospel as recorded in the New Testament:

- When John preached in the Judean wilderness, multitudes were "baptized of him in Jordan, confessing

Continued on page 4



**18th Annual  
Power Lectures  
July 25-29, 2010**

***Moses: The meekest man  
In All The Land***

**Sunday**

- 9:30 A.M. ***Eldad & Medad: The Spirit That Dwelleth In Us Lusteth To Envy***  
Robert Jefferies
- 10:30 A.M. ***Moses: A Great Prophet Who Personified A Greater***  
Keith Mosher, Sr.
- 6:00 P.M. ***When Society Wages War On Boys***  
Brad Harrub
- 7:00 P.M. ***The Legacy Of Amram & Jochebed: How To Raise Your Son To Be A Leader Among God's People***  
Glenn Colley

**Monday**

- 9:00 A.M. ***Weak Leaders: What Did This People Unto Thee?***  
Dave Leonard
- 10:00 A.M. ***Moses: Who Built According To The Pattern***  
Curtis Cates
- 11:00 A.M. ***And He Began To Make Excuse – Who Am I?***  
Gary Hampton
- 1:00 P.M. ***Korah, Dathan, & Abiram: Swallowing Up The Competition***  
Todd Clippard
- 2:00 P.M. ***Passing The Mantle: Making Sure The Work Doesn't Die With You***  
Bob Prichard
- 2:00 P.M. ***(Ladies Class) Helping Your Husband To Be A Leader Of God's People***  
Cindy Colley
- 7:00 P.M. ***Loving The People You Lead***  
Allen Webster
- 8:00 P.M. ***When The People Mummur***  
B.J. Clarke

**Tuesday**

- 9:00 A.M. ***When A Meek Man Gets Mad***  
Patrick Morrison
- 10:00 A.M. ***Learned In All The Wisdom Of The Egyptians: Keeping Your Faith While Receiving A Secular Education***  
Dan Cates
- 11:00 A.M. ***Keeping The Flock: What God Taught Moses On The Backside Of The Desert***  
James Segars
- 1:00 P.M. ***When Success Depends Upon You And Your Hands Are Heavy***  
Chuck Webster
- 2:00 P.M. ***Moses And The Magicians***  
Lee Davis
- 2:00 P.M. ***(Ladies Class) Moving From The Shadows To The Son & From The Imperfect To The Perfect***  
Teresa Hampton
- 7:00 P.M. ***Refusing To Compromise: There Shall Not An Hoof Be Left Behind***  
Greg Dismuke
- 8:00 P.M. ***By Faith Moses: The Highlights Of A Great Career (Heb. 11)***  
Eric Owens

**Wednesday**

- 9:00 A.M. ***Nephews & New Fire***  
Caleb Campbell
- 10:00 A.M. ***Here Am I: Answering The Call To Lead God's People***  
Bobby Liddell
- 11:00 A.M. ***And He Began To Make Excuse – But, Behold, They Will Not Believe Me***  
Kevin Beard
- 1:00 P.M. ***Face To Face, Friend To Friend***  
Mike Vestal
- 2:00 P.M. ***But We Are Moses' Disciples: The Foolishness Of Following Moses & His Law After The Coming Of Christ & His Law***  
Tim Burroughs
- 2:00 P.M. ***(Ladies Class) Teaching Your Children To Love One Another***  
Melony Webster
- 7:00 P.M. ***When A Nation Throws Away Its Future: Unwanted Babies And A Nation's Demise***  
Eric Lyons
- 8:00 P.M. ***Handling The Hard Causes***  
Jody Apple

**Thursday**

- 9:00 A.M. ***Then Sang Moses***  
Tom Wacaster
- 10:00 A.M. ***Standing On Holy Ground***  
Bobby O'dell
- 11:00 A.M. ***And He Began To Make Excuse – O My Lord, I Am Not Eloquent***  
Jason Hilburn
- 1:00 P.M. ***May It Be Said Of Me: The Servant Of The Lord***  
Larry Butler
- 2:00 P.M. ***May It Be Said Of Me: The Man Of God***  
Chris Butler
- 2:00 P.M. ***(Ladies Class) Redeeming The Time Because The Days Are Evil***  
April Meacham
- 7:00 P.M. ***What Moses Saw From Mount Nebo***  
Tom Holland
- 8:00 P.M. ***My Servant Moses Is Not So, Who Is Faithful In All Mine House***  
Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

**Southaven Church Of Christ**

1483 Brookhaven Drive  
Southaven, MS 38671  
(662) 393-2690

[www.southavencoc.org](http://www.southavencoc.org)



Deuteronomy 5:32

Wade Webster, Editor

POWER is a monthly publication overseen by the elders of the Southaven church of Christ, Southaven, Mississippi.



SUBSCRIPTION TERMS (USA):

Free Upon Request

Donations toward offsetting the cost of publishing POWER are gladly accepted and much appreciated.



Phone (662) 393-2690

FAX (662) 342-7152

E-mail: shavenpreacher@gmail.com

VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

www.southavencoc.org



**SOUTHAVEN**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOVING THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD (PART 1)

*Continued from page 2*

their sins" (Matt. 3:1-6).

- When he preached to Herod, the king "did many things, and heard him gladly" (Mark 6:20).

- When Jesus preached, listeners were moved to action (Matt. 14:13; Matt. 19:2; John 10:31). The woman at the well left her water pot (John 4:28); Simon and Andrew forsook their nets and followed Him (Mark 1:17-18).

- When Peter and the apostles preached on Pentecost, about three thousand repented and were baptized (Acts 2:38-41).

- When Stephen preached, they reacted with violence (Acts 7).

- When Paul preached on Mars' Hill, some mocked, some wanted to hear him again later, and some "clave unto him, and believed" (Acts 17:32-34).

- When he preached to the Ephesians, "many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them" (Acts 19:19).

- When he preached to the governor, Felix trembled (Acts 24:25).

- John recorded Jesus' inspiring preaching from heaven to the Laodiceans: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

Loving leaders inspire today. Much of the encouragement is given one on one by elders who take a personal interest in the sheep and

lambs under their care. Preaching inspires today. In many churches, there is public response for prayer or baptism every week. But responses to the efforts of church leaders are not limited to public confessions of faith or sin. Which of us sitting in the pews under the direction of sound elders while a capable preacher delivers the message is not inspired to do better, be better, and live better? Each time we put ourselves in that situation, we gain strength to help us face the tempter for another few days.

### **A Loving Leader Assists and Resists**

It is a part of the Christian's job description to assist those in need. Paul collected money to be used to help the poor saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:26). Stephen was among those who assisted the neglected widows (Acts 6). Pure religion keeps its eyes and heart opened to the fatherless and widows in their affliction (Jas. 1:27).

Preachers, and all Christians, should resist those who compromise or change God's truth. Jude insisted that we "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3; cf. Gal. 1:6-10; Phil. 1:17). God's Word has been given as a treasure to us (2 Cor. 4:7); it must be faithfully handled and passed down to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:2; Rev. 22:18-19).