

*In
search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Giving Attention

Timothy R. Henderson



In Earl West's book, The Search For the Ancient Order, he relates a conversation between 'Raccoon' John Smith, a pioneer Gospel preacher of the restoration period, and another preacher, William Vaughn. The conversation takes place after having heard Alexander Campbell speak on the allegory of Hagar and Sarah. " 'Is it not hard, brother Billy, to ride twenty miles, as I have done, just to hear a man preach thirty minutes?' ' You are mistaken brother John; look at your watch. It has surely been longer than that.' When Smith looked, he found Campbell had preached two hours and thirty minutes. Two hours were gone, and he knew not where." (Vol. 1, pg. 247)

When I read this passage from brother West's book, it struck me as something that would not take place today. I find it very interesting to see how the attention spans have shortened concerning Gospel preachers and the length of their sermons. I believe there are several reasons for this. First the religious world today, members of the church included, are not zealous in their desire to hear the blessings of God's word. We have reduced everything to sound bites, that must be delivered quickly so that we might get on with our lives. Our attention spans have been so reduced by television (or so the excuse goes) that we can't sit through more than thirty minutes at a time, and that must be broken up by interesting commercials. Because of this, many preachers have reached a point that they believe they must insert interesting stories every five minutes in order to keep their audiences attention. In listening to one Gospel preacher during a Gospel meeting, I kept track of how many inspirational stories he told versus how much scripture he used. Unfortunately, he used many more stories than Scripture, and many are being encouraged in this. It is a sad state we have reached that we feel we must entertain more than we exhort, encourage, and rebuke. The amazing thing with this idea of the world today having a shorter attention span is that so many things in the world of

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
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(* Bible Classes for All Ages)

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entertainment last for hours. Many of today's movies are clocking in at 2 1/2 to 3 hours. A football game or baseball game can go on for an entire afternoon. Theatrical presentations will generally last for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Why can we devote so much time to these activities and give them our most rapt attention, but when it comes to God's glorious word, we are doing good to devote 20 minutes, and that must be broken up with inspirational stories.

Another possibility for this lack of attention is because of the preachers themselves. Preachers today, do not make the word of God as much a part of their life as these early preachers did. Also, perhaps we don't preach with the same zeal and earnestness as the restoration preachers had. We do not appreciate what we have, because we did not have to work as hard or struggle with as much opposition as the Restoration evangelists did. I believe that if our preachers today would devote more of their time to studying God's word and making it an important part of their lives and treat it as a lifestyle, not an occupation, then we would see a great improvement in our pulpits.

When we read in our Bibles (Nehemiah 8:1-9) of the Israelites listening to the word of God being read and explained to them from early morning until midday and being attentive to the reading, it should shame us that we cannot spend one or two hours listening to God's word being read and explained in a wonderfully air conditioned building, with padded pews and completely protected from the environment around us. The Israelites were standing, outdoors, without modern conveniences, and still were giving close attention to what was being read and explained. Let us give care that we are not judged by our desire to hear God's word.

If you find that you do not enjoy listening to God's word being delivered, look into your heart and see if the problem lies within you, if it does, then get your heart ready to hear and heed God's word. If the problem lies with the preacher, then try to aid him in giving him encouragement both in his preaching and in his studying so that he might devote more of his life in making God's word a force in his life. May we all look and see what needs to be in our lives, and make God's word of prime importance.

He Missed One Service

By Anonymous

Via—The Hebron Herald, Vol. XXV, Number 4, April 2003

Paul Harvey recently reported on his noon news of a 73-year old man who was pinned beneath his farm tractor for four days and nights in driving rain and a terrible storm. Concerned friends went to see about him just in time. It seems that he is going to live after his ordeal, but he will lose a leg below the knee.

Several newspapers have picked up on this little story and have centered upon the amazing fact that a 73 year old man could live after being pinned beneath a tractor for four days. yes, all of that is amazing, but a more amazing fact is what caused his friends to go to see about him. One friend gave as the reason for this visit that "He missed prayer meeting Wednesday night." That's all? He just missed one service and his friends went to check on him.

As one preacher remarked, "I believe there are two possible suppositions we can make about this incident.

"On the one hand we could suppose that this man was so faithful and regular in his church attendance that everyone knew if he was not there, something had to be seriously wrong. A question: What if you had been the one pinned under the tractor? Would your absence have been noticed? Or, are you so irregular in attendance that everyone would assume you decided to sleep in, or go to

the lake? How many services have you missed in the last three months? Could you honestly classify yourself as a faithful, regular worshipper?

“On the other hand, we could assume that the people in this man’s congregation have such a concern for the souls of men that when anyone, no matter how regular or irregular, missed a service they went to see about them.”

I don’t know which of the preacher’s assumptions might be the more plausible, but I would like to see more men and/or more congregations like what he was describing.

Christians need to read Hebrews 10:22-25 daily. No Christian can draw near unto God, hold fast the confession of his hope, or consider his brethren to provoke them unto love and good works who forsakes the assembling of the brethren together.

I have observed some church members that pick and choose which services to attend according to their mood or by what TV program is showing. These folks are here-again-gone-again and hit-and-miss at the services.

Weak brethren seem to think, “Well, so what if I’m just at the services every now and then? If that’s the worst sin I ever commit, I’ll make it to heaven.” But are you sure of that? My Bible says that all sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1,2; Rom. 6:23). We can lose our souls over just one sin not repented of (Acts 8:13-24).

How many times does a person have to miss to be wrong? The first time is a sin as much as the forth time or the fortieth time if it is willful absence.

Jesus said, “*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.*”¹⁶ *‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.’* (Rev. 3:15-16).

Are you cold? Just exactly how faithful are you? **Would you be missed if you missed just one service?**

Pinned beneath a tractor for four days and nights, his life was saved by his devoted, regular attendance

News N Notes

Sick:

- Continue to remember Ed Roberts’ father
- Marie Roberts will have surgery on her other eye this week.
- Cindy North as she faces further surgeries
- Joy Isinghood has been improving

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll, Ethel Mahan, Pauline Sellers

Shut-ins:

- Josephine Clow, Mabel Fleming, Rhea Henthorn, Pauline Midcap
- A card, phone call or a visit can really brighten their days.

Meetings in the area:

- There are still several meetings going on in the area, check the bulletin board for dates and times.

Someone/thing Missing:

- Feel free to call 304-914-2262 / 304-914-2263