

The Better Way

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

BOIL IT DOWN!

B. C. Goodpasture

“Brevity,” said Shakespeare, “is the soul of wit.” It is the direct product of well-digested and thoroughly-systematized knowledge. **“He that hath knowledge spareth his words”** (Pro. 17:27). A short saying may contain much wisdom. The finest things in literature, both sacred and secular, are characterized by brevity. Take for example the Sermon on the Mount, Paul’s panegyric on love, and Lincoln’s Gettysburg speech. If one would have his words penetrate, he must concentrate. Even the rays of the sun have power to strike fire only when they are converged and concentrated.

On the other hand, long-drawn and tedious disquisitions are not regarded as necessary evidence either of superior learning or of unusual ability. They may betray a lack of these. **“For a dream cometh with a multitude of business, and a fool’s voice with a multitude of words”** (Ecc. 5:3). An abundance of leaves will not make up for a lack of fruit. The fig tree that was cursed bore leaves. Not much can be said for any writing whose chief quality is length. Length, however, is not a vice within itself. It may be justifiable, but not always.

The articles that are shortest, other things being equal, are likely to be printed first and read most frequently. Brother, boil it down!

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE

There are some things which cannot be done. It is folly for man to attempt that which is absolutely impossible. Defeat and ruin will be the certain consequences if he does. Jesus said: **“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”** (Mat. 6:24). No one can go in two opposite directions at the same time. **“How long go ye limping between two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him”** (1 Kin. 18:21; ASV). Between right and wrong there can be no neutrality, no compromise, no fellowship. “He that is not with me,” said Jesus, “is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Mat. 12:30).

“NOT YEA AND NAY”

Paul reminded the Corinthians that his preaching among them had not been **“yea and nay”** (2 Cor. 1:18,19); and that his personal dealings with them had not been characterized by ambiguity and vacillation. In common parlance, he did not “run with the fox and hunt with the dogs,” he did not “blow hot and cold,” he did not “talk out of both sides of his mouth,” he did not teach one thing here and

something else there, like some moderns. Some at Corinth, probably the Judaizers, the first century hobby riders, had charged him with fickleness. "Their content ion was that he would affirm and deny the same thing; that, like an unprincipled politician, there was no dependence in his word" (Lipscomb).

For different reasons persons speak in ambiguous language and take contradictory positions. Sometimes they do not like to be "put on the spot," they want to be "all things to all men" in that they seem to agree, always with present company. They are like Bob Taylor's school teacher, who, when asked by the school commissioners whether he believed the earth was round or flat, replied that he knew both systems and was prepared to teach whichever they wanted. They speak in ambiguous language so that they can "save face" in any situation! They remind one of the pagan "prophets" who kept the ancient oracles. According to Herodotus, when Croesus, king of Lydia, consulted the Delphic oracle, he was told that he would "destroy a mighty power." He thought this meant that he would crush the Persians; but instead he suffered a humiliating defeat. But the keepers of the oracles were safe—they did not say

which "mighty power" he would destroy. Likewise when Maxentius was about to join Constantine in battle on the banks of the Yellow Tiber, he consulted the Sibylline Books.

The guardians of these ancient oracles were as well versed in the arts of this world as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him the prudent answer, which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation, whatever should be the chance of arms.

They told Maxentius that on the day of battle "the enemy of Rome would perish." It turned out that Maxentius lost the battle and was driven from the field; and, in flight back to Rome, was shoved from the Milvian bridge and drowned in the Tiber. But the false "prophets" were safe—Maxentius was "the enemy of Rome."

But such tactics are unworthy of one professing to be a teacher of the truth. Paul never feared to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). He was not a "reed shaken by the wind," he did not bend with the locally popular breeze. It was not "yea and nay" with him.~

Deceased

THE PREACHER

J. Noel Merideth

The gospel preacher marries the lovers, buries the dead, comforts the afflicted, afflicts the comforted, weeps with those who weep, rejoices with those who rejoice, but above all he is to "**preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching**" (2 Tim. 4:2; ASV). There are many obstacles and pitfalls that the preacher encounters as he endeavors to "**do the work of an evangelist**" (2 Tim. 4:5). There is the dragnet of discouragement, the smear of the secular, the paralysis of pride, the vice of sloth, the snare of substitutes, and the constant buffeting of his body, lest while he preaches to others he himself becomes a castaway. None of us who preach have much room for bragging or murmuring. The distresses of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed.

On the negative side we are sometimes exposed to merciless criticism. We are self-employed and must usually take care of our own insurance and social security. There are many cranks and religious nuts to cope with. There is apparent insecurity. There is the painful sadness of seeing men and women fail to repent of their sins. But on the positive side, there are often the sincere compliments. There are monetary gifts of the brethren, the now better salaries, and favors of professional people. There is association with the best of people, there are roses among the thorns. There is really as much security as anyone else has. For those familiar with the business world know if the man who pays the bills wants a fellow removed there are a hundred ways to move him. The only security anyone really has is God. There are those glorious

moments when a sinner does come in faith to repent, confess, and be baptized. You know the angels and God in heaven are rejoicing. Paul says of the lost **“how shall they hear without a preacher”** (Rom. 10:14). What a solemn responsibility we have!

The preacher must first take care that he is right with God himself before he can hope to turn others to Christ. Paul wrote, **“Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee”** (1 Tim. 4:16). Further, **“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity”** (1 Tim. 4:12). He must beware of covetousness and the love of money. Elders should be treated as fathers, younger men as brothers, elder women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity (1 Tim. 5:1).

Although the preacher is often called upon to play many roles, engage in varied activities, and promote numerous projects, still the greatest task of the preacher is to be a preacher—to study the word of God and present it to his hearers with power, without fear or favor. Preachers must visit and do personal work to be sure; but the preacher who gads about to the neglect of his studies will make both the congregation and himself losers. If the preacher is not “razor sharp” in the pulpit, people just will not continue to come back to hear him regardless of what else he does. To stop studying and buying books is a sure formula for stagnation. No preacher always hits a home run when he goes to the pulpit but he can surely be swinging.

Paul told Timothy, **“Til I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching”** (1 Tim. 4:13). **“Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all”** (1 Tim. 4:15). And, **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (2 Tim. 2:15). It is unethical and unscriptural to **“wrest”** the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16). Handling the word of God is serious business for which we shall give an account before the great Judge (2 Tim. 4:1). So as we elaborate, elucidate, and give an exegesis of a passage, let us make sure that we give the

scripture distinctly, give the sense, and cause the people to understand the law of God (Cf. Neh. 8:8). Never ride a hobby in the pulpit, **“but speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine”** (Tit. 2:1). We need to study the Bible book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and word by word. The ancient gospel is what people need. It is the light to direct us, food to support us, and comfort to cheer us. It is the traveler’s map to heaven, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass and the soldier’s sword.

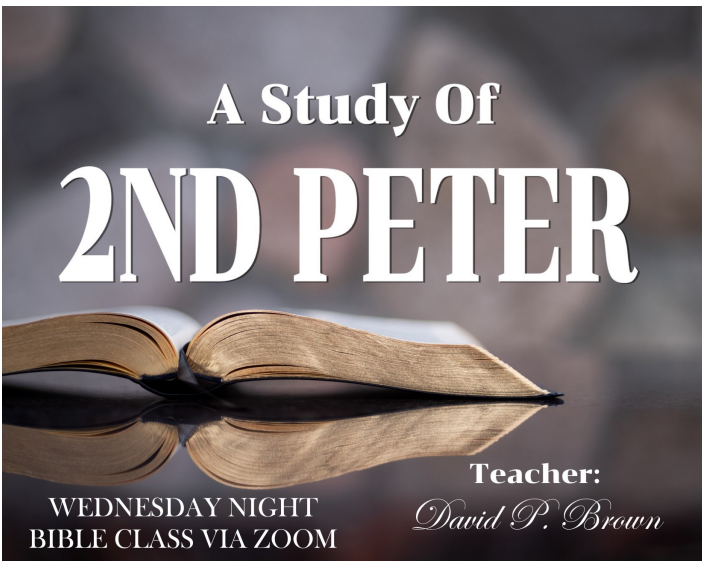
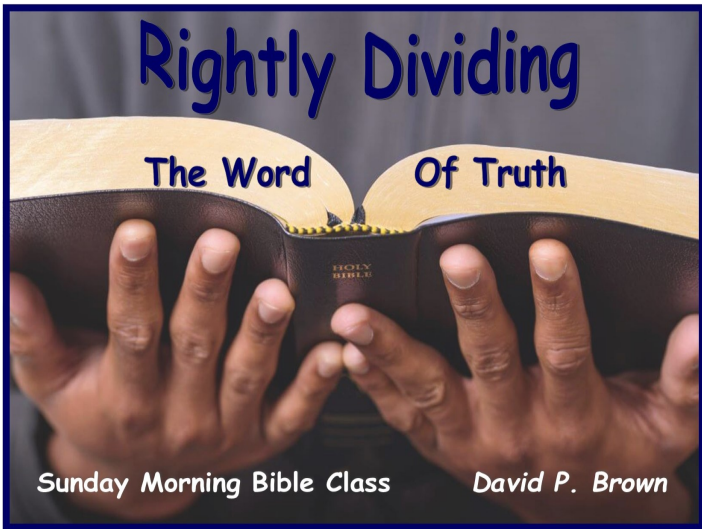
There are people today, as always, who want the preacher to tickle their ears (2 Tim. 4:3), who want to be soothed instead of saved (Isa. 30:10). But to come back to our refrain, **“the preacher is to preach the word.”** **“Speaking truth in love”** (Eph. 4:15), declaring unto a dying race **“the whole counsel of God”** (Acts 20:27) and commend people **“to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified”** (Acts 20: 32).

The years quickly slip away. We grow older and see our children mature and make their ways in life. The preacher and his loving wife often analyze the church and fondly remember the fine people they have met. From time to time we take that solemn march to the city of the dead to bury a fellow worker who has fallen to the grim reaper. As we face the lengthening shadows we know that Job was so right when he said, **“When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return”** (Job 16:22). Let each generation of preachers make sure that they commit the gospel to faithful men, who shall be able to carry on and teach others also (2 Tim. 2:1).

And finally, when it comes our time to lay down our weapons, we may say with Paul:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but unto to all them that have loved his appearing (2 Tim. 4:7-8).~

Deceased



TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Who said "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward"?

Answer to last week's question:
Alexandria, Egypt; Acts 18:24

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2025

Announcements	John West
Scripture Reading	Stephen Cohn <i>Genesis 9:1-7</i>
Song Leader	Gary Blasingame
Prayer	Jonathan West/Bret Bailey (AM) Stephen Cohn/Eric Paluka (PM)
Speaker	David Brown
Lord's Table (AM) <i>(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)</i>	
Gary Blasingame	Joshua West
Jonathan West	Stephen Cohn
Lord's Table (PM)	
Bret Bailey	J.D. Gunter
Audio/Video Monitor	Eric Paluka
Camera/Door Monitor	Bret Bailey

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025
(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements	Ken Cohn
Speaker	Eric Paluka
Bible Class Teacher	David Brown

FOR MARCH

Prepare Communion	Oakley
Lock Buildings	West
Prepare Bulletin Board	Oakley

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Josie Contreras, Zack Nero, Edith Young, Cynthia Jackson, Glenn Kryszak, Barbara Perkins, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Debbie Brannon, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Today, March 9th:** CRASE (Civilian Response To Active Shooter Events) Class after 2nd service.
- **Tuesday, March 25th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Sunday, March 30th:** Monthly meal and afternoon singing service
- **July 14th-16th:** Spring VBS