

# Voice of Baptists

*"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."* **Isaiah 40:3**

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## WHAT SHOULD WE PREACH? WHAT DO WE PREACH?

By Paul L. Cofer  
Bolivar, MO

***"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake."***

**2nd Corinthians 4:5**

The responsibility of the preaching of the Gospel involves such a great stewardship. We as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ will be held accountable of what we preach and the spirit and motivation of heart in which we preach. And while at times we walk away from a closing Sunday service or revival effort self-satisfied, have we really preached the word of God? Have we diligently applied ourselves to the study of the Holy Scriptures and then humbly submitted our hearts, through prayer, to the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God to direct our thoughts and words to where they will do the most good for the Lord? Beloved, as true missionary Baptist Churches which labor in the "eleventh hour" before the inevitable return of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us also ask ourselves, are we the good and faithful servant(s) who have been faithful over a few things especially the preaching of the precious word of God? Are we holding forth the true Gospel of Jesus Christ or another gospel? (Galatians 1:8-10)

### WHAT SHOULD WE PREACH?

Ezekiel was admonished by the Lord God (Ezekiel 33:7) that as a watchman unto the house of Israel he was to hear the word at the mouth of the Lord and warn them. Had Ezekiel spoken his own opinion, jealous contempt of a fellow servant, or a pet doctrine to use as a club against Israel, it would have been an abomination to the Lord and would have displeased him immensely. What should we preach?

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## "ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU"

Matt. 8:7a

by Harold D. Carver  
Buena Vista, TN



"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:", Matt. 8:7. The Lord Jesus Christ has made a wonderful and clear promise concerning prayer. How many ever prayed and did not get their prayers answered? I am sure that all of us would have to confess that many times our prayers go unanswered. Well, what is the problem? Did the Lord really mean what he said? Most surely He did, as God will not and cannot fail. Something is wrong in such a case and since no fault can be found in God, then the search must begin in the heart and life of the petitioner.

This lesson presumes that we are actively and regularly making an attempt to pray, even though our efforts are not as successful as they could or should be. It is the intent of the writer to explore the

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## Knowledge And Ignorance

by Jerry A. Reynolds  
Davisville, WV

The way of truth is always a narrow one and so the Lord has told us, but it seems that the thinking of man has never been able to grasp that idea in any of the ages past. Nearly all heretical ideas which have been greatly successful in deceiving good men have been developed from an extreme of a move in the right direction. Religious movements are always veering to the extreme right or to the extreme left away from the fine line of truth which the Lord has drawn. No extreme position in which we settle ourselves and smugly take our ease will leave us and those who follow us anywhere but far in error when we finally wake up to the realization of where we are with respect to the narrow way of God. Fortunately for man a providential God has often worked in mysterious and peculiar ways in order to amaze the conceited and lethargic mind and draw it back closer to the truth.

God made man an intelligent creature. Man is able to envision in his mind things invisible and eternal. God is both. God would have man to think upon him. In the fall man lost his inclination to think upon God. Therefore he will not do so without the influence directly from God by the Holy Spirit. Yet fallen man possesses the ability to think, to reason and deduce, to conclude and to project that makes him responsible to his creator for his actions. The fact that God does not hold accountable those human beings who are not developed sufficiently in mind proves this to be the case.

It is a wonderful thing when we find that God has a means of communicating with us directly by his Spirit. When he

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## VOICE OF BAPTISTS

(USPS 423-350)

P. O. Box 572

Huntingdon, Tenn. 38344

Kenneth W. Massey, Editor

### STAFF WRITERS

James H. Smith, Nashville, Tenn.

W. T. Russell, Nashville, Tenn.

F. W. Lambert, Westmoreland, Tenn.

Harold D. Carver, Buena Vista, Tenn.

Jerry A. Reynolds, Davisville, W. Va.

Stephen M. Skinner, Springfield, Mo.

Keith D. Frieze, Springfield, Mo.

### CIRCULATION STAFF

Glynn and Linda Williams

Huntingdon, Tenn.

POSTMASTER: Return all mail to Voice of Baptists, P. O. Box 572, Huntingdon, Tenn., 38344.

### ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU

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Biblical description and demands for true prayer. Thus, a sort of personal prayer life examination should be attempted. There are several reasons for unanswered prayer which we will now consider.

1. Perhaps we are not approaching God in the proper manner. We are unable to approach the Father except through Jesus Christ our Lord. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father," Ep. 2:18. Christ pleads the case by drawing near to the Father and pleading in behalf of men. This fact is well documented in the scriptures. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," Jn. 14:6. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," John 14:13-14. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," John 16:23-24. Again and Again we are told to ask in the name of Jesus Christ. The only way to the Father is thru Him. It is in Christ and He only that we find the authority to approach the Father. If we do not make our prayer in this manner we will be unsuccessful.

2. Perhaps our efforts at prayer are not in the Holy Spirit. Spiritless prayers will go no higher than the sound of our voice. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications," Zechariah 12:10a. "Praying

always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," Ep. 6:18a. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20. In Romans 8:26 we find a wonderful promise, "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." It is an absolute necessity that "Spiritual intercession be made in our behalf because of our weakness and our ignorance.

In our weaknesses the Holy Spirits "with groanings which cannot be uttered" communicates the things in our heart that we can't even phrase into words. Also we do not pray "as we ought" without the Holy Spirit. Many times we really do not know how to pray. For instance a child of God (friend or family) is seriously ill in the hospital, suffering and seemingly no hope for recovery. Should we pray for a complete recovery, or be content for them to go on to heaven? If we will pray in the Spirit He will make this decision for us. Many times our prayers are not answered because they are "Spiritless".

3. It may be that our prayers are not being answered because unconfessed sins are lodged in the heart. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," Ps. 66:18. It is foolish to attempt prayer with unconfessed sins in the heart. Certainly David realized this. In Isaiah 1:11-15 we find an account of a people who were attempting to carry on worship as usual but with sin in their hearts. Note verse 15 and 16. "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: Yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes; cease to do evil." The Lord said you bring me sacrifices, burnt offerings, incense and I hate it. Your efforts weary me. I will not hear you. WHY? Because of their sins. They had unrepented of sins in their hearts. Many times we hear the Brethren of yesterday say, "Things just aren't like they use to be." That's right, but it is not God that has changed. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," Isaiah 59:1-2. The problem of "unconfessed sins" is not a new phenomenon as Ezra recognized this problem and said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up into the heavens," Ezra 9:6. Ezra knew that he could not pray with

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impresses us with such knowledge we know it. Yet it is with the enlightening ability of divine truth conveyed to the mind that we are able to fully understand such impressions. I have met people who were miserably under conviction for their sins that were unsure what the trouble was. They needed to be taught an applicable portion of truth about the convicting power of God and what to do in response to it. I have also met people who had experienced a blessed relief from conviction through repentance and faith who were unsure of what their standing was in the sight of God. Those of us who were taught the way of heartfelt salvation and religion and have also experienced it, tend to think that the understanding of Spiritual things is intuitive with Spiritual experience. Some of it is, and certainly one who has not been made alive through the experience of regeneration has no ability to understand Spiritual matters, but there is much of the understanding that comes from proper teaching of God's word. We are surprised to find as we deal with many people of differing backgrounds how much of a person's understanding including our own has been derived from teaching in addition to experience.

We understand that the word of God has an answer for every question of great importance that we might have. God spoke to us in the fullness of time by his only begotten Son. In a very special manner He made it possible for all ages to have access to "all things whatsoever" Jesus commanded his Apostles. The Holy Ghost later brought to the minds of the Apostles all the teachings of Jesus which he gave during his earthly ministry, thus enabling them to write it down by the same infallible inspiration that enabled the Prophets of old when the Old Testament Scriptures were written. So the New Testament Scriptures were written. Yet God did not say in writing by revelation which writings were to be included in the sacred Scriptures written by the apostles and their companions. The selection of the entire New Testament Bible contents was not made without controversy, and again it was up to intelligent Spiritual minds to make that determination. The intelligent and Spiritual mind can still at this late date confirm that determination by observing the magnificent superiority of these sacred books over other writings also written by Godly men. Through the ages the Biblical writings have frequently pulled sincere and humble Christian teachers and their pupils back from the

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## Ask And It Shall Be Given You

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unrepented sins and neither can we. James said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It might be added that this also refers to a righteous woman, boy, or girl. Many times our prayers are not answered because our sins and faults have not been confessed to the Holy God and His forgiveness sought.

4. Another reason for "unanswered prayer" may be due to "selfish praying," as our petitions may not have the glory of God at heart. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts," James 4:3. This does not mean that we are not to ask God to meet our "personal needs". Certainly we are taught to make such requests, but we are not to ask God to meet "selfish needs". David had the honor and glory of God in mind when he said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart," Psalm 37:4. Luke 12:13-14 introduces us to a man who requested that Christ prevail upon his brother, "that he divide the inheritance with him." The Lord's answer was, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Luke 12:14. The Lord was looking with a penetrating look into the heart of the man and the same Lord is looking into our hearts when we pray. We find another most interesting example of "selfish praying" in Matthew 20:20-22. In these verses the Mother of Zebedee's children came with a special request for her sons. "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." Jesus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask." It seems this sincere mother was not concerned about the Glory of Christ but the glory of her little boys. Many times when we pray our motivations are wrong. Extreme caution must be exercised lest we become "self-centered" in our request.

5. Another reason which should be considered as a possible cause of unanswered prayer is a "stubborn will". "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:", I John 5:14. A stubborn will is manifest in an attitude that is not willing for God's will to be done. All successful prayer involves finding God's will through the Holy Spirit

1 making our request accordingly. Prayer is not talking God into doing something that He ordinarily does not do. The key here is to rely upon the aid of the Holy Spirit. We may have the Spirit through a surrendered and obedient

heart. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," Jn. 7:17. Each child of God should examine their heart and life to search out stubborn and unsundered will.

6. Many times prayers go unanswered because they originate from a heart that is full of spite and an unforgiving spirit. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses," Mark 11:25-26. God will not hear us with such an attitude. God has placed many commands in His inspired Word that we must always be in a forgiving attitude. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent: thou shalt forgive him," Luke 17:3-4. Thus God will turn a deaf ear in such cases of unforgiveness and spitefulness.

7. God may refuse to grant our request because of our insensitivity to the needs of others. Solomon explains this principle, "whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard," Proverbs 21:13. Isn't it interesting that so many of God's children cry to God saying, "Lord, please give me this", or "Lord, please give me that", and yet are so unyielding with their own resources. Some are like a "sponge" in that they only give when squeezed. Many like to quote Paul in Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." But to whom is Paul speaking? He was speaking to those Christians who had so freely contributed to his needs. We note the subject of this address in Philippians 4:14, "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction." They looked after Paul's necessities. Paul then said because you have looked after my needs then God is going to look after yours. God is saying, "If you look after the preaching of the Gospel then I will look out for you." This point needs to be well considered. Prayer is not something that guarantees a "tightwad" can have everything he wants. There is a principle; "give and then receive according to your giving." Christian friend, if your prayers aren't being answered then this might be a likely area for consideration.

Finally, there can be no successful praying without faith. Faithless praying

will always go unanswered. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6. Many times we pray with this attitude, "Lord, I'm going to make this request of you even though I don't believe you are going to answer me." The prayer that is not prayed with a genuine faith in the success of the prayer may as well not be prayed.

In the introduction it was pointed out that this writing is directed to those children of God who **actively** and **regularly** make an effort at prayer. In summary it might be well to add that in the opinion of this writer the number one prayer problem is the **lack of an active effort** on the part of the Christian. All through the Word of God we find the endorsement to regular prayer. The Lord Jesus Christ set an example for us by a prayer life that began in His youth and continued throughout His Earthly Ministry. In fact we find a record where He prayed all night on one occasion. Paul in his writings always encouraged prayer. "Pray without ceasing," I Thessalonians 5:17. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," Ephesians 6:18a. God will hear and answer true prayer!

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brink of devastating errors, while less sincere and humble teachers led many away with their heresies that they created by wrongly interpreting the teachings of our Lord. The sacred writings were carefully preserved, copied, and translated into other languages when needed in order that sound doctrine might be preserved for coming generations. In a time when every copy had to be made individually by a scribe with a pen and ink you can imagine the labor involved in making the Holy Scriptures available to even the teachers among the Christians. As spoiled as we are with ease in our generation it is hard for us to imagine a world where the Bible is not easily available to everyone who wishes to acquire one, but it was until printing became common a few short centuries ago.

We have all heard of the "dark ages" in Europe when the continent and surrounding areas descended into the darkness of ignorance in which it largely remained for a thousand years. It was easy for the usurpers of Christendom to pick up knowledge among themselves

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## WHAT SHOULD WE PREACH?

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There are some that are quick to answer, "Preach whatever is on your heart, just open your mouth and the Lord will fill it with 'preach' ". It is surprising that under such an admonition sometimes the most disgusting and saddest examples of preaching in the name of the Lord is issued forth. Yes, it is very true that we need the presence and help of the Lord to speak in His Name and the Leadership and Power of the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and words. However if our eyes and hearts are upon worldly things, passions, contempts and jealousies of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ or fellow ministers, and we do not endeavor to draw near unto God through much prayer and attendance unto His word, this is what will be preached in our pulpits. If a minister preaches **continually** ignoring the leadership of the Lord in directing the word and continually preaches his views on lust, some aspect of our culture, in a vengeful, vindictive spirit then one can safely conclude that this is on his heart continually and in his eyes continually. But what will point souls to the Lamb of God? What will open the hearts of sinners to their condition before God and what the penalty for sin will be? What will strengthen and edify the Church? Is it not the preaching of the WORD?

(2nd Timothy 2:15, 4:2) The apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul, spoke his last exhortations to a young preacher, Timothy. These should be indelibly ingrained upon our hearts and minds to endeavor to carry out in God's name. Study the precious word of God to shew thyself approved unto God. It is impossible to preach the word if one has not applied himself to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. Prayer, prayer and more prayer must be enjoined to ask for guidance in the task of standing and preaching the Gospel whether on a Sunday, in a revival meeting, or even on a street corner, wherever God dictates the time and place.

No greater message could be preached, especially in this day and time, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached in Power and under the anointing and influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Under those circumstances, the WORD becomes the Sword of the Spirit (Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17) by which God reveals the sin of the soul to the sinner, every hidden unrevealed aspect of a wicked heart is brought to the LIGHT and revealed. The WORD under the Power of the Spirit of God truly at

that instant becomes the WORD OF GOD.

This WORD will convince sinners, mentally and spiritually, of their sinful state before God and their accountability for their sin (Galatians 3:22, Jude 15). This WORD will warn sinners of the penalty of sin (Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:12), and what sin will bring forth in the final analysis. This WORD will exhort and admonish the sinner to repentance toward God and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But how we have need for man tongues to boldly declare and lift up the Lord Jesus Christ before the lost.

Not only to the lost should the WORD be preached, but also to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ for its edification and sustenance. She must be fed a substantial (not a sub-standard) diet that will properly benefit all from the youngest to the oldest member(s), the wayward gainsayer to the very pillars of the Church. (Acts 20:28) Paul declared to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus to take heed to themselves and to **all** the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD**. Self examination as to the stewardship, purpose of the call to the church or vineyard one labors must be carefully considered. If one **continually** "skins" the flock, tells them how weak God's people are these days, what a discouraging time it is, how the 'good-ole days' were better than these, soon the flock will starve and become weak spiritually. Those pastors may find members starting to despair and soon dropping out in attendance to the House of God and service to their Lord.

Young lambs, (newly baptized converts) cannot digest continual meat (strong doctrine) neither will older members fare well on a continuous diet of milk. It takes a balanced diet of the WORD OF GOD for both groups.

In conclusion, recall the first question that was posed. What Should We Preach? It is evident, and surely....hopefully you will agree that the WORD OF GOD and nothing but the WORD OF GOD needs to be preached. But consider the second question that is being posed **now** while a world lost in sin awaits someone to bring to them the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **WHAT DO WE PREACH?**

As God Called Ministers of the Gospel and Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, may we have:

**Eyes (Spiritual and natural) always looking unto Jesus and into the precious Holy Scriptures.**

**Knees bowed in a spirit of humility,  
fervent in prayer  
Hearts drawing near unto the Lord,  
Hands held out to beckon a lost hum  
to seek the Lord.**

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and hide it from the common people. It became in most places the prerogative of the priests to interpret the Bible for the people who were said to be unqualified to understand it. Little to no effort was made to educate the people in any manner except to incite superstitious fear in them so as to keep them the slaves of the wicked priesthood. As this darkness grew darker, the priests themselves forgot the Bible, taught from their vain traditions which grew more unGodly year by year, and ruled the people by fear and by force. The people, being ignorant and illiterate, were helpless to rise above it. Martin Luther testified from personal experience that in the days of his Catholic priesthood before his conversion he observed that "in the papacy (Roman Catholic Church), those who are called masters wholly neglected the Scriptures, and some of them had not so much as seen the Bible at any time." At the same time Luther witnessed that the Waldenses, who were the predecessors of the Baptists and the true seed of the Protestant reformation, "laying aside the Baptist cause in America." (*History of the Welsh Baptists* by J. Davis, page 77) Of him it is said, "His Greek Testament was his favorite companion, of which he was a complete master; his Hebrew Bible next, but he was not so well versed in Hebrew as in the Greek language; however, he knew so much of both as authorized him to say, as he often did, that the Greek and Hebrew are the two eyes of a minister, and the translations are but commentaries; because they vary in sense as commentators do." (P. 81, Davis) In my opinion, the foregoing statement is an exaggeration which might tend to cause all God-called preachers to think that they must learn to read the Bible in the original languages before they can properly minister the word of God. However, the prospect of being able to read the Bible in the exact words penned by the inspired writer is a pleasing one to all that love the truth. Mr. Edwards was very critical of ignorance among the ministry, expecting them at least to master the English language. he said, "an American, with an English grammar in his hand, a learned friend at his elbow, and close application for six months, might make himself master of his mother tongue."