

Thus Saith God's Word

by Rev. Ted Brooks

God's servants will face opposition that will challenge their ministry. In the letters of Paul we find these words: "For the love of Christ constraints us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

"And that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." (II Corinthians 5:14-15)

We want to look and see what it was that would cause Brother Paul to be able to stand, not only to stand but to stay. Earlier Paul had preached "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body; for we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you." (II Corinthians 4:7-12)

Here we have read that which was written by the great Apostle Paul over two thousand years ago even when Jesus Himself predicted or prophesied "Go they way for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:15-16)

The thing which causes Paul to stand and to stay was that he looked "Not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18) And today his sermons just keep going and going, accomplishing more than anyone thought possible.

We would like to think that when God calls us to serve him in vocational ministry his people will receive us, love us and support us. This sometimes does happen, but it is not so in all churches.

There are many reasons for this. Certainly as ministers of the Gospel we have our fair share of poor judgments. We miscalculate the feeling of the congregation. We may overlook someone because of being preoccupied with another's burden of responsibility.

There are those with opposition because there is a group in the church that has determined they will run the church as they have done for years, even if they have to lie.

Preaching does cause pain because the word of God demands a change in us. "Old things are to pass away, all things are to become new." (II Corinthians 5:17) This, my friend, is why opposition will raise its head in your ministry.

The reason any minister will keep on in spite of threats and gossip is because our aim is to please our Lord. Like Paul we are overwhelmed and mastered by the great love of Christ. "For the Love of Christ compels us." (II Corinthians 5:14) "That they which live should not live unto themselves." It is you he hath made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins. (Ephesians 2:1)

Oh my friend, there are times I am perplexed, but I need not be in despair. Like Brother Paul and Abraham of old, when I arrive upon Mount Moriah that which God had demanded of me was made clear, the sacrifice which God had demanded of me, was that which had given me great joy. It is on Mount Moriah, my friend, where you approach the unseen. It is there that our souls are more schooled and disciplined by God. It is on Mount Moriah we shall find that to offer ourselves and to lose ourselves is to find ourselves in God more perfect.

When you study God's word you will find that it was the birth of Isaac that brought him nearer to God. The scripture tells us that God did tempt Abraham, that God placed Abraham under trial. His fear of God was tested by this trial. On one occasion Jesus asked Peter, "Lovest thou these more than me?" (John 21:17) Jesus was pushing for a reply. Peter who do you love, me or these?

It was long before that it had been settled when Joseph said unto his brothers, "As for you, ye thought evil against me but God meant it unto good..." (Genesis 50:20)

It was no accident that Abraham was up on Mount Moriah. It would be here that God would pierce his soul. "He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37)

It was God himself who said "Abraham, take thy son, thy only son..." (Genesis 22:2) This was no thought on Abraham's mind, it was the voice of God. To take his own son upon Mount Moriah was not Abraham's plan. It was not something he had sown into his own mind. It was the voice of God. It was not a Sunday school teacher, not a Deacon, but it was a call from God. How could this be? God calling for the very gift that has caused me all my joy? So Abraham wanted to know the meaning of this sacrifice. So Abraham said "Here am I." Could I ask the question to you, if God were to ask you that which you dearly love, could you give it up and say here am I? "Take now thy son," You see this was his favorite son. Abraham had two sons, but God wanted the one he loved. The scripture tells us it was a three days journey, meaning he could have changed his mind. The reason Abraham did not change his mind was that it was God's voice that said, "Thy son, thy only son, bring him to Moriah." So Abraham prepared the altar, the wood and the knife. His son is with him, but in doing all this Abraham has seen and knows that he has already offered himself. No man can bring anything to God till first he has given himself. That was the offering God was looking for. When the real victim has been offered, God will provide Himself a sacrifice. (Genesis 22:13) My friend, whatever learned truth you have, it shall be tested. It will no longer be lip service saying I go and then not go. My friend, on Mount Moriah is where you will find out that "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6)

Dr. R.G. Lee wrote, "The love of Christ is an inspiring force within and a protecting environment without." What can we say but hallelujah, praise the Lord. What a foretaste of glory divine. God's servants are encouraged by the compelling love of Christ.

Listen, you need to ask the question: whose are we? And why are we here? Life will have its perplexities. We all will have our questions and be unable to explain many of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. What a joy it is to be called up on Mount Moriah to recognize God's servants will live unselfishly because they live for Christ.

Let me close with these thoughts of Brother Paul who faced opposition, accusations of being dishonest and insincere. As we said before, he was held and questioned by false teachers. They got to where they were unimpressed with his appearance and speaking ability and he was accused of being unqualified as an apostle.

Some years ago I witnessed a minister who had been at this one particular church for over forty years. Oh, they did the right things in telling him that they needed another pastor because of his age and sickness, but they did it in the wrong way. He was old and sick but they replaced him with another who was old and sick.

The second old man got sick so they asked the first one to come and preach. It was a sad occasion for the old preacher who for over forty years had labored and now felt no longer needed. That particular Sunday he left and went on out. His back bend and with the love of Christ in his heart, not knowing in that just a few minutes he would hear the call and he replied "Here and I."

Jesus declared, "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." (Matthew 18:7)

OBITUARIES

Eddie Locklear

PEMBROKE-Mr. Eddie Locklear, 86, of 729 Eddie Road, died Monday (Aug. 20).

The funeral was held at 3:30 p.m. Thursday (Aug. 23) at Prospect United Methodist Church, the Revs. Bill J. Locklear, Marshall Strickland and Dell Harris officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Mr. Locklear is survived by five sons, Lee Kermit Locklear, Zeke Locklear and Stanford Locklear, all of Pembroke, Wade Locklear of Lumberton and Leewood Locklear of Maxton; two daughters, Celia Gregory of Burlington and Bonnie S. Locklear of Pembroke; two brothers, Currency Locklear of Lumberton and Fred Locklear of Pembroke; four sisters, Edna Locklear of Maxton, Carrie Jones of Shannon and Mildred Locklear and Ella Bullard, both of Pembroke; 23 grandchildren; 46 great-grandchildren; and five great-great-grandchildren.

Arrangements were handled by Thompson's Funeral Home of Pembroke.

Stacy Hunt

LUMBERTON-Mr. Stacy Hunt, 77, of 1001 Lowe Road, died Monday (Aug. 20) at Southeastern Regional Medical Center.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Thursday (Aug. 23) at Deep Branch Baptist Church, the Rev. James A. Hunt officiating. Burial followed in the Hunt Family Cemetery.

Mr. Hunt was born May 21, 1924 and is survived by his wife, Mae B. Hunt of the home; a brother, William Raeford Hunt, Whittier, Calif;

two sisters, Celia Hunt-Thomas of Williamsport, Pa. and Myrtle Hunt-Kerns of Pembroke; a son, Samuel Hunt of Bonaire, Ga.; two daughters, Marie Hunt-Matson of Vancouver, Wash. and Rita Hunt-Meyer of Whittier, Calif., and eight grandchildren.

Arrangements were handled by Locklear & Son Funeral Home of Pembroke.

Hazel Locklear Chavis

PEMBROKE-Mrs. Hazel Locklear Chavis, 51, of 828 Philadelphus Road, died Tuesday (Aug. 21) at home after a brief illness.

The funeral was held at 2 p.m. Saturday (Aug. 25) at Gray Pond Baptist Church, the Revs. Horace Oxendine and Lindbergh Chavis officiating. Burial followed in St. Annah Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery.

Mrs. Chavis was born in Robeson County on Jan. 20, 1950, a daughter of the late Hubbard and Bessie Blue Locklear. She was a retired employee of J.P. Stevens and was a member of Gray Pond Baptist Church where she was a Sunday School teacher, chairman of the lay leaders and director of the G.A.s and Acteens.

Mrs. Chavis is survived by her husband of 22 years, Jerry Chavis of the home; a daughter, Kerdetta C. Lowry and son-in-law, Mark, of Maxton; a granddaughter, Kressa Lowry; four sisters, Shirley Locklear, Normaie Lloyd, Frances Kerns and Ruth Hunt, all of Pembroke; and several nieces and nephews.

Arrangements were handled by Revels Funeral Home of Pembroke.

FAIRMONT-Mrs. Earlene H. Hunt,

46, of 5948 Pleasant Hope Road, died Thursday (Aug. 23) at McLeod Regional Medical Center.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Sunday (Aug. 26) at Reedy Branch Baptist Church, the Revs. Chester Chavis and Kent Chavis officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Mrs. Hunt was born on Oct. 20, 1954 in Robeson County. She was a member of Reedy Branch Baptist Church.

She is survived by her husband, Roger Dale Hunt of the home; two adopted sons, Dan Hunt and Kendall Hunt, both of Fairmont; father, Edsel "Jack" Hunt of Fairmont; mother, Carrie Mae Chavis Hunt of Fairmont; five brothers, Alex "Son Jr." Scott and Bracy Scott, both of Maxton; Clyde Hunt of Kenly, Larry Hunt of Clayton and Kevin Hunt of Georgia; and six sisters, Maggie Locklear and Genice Hunt, both of Pembroke, Lessie Mae Locklear of Maxton, Rosemary Deese, Elaine McGirt and Angela Hunt, all of Fairmont.

Arrangements were handled by Floyd Funeral Services of Fairmont.

Carl Lambert Jr.

SHANNON-Mr. Carl Lambert Jr., 14, of 118 Fran St., died Friday (Aug. 24) in Southeastern Regional Medical Center in Lumberton.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Tuesday (Aug. 28) in Freedom Assembly of God Church, the Revs. Montana Locklear and David Locklear officiating. Burial followed at the family's home.

Mr. Lambert is survived by his mother, Lisa Lambert; his father, Carl Jones; and stepfather, Danny Hue Jones; a brother, Bobby Ray

Lambert; a sister, Tasha Lynne Lambert; and his grandmothers, Susie Lambert and Velma Jones.

Heritage Funeral home, Red Springs, handled arrangements for the family.

Sallie Oxendine

RED SPRINGS-Mrs. Sallie Oxendine, 92, of 8021 N.C. 710 North, Red Springs, died Saturday at Sun Bridge Nursing home, Pembroke.

The funeral was held at 3 p.m. Wednesday (Aug. 29) at Freedom Assembly of God Church, Red Springs, the Revs. Montana Locklear and David Locklear officiating. Burial followed in St. Annah Church Cemetery in Pembroke.

Mrs. Oxendine was born in Robeson County to the late Alex and Missouri Revels Locklear, and she was a housewife.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Will Oxendine and a son, Belvin Oxendine.

She is survived by five sons, Foy Oxendine and Paul Oxendine, both of Vass, Sim Oxendine of Wagram, Pernel Oxendine of Charlotte and Winston Oxendine of Aberdeen; three daughters, Anna Mae Williams of Vass, Betty Jones of St. Pauls and Frances Oxendine of Red Springs; a sister, Ruthie Brayboy of Pembroke; 27 grandchildren; and 55 great-grandchildren.

Arrangements were handled by Heritage Funeral Home, Red Springs.

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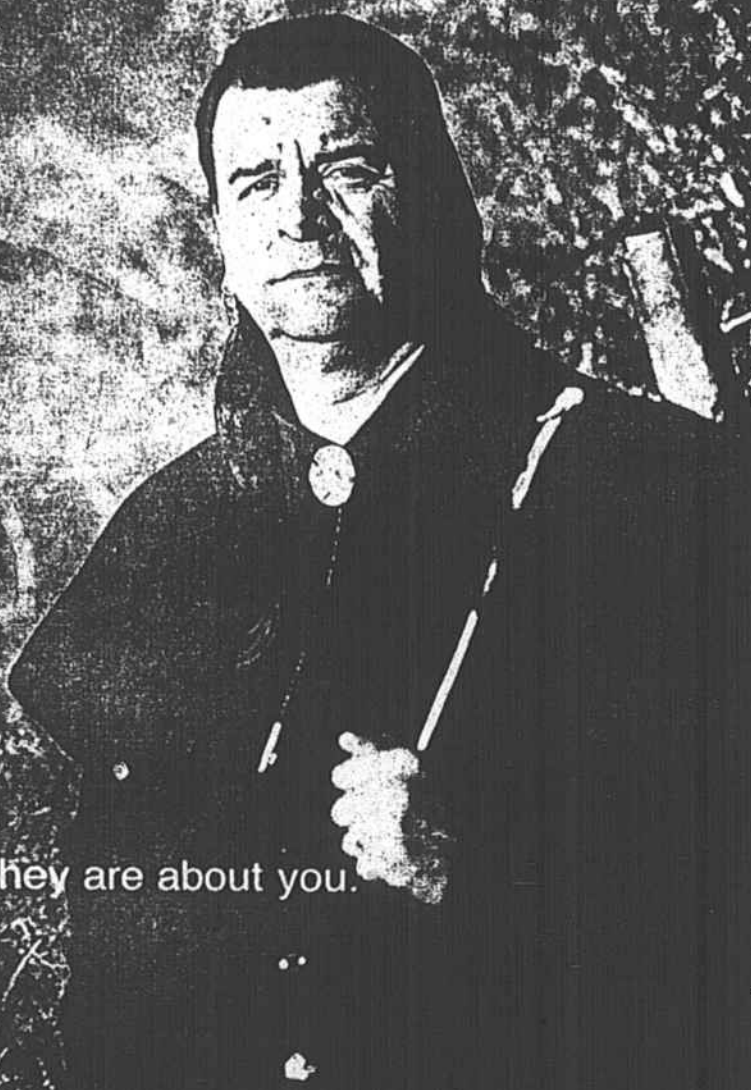
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