

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

June 3

2018

**Editor's Note:** Last week we had an article by John Isaac Edwards dealing with the same problem Donald Townsley deals with in the following article. John's was written a short time ago. Donald's was written many years ago. So we see this is not a new problem but it does seem it is becoming much more prevalent in recent years. I commend the following article to you. (JH)



## "GIVE THE PLAN, PREACHER! GIVE THE PLAN!"

Within the last ten years or so I have noticed a trend among gospel preachers that disturbs me to no end! The trend is to preach sermon after sermon and fail to set forth the plan of salvation! This trend also disturbs many other people -- I know it does because they talk to me about it. A preacher comes to preach in a gospel meeting; the members have invited sinners to hear him preach the gospel, but he never tells them what to do to be saved! God's plan of salvation is so important! Preacher, why have you quit giving it?

Preachers in apostolic days preached the plan of salvation. Philip preached Christ (and the plan of salvation is included in preaching Christ) to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5, 12); Simon was taught the plan of salvation (Acts 8: 13); Philip preached the plan to the Eunuch ( Acts 8: 35 - 38); we know the plan of salvation had been preached to the Romans because they had obeyed that plan (Rom. 6:3 4, 17), and Paul preached the plan to the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-5).

The inspired writers of the New Testament called member's attention to the first principles of the gospel, reminding them over and over of their conversion and the responsibility that was theirs because they had obeyed these first principles. The Ephesians were to remember their baptism to "*keep the unity of the Spirit*" (Eph. 4: 1 - 6) and to preserve purity of life (Eph. 5: 25 - 27). The Romans were told to remember their baptism to know whose servants they were (Rom. 6: 16 - 22). The Colossians were to remember their baptism to keep their affections in the right place (Col. 3: 1 2), and the Galatians needed to remember their baptism to remind them whose children they were (Gal. 3: 26 - 27).

Brother preacher, we need to preach the plan of salvation to every audience because there could be a lost sinner(s) in that assembly who does not understand what to do to be saved, and this could conceivably be the only opportunity he (she) will ever have to learn what to do to become a Christian. We need to clear our hands and discharge our responsibility in presenting the Lord's plan of salvation to those who are lost (Mk. 16: 15 - 16).

We also need to give the plan of salvation because there are children in the audience who are growing up and reaching the age of accountability. We need to keep Christ's plan before their young minds so they can see the importance of obeying it.

When we omit the plan of salvation time after time there is a danger of members of the church becoming weak concerning the plan. They may decide it is not that important and that the Lord will save people without their meeting these conditions laid down in His word.

We should preach the plan of salvation so people can see that the Lord's plan is distinct from the plans of denominationalism. Preachers of the gospel must ever keep before the people how the Lord's church can be recognized from denominationalism by its terms of pardon, its worship, its work, and its organization.

Preacher, how can you claim to have preached the good news (the gospel) in its fullness to a sinner when you did not explain to him how to appropriate this salvation to his life? Why preach

the crucifixion and the blood of Christ if you are not going to tell sinners how to appropriate His blood to their lives so they can be saved? Why preach on the grace of God if you are not going to tell sinners how to receive this grace?

So I ask again: "Preacher, why have you quit giving the plan?" Have you left it off because you know it so well that you think everyone else does too? With a little reflecting you will realize that they do not! Do you leave it off because you think brethren will think you are simple for repeating it so often? You are not trying to please the brethren (Gal. 1:10), you are trying to please God and help save men from hell! Do you leave it off because you don't see its importance? If this be the case, you need to learn its importance! In any field of learning the fundamentals are always important. No man or woman can be saved without first understanding and obeying the fundamentals of the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; John 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:13). So, we say again: "Preacher, give the plan!" The salvation of men depends upon their hearing and obeying it!

✍ Donald Townsley



## “All Have Sinned”

We often hear quoted Paul’s statement in Romans 3:23 where he says, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* Even though this is often quoted, how many of us really think of what it means to each of us.

I fear that some use this statement to minimize the seriousness of sin. Since everyone sins then it must not be any big deal. We need to recognize that Paul makes this statement, not to minimize sin, but to show the need that each and every person has. Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). To be reconciled to God that sin must be removed. This is only accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Others use this statement as a substitute for confessing their own

sins. They see it so much easier to say, “All have sinned” than to say, “I have sinned” and to acknowledge that sin. Several years ago in a Bible class a lady made the statement, “James, we all sin.” I replied, “Yes, name me one of yours.” The lady knew the point I was making and acknowledged such. It is easy to make the general statement, “We all sin”, but much different to admit and acknowledge a particular sin in our own life.

So many times when sin is pointed out in one’s life, rather than saying “I have sinned,” the person will either deny the sin or make every effort to justify their action. One may justify his actions in his own mind, but sin is against God. He knows, and our efforts may please ourselves and give comfort, but only a humble spirit that yields to God and His will results in a cleansing from sin. When sin is pointed out in our life we need to say with David, *“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me”* (Psalm 51:1,2).

Pride prevents many from acknowledging their sins. No person will ever ask that all important question, “What must I do to be saved?”, until they realize they are lost. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5:3).

✍ James Hahn

### Belleville church of Christ

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[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study . . . . .	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship . . . . .	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship . . . . .	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study . . . . .	7:00 p.m.

**Evangelist**