

THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING

JOHN 16:8-11 • TV-030B

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John 16:8-11

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

We are going to do a little plowing today on this telecast. As old Dr. A.D. Muse from Louisville, Kentucky use to say, “We’re going to do a little cornbread and tater-row preaching, (that is plain language).”

I’m speaking today on this subject: **“THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING.”**

Now, I’ve got to have a text if we’re going to preach a sermon. So, we’re going to take **John chapter 16:8** for a text: *“And when He is come He will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.”*

Now my friends, faith is the product of preaching. Preaching is mighty important. Our Lord was a preacher. The word says, *“Our Lord began to preach.”* And the apostles were preachers. Then, when our Lord went back to glory He told His disciples: *“To go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”*

And faith is the product of preaching. Whatever beliefs you hold; they are the results of the preaching you’ve heard. You may not know that, but it’s true; *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

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Now, if you've heard the true Word of God you've got true faith. If you have heard a false presentation or interpretation of God's Word; you've got a faith that's false; it is in a false doctrine. So faith is the product of preaching. That's how important true preaching is.

I'll tell you something else, a knowledge of God is the product of preaching. What you know about God or what you don't know about God is the result of the preaching you've heard. That's right!

What you know about God, about His attributes; what do you know about God's attributes, about His purpose, about His glory, and about His dealings with men. Whatever you know or whatever you don't know are the results of the preaching you've heard.

And then I raise something else; our religious conduct is the result of the preaching. It's the product of the preaching that we've heard, our attitude toward God. If there's no fear of God before their eyes, the God who should be feared has not been preached.

If there's no belief in the power and sovereignty of God, then the sovereign God has not been preached. If there's no faith in a just God and a redeeming God, then it's because a just God and a redeeming God has not been preached.

So what you know about God's dealings with men and God's attributes and God's purpose is the result of the preaching; it's the product of the preaching that you've heard. Now this is true; there's no question about it.

There's something missing in present day preaching. Why do I say that? Because true faith is hard to find, true saving faith is hard to find. And a right knowledge of God; this is eternal life to know God, not just any God, not a God, the true and living God.

That is what Christ said; *"This is eternal life that they might know thee, the true (and living) God."* And there's very little knowledge of God. And there's very little proper godliness and righteousness, it is almost nonexistent.

The dishonest church member is the rule rather than the exception, as it ought to be. You're going to find tares among the wheat. But who'd ever think that we're living in a day when wheat would be hard to find among the tares?

Oh, we've got large church buildings. We've got them on every corner nearly. But most of them stand empty most of the time, that is, except for a beautiful Sunday morning, formal ceremony, called, "a church service."

And we've got millions of Bibles; they're just everywhere. Everybody's got one in his home but they go unread. There are millions of Bibles, but folks don't know what's between the cover. They know there's a book in there called Genesis and maybe one called John and maybe one called Revelation, but they don't anything about the rest of the Bible.

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And then we have moral reformation, but most of it is like the Pharisee's, whited sepulchers, inside full of dead men's bones, appearing beautiful to men but God looks on the heart and God is displeased with what He sees.

We have a superstitious regard for religious things; that's right. Nearly everybody goes to church three times in his life. He goes there as a baby to get sprinkled and he goes there as a young man to get married. Folks just wouldn't think about getting married except in church, you know. They may never darken the door any other time but they go there to get married.

And then they go there to get buried. They wouldn't think about having a funeral without having a preacher. The preacher may not even know the man's name. He may have to read it in the paper.

But they wouldn't think about being married or buried without a church service or without a preacher because they have superstitious ideas regarding religious objects and ceremonies and rituals.

But the rest of their lives they live totally without God, without any thought of God, without any communion with God, and without any faith in God. Everybody believes in heaven. Everybody wants to go there, but a living union with Christ, a day by day walk with God; it is unheard of.

We have orthodox, fundamental, doctrine. Most people believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Most people believe that God created the world. Most people believe that Jesus Christ came into the world and died on a cross, was buried, and most of them believe that He arose again.

And most of them believe that He's coming back. And most of them believe there's a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. But where oh where are the "*new creatures*" in Christ Jesus? Who are those who have been lifted and exalted, those who have been washed and cleansed and made "*new creatures*" in Christ Jesus?

There's something missing. Where is the love for God and love for one another? I'm talking about real, merciful, love, forgiving love, gracious love, and kind love. Where is it?

Where's that joy of the Holy Ghost, that joy in Christ, joy in God, joy in life, and joy in death, that joy which Paul spoke when he said; "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain?*" Where is that?

The world in which I live, even the religious world, is a world of murmuring and complaining, and fault finding, and griping. Where is the peace? There's no peace anywhere today, no peace in the heart, there's no peace in the home, and there's no peace in the church.

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You know that; something's missing. We're products of the preaching we've heard. And our knowledge is a knowledge that we've acquired from listening to preachers. And our attitude and our conduct is the result of the preaching we've heard.

And if this is the result of the preaching we've heard then something deadly is wrong; something is missing. And it's time somebody pointed it out. Where is the peace, where is the patience, patience in trial, patience in affliction and patience in need?

Anybody can have patience when the sun is shining. Anybody can have patience when the bills are all paid and everybody's well and everything's coming up smelling like a rose.

But when the day is dark and the clouds are heavy and the rain is falling and there's no light to be seen; that's when real faith is manifested, patience, waiting upon God, long-suffering, that is able to say with Job; "Well, here I sit on the dunghill, scraping my boils with a piece of glass, broke, but God gave and God took away; praise the Lord."

Where is that? Where's the gentleness and goodness, the kindness? Where's the faith to overcome, to walk with God, every day, through every day difficulties? Where's the humility? It's a forgotten virtue.

Something is wrong. There's a missing note and I think I know what it is. I think it's found in **John 16:8**; and our Lord said this: "*When the Holy Spirit is come He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.*"

What we're missing today is Holy Spirit regeneration, Holy Spirit quickening, and Holy Spirit conviction. Someone said; "Men are saved today who have never been lost, men are built up today who have never been brought down and men are saved today who have never been empty. Men are healed who have never been wounded. Men are given hope who have never been without hope. Men are given grace who have never been guilty." That's what's missing, a real, saving experience.

Men are exalted who've never been humble. They don't know what it is to be humble. Men are given a hope for heaven who have never, ever, repented of sin, and fled to Christ for mercy.

My friend; the Holy Spirit never, never takes a man to Calvary for peace until He takes him first of all to Sinai to be slain by the law. The Holy Spirit never clothes a man with the righteousness of Jesus Christ until that man has been stripped, literally humbled and stripped of his own pride and self-righteousness.

That's what God did to Saul of Tarsus. He was a religious man; but a cruel person. He was an orthodox Pharisee; "*Concerning the outward law I was blameless,*" he said, But he was a cruel man, breathing out threatening's and cursing and going to destroy people for their faith.

What did God do to him? Before God ever exalted Saul of Tarsus He brought him down; He humbled him, He broke him. Before God almighty ever gave Saul grace; He brought him to the place of guilt.

Before God almighty ever raised Saul out of the depths of sin; He showed him he was in the depths of sin. The Holy Spirit never speaks peace to a sinner until he has grieved over his guilt. And that's what's wrong that preachers are going out today crying: "*Peace, peace, when there is no peace.*" There is no peace!

In **Psalm 107**; you ought to read that sometime, that whole chapter. It starts out this way, **Psalm 107**; "*Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, from the north and the south, and the east and the west. They wandered in the wilderness in a lonely way. They found no city in which to dwell. Hungry and thirsty they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distress.*"

First, God shut their mouths. First, God stripped them. First, God humbled them. First, God broke them. And then God spoke peace to them.

Our Lord one time was having dinner in the home of a wealthy, religious, Pharisee. I don't know why the man invited Him there but he did. So Christ went to the home.

And in those days they had a table, a round table in the center of the floor. And the guest would recline while they ate. They would recline on pillows. Their feet would be out behind them. They would be reclining this way while they were eating around the table.

And while He was there reclining and eating a woman came through the door. She was a notorious person. The Scripture says, "*She was a harlot;*" she was a sinner. And she came to the door and she stopped at the feet of Christ and knelt down and began to weep.

And she washed His feet with tears. And then she dried them. She unplaited her hair and she dried His feet with her hair and then she began to kiss His feet.

And the religious Pharisee, a moral man, was sitting up there in his chair. He was watching all that and he turned to someone next to him and he said: "Now; if that fellow was a prophet, if he was really a prophet, he'd know that that woman was a sinner and he wouldn't let her touch him."

And our Lord knew what He was thinking because Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. And He looked up at him and He said; "*Simon I've got something to ask you.*" And Simon said, "*Well; say on Master:*"

He said: "Simon; suppose that a fellow owed a debt of say 500 pieces of gold, an enormous debt, and he didn't have a dime, he couldn't pay, not a cent, not a cent, Simon." And the man to whom he owed the 500 pieces of gold forgave him completely."

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“Now, there’s another man who owed this same person only 10 pieces of gold and he was also forgiven. Now Simon; which one of them will love his benefactor the most, the man who owed him 500 and was forgiven or the man who owed 10 and was forgiven?”

Simon said: “Why, the one who owed him 500, the one to whom he forgave the most.” He said, “*Simon; I came into your home and you gave me no water at the door to wash my tired, dusty, weary, feet. But this woman since I came in has not ceased to bathe my feet with tears.*”

“*And Simon; you gave me no kiss of greeting when I came through your door, not a kiss of greeting, not a warm welcome. This woman, since I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet.*”

“*And Simon you didn’t give me any oil to anoint my hot, weary, head, when I came into your home. This woman has not ceased to anoint my feet with precious ointment. Simon; her sins which are many are all forgiven.*”

Do you see what I’m saying? The mercy of God; where is it? It’s down at the feet of Christ. You’re never going to find mercy until you find yourself there.

Now too many of you, preachers, deacons, and Sunday school teachers, and religious moralists, and self-righteous, religious Pharisee’s, are sitting up there in the critical seat. You’re sitting up there in the righteous seat.

You’re sitting up there and you’ve never been humbled, you’ve never been a sinner, you’ve never been lost, you’ve never been stripped, you’ve never been slain of the Lord, you’ve never been brought through the slough of despond; you’ve never been there. And therefore, you’ll never hear Him say, “*Peace.*”

And that’s the reason they have to get you to sign a pledge card to come to church. If you love Christ; you’d worship Him. “*To whom much is forgiven; they love much.*”

That’s the reason they have to twist your arm to get you to read your Bible; you’re a daily Bible reader. That’s the reason they have to put the pressure on you to get you to come to a prayer meeting once in a while.

That’s the reason they have to serve corned beef and cabbage down at your church to get anybody to come down there to a missionary meeting. It’s because they don’t love Jesus Christ and the reason they don’t love Him, they’ve never needed Him.

They’ve never been lost and that’s the missing note in this present-day preaching. Preachers are trying to get folks saved who are not lost. They are trying to wish Jesus Christ on a bunch of people that don’t need Him.

They’ve never been at the feet of Christ. They’ve never been broken, they’ve never been shamed, they’ve never been humbled, they’ve never been stripped, and consequently, they’ve never been saved.

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Now you can go on playing church until you wind up swearing on a stack of Bibles that you know God while He says; *“Depart from me I never knew you,”* if you choose.

But I pray daily; Lord; break my heart. Lord humble me. Lord strip away every self-righteous fig leaf. Lord; show me who I am and what I am and shut me up to faith in Christ.

**“More love, oh Christ to thee
More love to thee
May I ever be?
More love to thee.”**

Our Lord gave another illustration in **Luke 18**. I want you to listen to this one; here’s the missing note; He said in **Luke 18:10**: *“Two men went up to the temple to pray. One of them was a Pharisee; (that’s the religious, moral, fellow), and the other a Publican, (a sinner, a no-count sinner).*

“And the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God; I thank you I’m not like other men. I’m not like other men are. They’re extortioners, they’re unjust; they’re adulterers. Well, I’m not even like this Publican. I fast twice in the week. I tithe. I give tithes of all I possess.”

“And the Publican standing afar off would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but smote upon his breast and cried: Lord; be merciful to me a sinner.”

Now I want us to look at these two men. And our Lord is illustrating what our problem is today.

First of all: The Pharisee made his way into the temple, right up to the altar, to the holiest place.

He was familiar with it all. He felt that he had a right to be there. He was very familiar with the temple and with holy things. He felt that he had a perfect right. He was a good man, you see, a moral man and a religious man.

He was a man who fasted and prayed and gave alms and tithed everything he possessed. He had a right to be there. He wasn’t like these other people. He wasn’t an extortioner. He wasn’t unjust. He wasn’t an adulterer; he belonged there.

But the Publican stood afar off. He didn’t feel worthy of the presence of the Lord. He was a guilty sinner who felt unworthy in the presence of the Lord and he stood afar off. Someone said, “He left room between him and God for a mediator.”

Maybe he’s like those people over there in **Exodus 20** when Moses gave them the law the Scripture says; *“They stood afar off from that smoking, holy mountain.”* And they said: “Moses; talk to God for us. Don’t let God talk to us lest we die. Get between us and God.”

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And that's what this old Publican is doing; he's standing afar off. He doesn't feel worthy to come stomping up in his natural flesh into the presence of God.

This Pharisee also looked toward heaven. And I'm sure he spread his hands in a manner of obedience. That's the way they use to lift holy hands in prayer. And he spread his hands in obedience and submissiveness to God.

But the Publican would not. It didn't say he could not; it says, "*he would not. He would not lift so much as his eye, (let alone his hands). He wouldn't lift so much as his eyes to heaven,*" his downcast eyes revealed his shame.

It revealed his grief over his guilt. And his downcast eyes showed the state of his heart, ashamed, embarrassed, in the presence of the Lord. He wouldn't lift his hands and his eyes to God, he was unworthy.

What did he do? Well the Pharisee literally denied his sins. There's no confession in anything he says; it's all a self-righteous listing of his good deeds; "I thank thee God that I'm not like other men."

Have you ever heard people talk that way in this day? "Well; I've never tasted a drop of liquor in my life. I've never played a game of cards. I've never been inside a theater. I've never danced, I've never gambled, I've never done anything. Lord; I am so glad I'm not like other people. Other people are awful. They're extortioners, they're unjust, and they're adulterers. Well Lord; I fast and I tithe and I give alms. I'm not like other men. I live a moral life."

"The Publican smote upon his breast." Do you know what that says to me? That says that he knew the source of sin. He smote upon his breast. He looked to his heart. He knew his heart was the source of sin and the fountain of sin and he was smiting his breast crying; "O wicked heart, O wicked heart."

My friend; sin is not just an evil deed; it's an evil thought. Sin is not just hate; it's the absence of love. Sin is not just stealing; its ingratitude or covetousness or dissatisfaction with what God's given him. Sin's not just murder but its envy, jealousy, hatred, and lust.

God doesn't see as people see. God sees the heart. And that's the reason our Lord said; "*Out of the heart proceeds those things that defile a person. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"

He said in **Matthew 15:17-19**: "*What you put in your mouth doesn't defile you; that goes down into your stomach and is cast out into the draught; it's what comes out of here that defiles you; for out of the heart proceeds, out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, false witness, and blasphemy.*"

And here this Pharisee was talking about what he hadn't done and what he had done. And the Publican was smiting his breast crying, "O my wicked heart, O my wicked heart." The reason the Pharisee felt superior to the Publican was because he was blind to the state of his own heart.

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And then watch this, the Pharisee dealt with trivial matters. And that's what most preachers and churches are dealing with today, trivial matters, "I tithe, I fast, I pray, and I give alms."

Paul says that's dunghill garbage. He said, "I did all that before God saved me." He said; "*I was a Pharisee of Pharisees, concerning the law, blameless. I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I acceded many my equals.*" He said those things before God saved him.

But after the Lord saved him, he said, "*I count these things but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him.*"

This Pharisee was dealing with trivial matters. Isaiah called it, "*Filthy rags.*"

The Publican had nothing to say about his so-called good deeds. He prayed about important things. Do you know what he prayed about? He prayed about sin; "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*"

He prayed about mercy: "*God be merciful.*" He prayed about sacrifice; "God; let your blood be propitiation for me on the mercy seat."

This Publican went straight to the Father. He didn't go to a soul-winner or a preacher. He didn't do that. He didn't get sidetracked; he went straight to the Father. He knew what David knew: "My sins are against God. I've got to deal with God."

I've got to deal with God. He went straight to the Father, "*God,*" and he prayed for mercy. I don't know what he knew about the atonement. He'd seen the morning and the evening sacrifice I'm sure, the lamb that was slain.

But this is literally under grief what he's says, "*God accept a sacrifice and show mercy to me.*" That's what he's praying. You ask anybody that knows anything about the Bible and this is what that man said; "God be propitiated toward me in mercy; I'm a sinner."

He acknowledged his sin. He didn't say; "Lord; I'm a reformed sinner, now. I'm a church member. I'm a penitent sinner, I'm a praying sinner, and I'm a white-washed sinner." No, he said, "*I'm a (the) sinner,*" (the, definite article); "*God be merciful to me the sinner.*"

This is the missing note. We don't have any sinners, we don't have any sinners. "A sinner is a sacred thing. The Holy Ghost hath made him so." They're hard to find. A self-confessed, unadulterated, bonafied, genuine sinner, who needs Christ, is hard to find.

You know they complained about Him eating with the sinners and Publicans; but our Lord said, "*I didn't come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost.*"

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Listen to this:

**“Twas for sinners that He suffered
Iniquity, ruin, and hell
Can you doubt that you’re a sinner?
If so, then bid all hope farewell**

**But believing what is written
All are guilty, dead in sin
Look to the crucified Saviour
And hope shall rise thy soul within.”**

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”

If there’s a sinner out there I point you to Christ and I say look to Him and be saved!