

Christ-like Preaching

Gary McDade

God had but one Son, and He was a preacher. When Jesus heard that John the Baptist, his forerunner (Isa. 40:3), was cast into prison he came and dwelt on the sea coast in Capernaum “in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim” for this reason: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4:14-16). The apostle Matthew then recorded, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (v. 17). “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (v. 23, cf. also Matthew 9:35). Why was Jesus preaching the gospel of the kingdom? Because “the people which sat in darkness” and “them which sat in the region and shadow of death” needed that “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

People still sit in the darkness of sin and the “shadow of death” today. “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10-11, 23). All are mortal, and face two certain appointments: death and the judgment. The number of deaths in the United States in a recent year was 2,423,712 according to the Center For Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The Bible says, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Therefore, millions of people pass beyond the reach of the saving gospel of Christ each year, and it is very likely the case that the vast majority of them do so without ever once hearing the gospel plan of salvation.

On a less grand scale, the flow of people in and out of our community is constant. Researchers tell us that the average community population ebb and flow sees 20% of its population move away each year and a corresponding percentage move in. The local congregation must continually be aware of these and other factors in order to keep its evangelistic fervor. In these observation is seen the necessity of more “Christ-like preaching.”

¹www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/deaths.htm