

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

G O S P E L M E E T I N G R E A T E M O R I E S I A N T E N O S P E L E S S A G E

I make a notation “GM” along with the date and place on the paper copy of my sermons to indicate that I preached that sermon in a gospel meeting. It is one of my homemade preacher shorthand notations. Growing up a “PK” (“preacher’s kid,” of course), I’ve got a lot of GM memories. I would not trade anything for them, especially the indelible imprint they made on me in shaping the adult I have become. Let me encourage you to bring your children and yourselves to gospel meetings for what they will mean to your faith and for the part they will forever become. To me, the GM of gospel meeting stands for a few other things, too.

- *Great Memories.* When James Watkins held a meeting for us in 1984 in Franklin, Ga., I led singing that Sunday night. I was 14, and this participation was a big deal to me. I led, “Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah” and in verse three mistakenly bellowed out, “All ye fruitless trees and cedars.” Once when the air conditioner was out, we opened the side doors on either side of the pulpit for relief in that muggy July, west Georgia heat. This was an open invitation for the horse fly that landed on the calf of my leg during the chorus of “the song before our opening prayer,” which bit mercilessly until I could swat it during said prayer (which was by no means a quiet slap).

I remember attending a meeting in Carrollton, Ga., and being jolted by Bobby Duncan’s dramatic cries of “the boy is home!” in his powerful telling of the story of the prodigal son. I remember, though, I was no more than 5 or 6, the smell of hay and watching members set up a portable baptistry for a tent meeting my dad preached in Aragon, Ga. I remember the family car rides when we rode to others’ meetings. I remember the baptisms, restorations, preaching, and fellowship always a part of these special times.

- *Giant Men.* Through this venue I first became acquainted with men who have become my heroes: Frank Chesser, Perry Cotham, J.J. Turner, Howard Swann, James Watkins, Bobby Duncan, Truman Cobb, Franklin Camp, Winfred Clark, Wendell Winkler, Glen Posey, Ken Thomas, V.P. Black and others. I remember playing basketball with Ken Thomas, who had to play in his socks and still took us all to school (he also demolished me in a game of “punt, pass, and kick”). I recall having me heart stirred and being convicted of sin by the penetrating preaching of Frank Chesser.

I vividly recollect being amazed by Perry Cotham, who seemed to me even two decades ago to be a very old preacher. I will never forget being touched by Franklin Camp’s tender heart as he told the story of Christ’s crucifixion. I was wowed by J.J. Turners ability to turn a phrase. There was the time when I walked by James Watkins’ hotel room and saw him diligently studying his Bible in the middle of the afternoon. These men were spiritual giants to me.

- *Gospel Message.* Even as a child, I learned so much from the sermons I heard. I saw things in a new way because every preacher has his own unique style, history of study, and method of delivery. I was challenged by the Bible-centered book, chapter, and verse approach these men faithfully took. I got my first climpse at sermon organization, taking crude notes and main points from sermonic masterpieces. Meeting after meeting, year after year turned my heart and mind more and more on the Bible. Even then, I saw, at least to a juvenile degree, the effectiveness of this method of evangelism

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

GOD’S REDEMPTIVE BLESSING

Text: _____

I. The _____ of God’s Redemptive Blessing

Notes:

II. The _____ of God’s Redemptive Blessing

Notes:

III. The _____ of God’s Redemptive Blessing

Notes:

HAVING A MOMENTOUS MEETING

Text: _____

I. Be _____

Notes:

II. Be _____

Notes:

III. Be _____

Notes:

IV. Be _____

Notes:

and edification.

Give your children, your mate, your non-Christian friends and neighbors, and yourself the pleasure of experiencing these unparalleled joys. The Godhead and the heavenly host pay particular interest to each service of every gospel meeting. Let us join them there and grow from hearing anew the wonderful story of love. It will stay with you for a lifetime.

-Neal Pollard

WHAT I OWE THE GOSPEL MEETING

When a congregation schedules a Gospel Meeting, it imposes an obligation and debt of dedication upon every member of the entire congregation. Each of us should take a personal interest in the good works of the congregation. We should desire to get the most from this meeting and to help it to do the most good. What, then, will help me reach these ends.

I owe this Gospel Meeting **My Top Priority**. It is the work of the Lord. It will be a supreme effort to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). This Gospel effort will seek to put the Great Commission into greater effect in our lives (Mark 16:15).

I owe this Gospel Meeting **The Priority of My Faithful Presence**. Hebrews 10:25 forbids my forsaking any of the assemblies of the saints. Surely each service of the coming Gospel Meeting constitutes an assembly of the saints. Love and interest in God’s cause will produce ample motivation for my faithful presence at every service. Haphazard attendance surely will hinder this effort. It is hard to expect non-Christians and members from other congregations to attend if the host membership does not make attendance a priority.

I owe this Gospel Meeting **The Priority of My Prayers**. The early church continued steadfastly in their prayers (Acts 2:42). They prayed for the preachers, their brethren, and the lost (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 10:1-3). I owe the speaker my prayers as he preaches the Word in this meeting. I owe those who are lost my prayers for their salvation. Great Gospel Meetings do not occur without much prayer. My personal, private “closet prayer” must be a top priority if this meeting is to be what it should be.

I owe this meeting **The Priority of Practicing What I Learn**. The acid test of any sermon is seen in how must it affect us after we leave the assembly.

Let’s give this meeting top priority. Is not this what our loving God would have us do?

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FOR THIS CAUSE I BOW MY KNEES—2

Considering the amazing and absolute power of prayer, one perhaps questions for what it should be used. Certainly no mature Christian wants to be as a little child who in their innocence prays to God for the newest toy or game. But then on the other hand, no mature Christian wants to deny themselves of the marvelous blessings that can be received because of a life committed to prayer. Where is the middle ground? For what does the Bible teach us to pray?

On one occasion the apostles of Jesus Christ vocally stated their confusion when it came to prayer. As they witnessed their Lord engage in one of His favorite pastimes, they came to Him and said, “*Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples*” (Luke 11:1). Then the text indicates that Jesus immediately said what has come to be known as the model prayer. Instructing His apostles He said, “*When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. They will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil*” (Luke 11:2-4). Knowing the authority with which Jesus spoke, the principles of prayer He gave two thousand years ago are still good today. For what did Jesus teach His disciples to pray?

First, Jesus taught His apostles to pray for the state of the church. Following His glorification of God, the first thing He mentioned in this model prayer was the kingdom. In that day, the church had not yet been established, and thus their prayer was for its coming. Today, we certainly do not have to pray for its coming any longer, but the principle remains true in the fact that we should pray for the state of the church. On various occasions there are additional examples of Paul, in his epistles, stating the fact that he continuously prayed to God on their behalfs. For instance, to the Philippian church, he stated, “*We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you...*” (Philippians 1:3). Prayers should be saturated with petitions for the spiritual strength of the congregations of which we are members as well as for the strength of the church universal. Our prayers need to individually petition God on behalf of various works in which we are engaged. Especially consider events that may be upcoming such as gospel meetings or other evangelistic opportunities and keep in mind that no successful event of that kind comes without plenty of prayer on its behalf. Those whose duty it is to preach and teach on a regular basis need our prayers on behalf of their efforts. The leaders of congregations whether it be elders or otherwise should continually be mentioned. Perhaps much of the state of the church in various places can be blamed on a lack of prayer. So always, when bowing to your knees in prayer, do so for the cause of the church.

Second, Jesus taught His apostles to pray for the will of God. The will of God is something for which many will vocally pray, but something very few actually want to see fulfilled. Why? Because they must involve themselves personally for the will of God fully to be done. The entirety and perfection of God’s will can never be done as long as there are Christians who are lethargic enough to do nothing in His service. God’s will is that every one of His children truly worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God’s will is that every one of His children have a passionate concern for lost souls and thereby teach them the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). God’s will is that every one of His children have a servant’s heart that brings forth fruit by performing benevolent deeds for others (Galatians 6:10). But as long as God has a single child whose indifference hinders them in any of these areas or others, God’s will is not being done. The fulfillment of God’s will takes my personal commitment, and it is with that doubtless devotion that we should pray “*thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*” Paul provided a three point outline as to why we should pray for God’s will, rather than our own, to be done. That three point outline is a three fold description that includes it as being “*good, and acceptable, and perfect*” (Romans 12:2). It is good because that is its ultimate goal—for good to be done to all. It is acceptable because of its goodness that cannot be condemned. And it is perfect because it is without flaw or blemish. Man’s will, on the other hand, is often bad, unsuitable, and flawed. God’s will seeks what’s best for all the world, while man’s seeks what’s best for only himself. To which would you rather entrust the direction of your life and the destiny of your soul? However, when you pray for the fulfillment of God’s will, be prepared for how He might fulfill it. God does not work on our timetable, and neither does He necessarily work according to our “logic.” The fulfillment of God’s will may come in forms we never expect. It will, however, always be good as only God’s will can be. Therefore, when bowing to your knees in prayer, remember not only to pray for the state of the church, but also for the fulfillment of God’s will.

-Andy Brewer
to be continued