**Teach the Whole Counsel**

*by Irven Lee*

Every true Christian is eager to see the truth spread and cover the earth. All who read the New Testament carefully understand that the great mission or commission under which we work is to teach all nations. The gospel is to be preached to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47).

We are allowed much liberty to use many available means of teaching just as we may use different means to travel. The apostles never traveled by car, train, bus, or plane, but we do not sin by using such means today in going to various places to preach the word. He told us to "go teach," but He did not specify a method of travel or a method of teaching. He did specify what we are to teach. He specified that we preach or teach the gospel, including all things that He commanded us (Matt. 28:20). The method of teaching or traveling are general or generic commands, but the Lord was very specific in giving the content of the message.

Some useful teaching is done by sermons delivered to the assembly. The audience on such occasions may be aliens or saints. We should not go beyond that which is written, but there is much truth to cover if we would preach the whole counsel. We should use the best judgment we have in selecting the part of His counsel that is most needed when and where we preach. If one is to speak time after time to practically the same audience, he should try hard to get to the whole counsel sooner or later (Acts 20:26-27). This is very important. The congregation should be fed a balanced spiritual diet and not be given the same few lessons over and over again. Repetition is important, but there are many things to emphasize by repetition.

Some of the most effective teaching is done privately. On such occasions it is possible to learn of the special needs of the one being taught so that time will not be consumed on those things that are already understood. One can deal with the special prejudices and special needs of the listener, and he can deal with the questions that the learner is ready to ask. When one preaches to a large audience, he does not expect to complete the task in one lesson. In a similar way, many hours of study may be necessary to convert one friend or neighbor, but the value of one soul and the joy of accomplishment make it worth every hour that is used in converting one person.

The New Testament itself is an example of teaching by means of written material. Much is accomplished in our generation by written material. One way that even the babe in Christ can help in spreading the truth is by handing printed sermons to those who might read. It is unfortunate that our nation is not a nation of readers. Recreation, television, or two jobs for earning more money cut down on the time for reading. Many complain that the school system graduates many illiterate people today who find reading difficult and unpleasant. There are many that may be taught much truth by the printed page. Let us use this method freely.

Whom are we to teach? Every creature in all the world. What are we to teach? The whole counsel of God. Should we be discouraged by thinking of the amazing assignment? It would not be as impossible as it sounds if we could capture the spirit of the early Christians. When one was taught, he was to begin his struggle to become a teacher (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 8:4). In a few decades, the word had been carried from nation to nation in a persecuting world that offered only slow means of travel and with no radio, television or printing press. Look at what they did and marvel (Col. 1:23). A snowball that a person can hold in his hand can become huge by rolling it in the snow. When Paul and one companion would start out to go into a pagan world, the number of skilled workers would start multiplying. There would soon be Timothy, Luke, Titus, and many others along with the two who went out from Antioch (Acts 20:4; Phile. 1, 2, 23, 24). Too many continue to sit and be taught rather than to become teachers.

Teachers of the word are not all men who spend their whole time preaching to assemblies while receiving full support from the church. Each church needs elders that are apt to teach, and there is a need for qualified teachers for the classes. Many of us have been helped very much in well-taught classes. On the other hand there are many classes that are not well taught. Those who are excellent teachers of the word do both public and private teaching (Acts 20:20). Should not each faithful man become a teacher? Should women forget their job to teach women and children (1 Tim. 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; Titus 2:3-5)?

From “**Have Ye Not Read?**” (*by Hoyt Houchen*)

**Question:** Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 3:11, "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me." How is is that the Lord delivered him out of them all, yet he endured them?

**Reply:** The Greek word for delivered is from *rhuomai* and means rescued. The same word is used in Matt. 27:43 when the enemies of Jesus passed by the cross and railed on him, saying, "He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now…." The word is also used with reference to Paul's deliverance from this body of death (Rom. 7:24), to his deliverance from the mouth of the lion (2 Tim. 4:17) and from every evil work (2 Tim. 4:18). The primary meaning of the passage under consideration is that the Lord rescued Paul from the hands of his enemies. Paul was rescued from the hands of his enemies who had left him for dead at Lystra (Acts 16:19). There was yet work for Paul to do.

In another sense, the Lord delivered Paul from these afflictions and persecutions by providing him with the strength to endure them. This is the idea expressed in 2 Cor. 12 concerning his "thorn in the flesh." He had besought the Lord three times to remove it but the Lord told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness" (v. 9). Paul then concluded, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

The Scriptures do not teach that we, as Christians, will be free from afflictions and persecutions (2 Tim. 3:12), but they do teach that God will supply us with the strength to endure them. Neither are we free from temptations, but God delivers us from falling into them by providing the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). It is tragic that we do not always take the route of escape. Paul wrote in Phil 4:13, "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." God supplied Paul with the strength to carry out God's will in spite of afflictions and persecutions. Paul was rescued from the hands of his enemies in some instances, and in afflictions, the strength of the Lord enabled him to endure them. We are not free from trials today, but when we put our trust in the Lord and obey Him, He is with us (Psa. 23:4) and He will supply the strength for us to endure them.