

# The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – **Psalm 119:105**

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## *Preach the Gospel*

Darrell Hymel

If we are making an attempt to restore Christianity of New Testament times, we must not forget to imitate their methods of evangelism and making disciples. If the New Testament is a book authored by the Holy Spirit and, therefore, a book for all centuries, the ways that worked then will also work now.

There is a simple, but yet, dynamic pattern laid out in the Scriptures that will guarantee our acceptance with God as laborers in the kingdom. Our first point to understand is this: our acceptance with God is not dependent upon the number of souls that are harvested, but whether we have planted seed. Paul was just as much a bond-slave of Christ at Athens, where the response was minimal, as he was at Ephesus, where the “*word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing*” (**Acts 19:20**). We must sow the seed “in season and out of season,” when it is convenient and when it is not, when dozens are being baptized and when there are none. How many times have we sowed some seed and then, when we do not see immediate results, we stop laboring steadfastly? How successful would a farmer be if he ceased his labor when he did not receive a harvest immediately after sowing? If we would learn how to measure success, we would not grow weary in well doing. Our job is to plant and water, not to give life. We can no more force a sinner to live than we can force the green stalk out of the grain. Let us sow in faith, knowing that His word will not return unto Him void (**Isaiah 55:11**). The great success story of the church in the first century, which we are to imitate, is not that every person was converted – they were not – but that every creature heard the gospel story (**Colossians 1:23; Acts 19:10**). The key to successful Christian labor today is to “*be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*” (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

The success of Paul’s labors is outlined for us in **Acts 14:21-23**: “*And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the*

kingdom of God.’ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed.” To follow Paul in these five steps will insure God’s approval of our labor and most certainly will produce the same results.

If the results are not the same today, we can be sure that something in this plan is being left out. In my judgment, it is needless to talk about the last four points if we are failing to preach the gospel. Many times, the gospel is not preached as it should be by each Christian, simply because we don’t think it will work in the twentieth century like it did then. Maybe we think it was easier during a time of miracles. It is true that multitudes flocked after Jesus when He fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, but not very many were true disciples (**John 6:66**). Jesus made it plain that if men would not listen to the writing of Moses, they would not listen even if someone rose from the dead (**Luke 16:31**). We must comprehend that, in the first century, the gospel was God’s power to save; and we have the same gospel today. The power is the same, man is the same, and obstacles are the same. If the results are not the same, it is because we are not sowing.

When the Sanhedrin summoned Peter and John, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 4:18**). If the apostles had obeyed that command, the resurrection of Jesus Christ would have had no power, the blood of Jesus would have been shed for naught, the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ would have died right there. No government official has given such a command today, yet the gospel remains locked in our buildings. We must become convinced of this cause-effect relationship: when first-century Christians taught the word, the number of disciples increased. Compare **Acts 4:2** with **4:4**; **5:25, 28, 42** with **6:1**; and take note of **6:7**.

Too often, when our hearts are moved to want to convert the lost, we want to “organize.” ‘Personal’ work begins and ends with a “group” meeting at the building to discuss how to visit a cold, two-year-old list of names. Effective teaching of the gospel in the first century did not result from “grouping together,” but from being “scattered abroad” (**Acts 8:1-5**). We must stop emphasizing “how to” and start emphasizing faith as the chief ingredient of successful soul winning. We need to have the same spirit of faith that was in the apostles: “*We also believe, therefore also we speak*” (**2 Corinthians 3:13**). As important as knowledge may be, it cannot replace the spirit of the Samaritan woman who, with limited

# News and Notes

There is a table in the resource room (under the counter) that the church does not need. Anyone who wants it is welcome to get it.

## Members:

- \* Ken Berry is having a breathing test this week.
- \* Margie Frizzell is still waiting for positive results with her back brace.
- \* Thelbert Frizzell had another bad week this past week.
- \* **Estelle Hayes'** eyes continue to get worse.
- \* Ame White has been in a lot of pain lately. She has an MRI planned for it. She also has surgery planned for her eye.

## Friends and Family:

- \* Benny Gore, **Ame White's brother, had a stroke last week.** He has no feeling in his left side. He is in rehab in a hospital in Bowling Green.
- \* Benji Norris, father of Julie Norris who once worshipped here, died last week in Huntsville, AL. **Julie's address is 5451 Middlebury Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37128.** Her mother's (Mary Jane) address is 207 Stone Valley Dr., Huntsville, AL, 35806.

Absent: None known.

New Reports: None known.

knowledge, said, "*Come see a man*" (**John 4:29**); and many believed in Him because of the word of the woman (**:39**). The simple knowledge of the great need of salvation led Cornelius to "*call together his relatives and close friends*" (**Acts 10:24**). This is the way that works.



*"The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words. I sought Your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to Your word."* – **Psalm 119:57-58**