

## **Positive Preaching**

I like positive preaching. I like to hear it. I like to do it. It is like watching the sunshine glisten on the dewy leaves of the apple tree by my window, fresh from a springtime shower. I appreciate the knowledge that the sunshine and the rain will make the tree grow, bloom and bring the delicious ripened fruit. I know that it takes positive preaching to make the Christian grow in grace and knowledge, blossom in faith and fervor, and bear the delightful fruit of a mature working Christian.

Only one year, however, made me see that it takes more than sunshine and rain to produce a bountiful harvest of golden apples from the tree. I saw that the tree needed annual pruning. It needed spraying or some other natural preventive of disease and contamination of the fruit. Otherwise, a pretty little moth would find a lodging place for its egg in the bloom and every apple would be wormy and ruined.

It took no longer for me to learn that positive preaching is not enough to produce the good fruits of Christians. It takes pruning, cutting away the superfluous growth, the weak limbs, the diseased branches, cross branches which would abrade other good ones. This is after the order of the Lord's parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-8). Some negative preaching and work has to be done to clear the church of such branches; including "strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Corinthians 12:20).

- by **Robert Welch**

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## ***"Truth Does Not Fear Investigation"***

There's a good saying that brethren have used over the years to show our sincerity in what we practice and preach: "truth does not fear investigation." The idea is that if one is genuinely concerned about doing right, he'll not be afraid of someone else questioning what he does. By frequent examinations and regular defenses one is constantly kept "in check." If by an "investigation" one's preaching and/or practice is proven true, great. If however it is proven to be false, there's a since in which this is also great, for now the sincere individual can make the necessary changes to get back on track and be right.

Unfortunately, not everyone is interested in truth. Some are content to go on in their error hoping no one will ever challenge them. If they are questioned, too many write it off as being "bothered" and ignore the "investigator." How sad!

Those fearful of investigation need reminding of what Peter wrote, "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..." (1 Pt. 3:15). When a person gets to the point where they cannot defend or give an answer for what they're doing, it's time to do something else. While error may clam up, get aggravated and run from it - truth does not fear investigation. What about you?!

- by **David McPherson**

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## **Calvinists Caught In A Trap**

There is the idea, taught by Calvinists, that Jesus only died for certain specific individuals. They typically refer to these as "the elect." Furthermore, it is argued that God "irresistibly" draws these people to Himself. And, finally, that these "elect" ones, having thus been drawn to salvation, will be saved regardless of what they do. One famous quote from a Baptist preacher states it this way:

*"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. . . and all the sins he may commit from idolatry*

*to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. . . The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." \**

There are lots of ways to answer this false doctrine, but here is a simple approach that works:

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: *"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14,15)
2. Calvinists would have to argue that Jesus was speaking to "elect" individuals, because He indicated that God would forgive their trespasses.
3. But, LOOK, Jesus also indicated that these same people might NOT have their sins forgiven if they refused to forgive others.
4. So, here is a text that catches the Calvinists in a trap:
  - a) If these were really among the "elect," it would not matter if they forgave others, because God would have to save them anyway – but the text says He will not.
  - b) If these were not among the "elect," then God would not forgive them under any circumstance – but the text say He will.

**- by Greg Gwin**

\* Sam Morris, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Stamford, Texas, as quoted in [The Possibility of Apostasy](#), by C. R. Nichol, pg. 74