

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

January 7, 2018

Balance in Preaching

by Frank Himmel

Looking back on his work at Ephesus, Paul told the elders of that church, "I did not shrink back from declaring to you anything that was profitable.... Therefore, I testify to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:20, 26-27).

As Irven Lee once put it, preachers are just "God's little delivery boys." Our task is to communicate God's word to mankind as He revealed it in Scripture. We do not originate the message. It is not our place to decide which parts are or are not important. We have no authority to edit the message. We have no business either making rules God did not make or dismissing those He did. We dare not ignore instructions that may be harder to practice, or water down truths or requirements that we fear some might find unpalatable (see 2 Corinthians 2:17). If people reject the message, they are rejecting God. "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking" (Hebrews 12:25).

Paul told the Corinthians, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). That means preaching



God's grace and mercy in Jesus, uniquely in Him. It means preaching who and what Jesus is, including the supporting evidences of Jesus' miracles and fulfilled prophecy. It also means preaching what Jesus requires: the title *Christ* refers directly to Jesus' lordship.

Paul's letters to the Corinthians illustrate just how broad the scope of preaching Jesus is. They talk about Jesus' death and the forgiveness it makes possible. They speak of God's grace and our hope of a coming better life. They also deal with "doctrinal" matters such as the two covenants, pointedly condemning

those who teach what is false. They address worship, plainly identifying right and wrong practices. And they have a lot to say about attitudes and conduct in the daily lives of Christians.

Those of us who preach need to watch our balance. We need to preach it all, not just our favorite themes or passages. We need to help both beginners and more advanced students. Our sermons need to be both educational and practical. We must reassure and at the same time challenge—as one put it, "Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable."

Beginning this Sunday, at the first service we will have sermons on the family, then at the worship hour, lessons about prophecies Jesus fulfilled. In between, the adult Bible class will be studying David and his godly heart. *Balanced preaching also requires balanced hearing.* Will you be present for all these lessons? ■

God in the Book of James

by Frank Himmel

The book of James is no theological treatise. It is eminently practical, a book of dos and don'ts. Yet by noting James's various references to God, one gets a clear picture of Him. These include...

God is wise and generous. "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (1:5).

God is infinitely holy. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone" (1:13).

God is the unchanging source of all good. "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (1:17).

God is the one and only God. "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (2:19).

God is both our Creator and our Father. "With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we

curse men, men who have been made in the likeness of God" (3:9).

God is gracious. "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (4:6).

God is sovereign. "Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that'" (4:15).

God is just and able to rectify wrongs. "Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth [hosts]" (5:4). "... Behold, the Judge is standing right at the door" (5:9b; cf. 4:12).

God is compassionate and merciful. "We count those blessed who endure. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (5:11).

We are currently studying the book of James on Wednesday evenings. Won't you come and learn together with us? ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Bruce Williams, Josh Baucom	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Sam Walters	Daven Daniel
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	
LORD'S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mike Zachry	
CUP	Albert Lee Harrison	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Rawland Daniel	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Brian Wilson
CLOSING PRAYER	Justin Candella	Adam Gibson