

Sermon #6

ASK YOUR PREACHER

When Jesus commissioned His apostles, He told them to preach the gospel. Mark records Him as saying to them: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15. Thus, they were limited in their preaching to the things embraced in “the gospel.” They were not allowed to preach anything not in the gospel. On one occasion Paul said: “For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.” 1 Cor. 9:16. This indicates that he had a responsibility to preach, and the woe of God was upon him if he did not discharge this responsibility. But it also shows that he must preach the gospel. He might preach and still not fulfill his obligation. He might preach something besides the gospel. So his duty was to preach the gospel. To have preached something else would have placed him under the

displeasure of the Lord, for Jesus said concerning certain ones: “But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” Matt. 15:9. Preachers cannot serve God faithfully by preaching just anything. If they preach the commandments of men for their doctrine, their service is vain. Jesus said so, and it must be true.

But there is a responsibility also on the hearer. Jesus said one time: “Take heed what ye hear.” So the hearer must be careful lest he be led astray by being taught things that are not found in the gospel. Paul said: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Col. 2:8. To preach human philosophy and the tradition of men, therefore, is not to preach the gospel. Such preaching will deceive the hearer and lead him away from

Christ. On this account, the hearer should be very careful about what he accepts in religion. So I am again asking you to search the Scriptures and to ask your preacher concerning the things he is teaching you. In view of eternity, you owe it to your own soul to make this investigation that you may be sure you are not believing and practicing something unauthorized in the Bible. Let us, then, consider a few other things that deserve such an inquiry as I have suggested.

1. Ask your preacher where the Bible says that foot washing should be done as a public religious service in the church. Not every preacher has been preaching this doctrine, of course, and some of my listeners will not need to ask their preachers about this, but others have been preaching it. And some of my listeners have preachers who have been guilty of this sort of preaching. You

are the ones, therefore, I am requesting to ask your preacher about this. Has your preacher taught you that you should perform this service as a public service of the church? Has he led you to come together in a public assembly and practice foot washing just as you would publicly partake of the Lord's supper? Then he is the man that I want you to go to with the request that he furnish the passage of Scripture that says so. If he refers you to the thirteenth chapter of John, which he likely will do, to sustain his teaching and practice, just remind him of the fact that this was before the church was built. It is often thought that Jesus instituted the ordinance of foot washing in John 13. But he did no such thing. Foot washing had been practiced for hundreds of years before. It can be found as early as the days of Abraham. So Jesus merely performed a service for His disciples such as had been long practiced. The

difference was that in this case the Lord washed His servant's feet, instead of the servants washing the Lord's feet. This was cause of astonishment, of course, and caused Peter to hesitate at the idea of letting his Lord wash his feet.

But your preacher may tell you that Jesus said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet." John

13:14. Hence, he may conclude that this commandment by the Lord is authority for his practice of foot washing today. But I am not asking you to ask your preacher for the Scripture that says disciples "ought to wash one another's feet." I knew that was there all the time. I can find many duties that the Lord's disciples ought to perform one for another. And I knew the Lord said: "You ought to wash one another's feet." So that is not the passage I am looking for.

What I want him to furnish you is the passage that says: "You ought to wash

one another's feet as a religious service in the public assembly of the church.

This is the statement that must be found, for he teaches it that way and leads you to practice it that way. It is no trouble to find proof that the Lord's Supper is to be a public service, for Paul shows that it was done when they "came together in the church." 1 Cor. 11:20. And Jesus said: "I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." Luke22:29-30. But can your preacher produce any such Scriptures in favor of public washing? Ask him to show you where Christians did it when they came together in the church. Let him read the passage that says: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may wash one another's feet at My basin in My kingdom."

Something of this kind must be produced to support the idea that Christians are

to wash one another's feet in the public services of the church. So ask your preacher to produce a passage of this kind.

And while he is looking for it, you might remind him, in case he does not already know, that the only time foot washing is mentioned in the New Testament after the church was established is in 2 Tim. 5:10. Have him read this for you. It says, while giving the qualifications a widow must have to be placed on the care of the church, "Well reported of for good works: if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." Ask your preacher if these are home duties or public service of the church. Washing the saints' feet is classed with bringing up children, lodging strangers and relieving the afflicted. Does Paul mean to say that

mean that strangers should be lodged and the afflicted relieved in the public
worship of the church? Any one can see that these are duties to be performed
at home. And washing the saints' feet is classed with them. So it is a home

last but a moment's time. While he is hunting for it, for evidently he will have to make a search, call his attention to the statement of Christ in Matt. 25:41, 46. In verse 46, we have the statement: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Are not these strange statements if there is no everlasting hell for the wicked? Note that Jesus calls the punishment of the wicked an everlasting fire. Also he refers to it as everlasting punishment. Ask your preacher how a punishment could be "everlasting punishment" if it lasts only for a minute. Jesus contrasts the state of the wicked with the state of the righteous. One will go into everlasting punishment; the other into life eternal. So we have the punishment of the wicked described by the same word that describes the life of the righteous. Both are everlasting, or eternal. The punishment of the wicked is just as eternal

as the life of the righteous. If one comes to an end, so will the other. And with all of this you might read Rev. 20:10: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Does this look like there will be no hell for the wicked? The book says they will “be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Ask your preacher if he could frame an English sentence that would more clearly state an endless torment for the wicked.

3. Ask your preacher where the Bible says a second chance of salvation will be given to men who fail to obey the gospel in this life. I suppose you have heard preachers preach this theory. It is claimed that when the Lord comes the second time, He will set up His kingdom on earth, and all those who did not obey Him during this age of the world will be given an opportunity in

the next age, under much better environments than existed in this age. Then all who wish can obey the gospel and still be saved in eternity. Perhaps your preacher is one of those who have been preaching this doctrine. If so, I ask you to ask him for the text in the Bible that says so, I have been looking for it for a good while, and I have never found it. So maybe your preacher has discovered the passage, and he should be glad for you to question him about it.

I recall a parable uttered by the Lord in Matt. 25 that shows such a doctrine is not true. It is the parable of the ten virgins. It tells of ten virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom. When finally the cry was made that the bridegroom cometh and for them to go out to meet him, the five foolish virgins discovered that their lights had gone out. They appealed to the wise virgins for oil, but were turned away, and had to go back to buy for themselves.

While they were gone, the bridegroom came. And Jesus says: “They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.” Matt. 25:10.

Then the following two verses say: “Afterward came also the virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.” These virgins failed to prepare to meet the bridegroom prior to his coming. When he came, he found them not ready to meet him. When the door had been shut, they came and sought admittance. They were looking for a second opportunity, having failed to take advantage of the first one; but they were turned away without any such opportunity being given. The bridegroom, of course, represents Christ. And the parable shows us that if we fail to prepare to meet Christ before He comes, it will be too late then to try to

get ready. Ask your preacher why these foolish virgins were turned away if the Lord is going to give people a second chance for salvation.

4. Ask your preacher where the Bible says man is wholly mortal. I know that it is often claimed that man is no more than the beast of the field, that no part of him survives the death of the body, and that when he is dead, he is as dead as a dead dog. But if your preacher preaches that, ask him where the Bible says so. Jesus said in Matt. 10:18: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Jesus plainly says that man is “not able to kill the soul.” So if your preacher claims this soul of man dies when his body is killed, just ask him who kills the soul. Man cannot do it, and if it is killed, someone else must do it. Ask your preacher if God kills the soul when man kills the

body. And ask him, if this is so, if it would not make God a partner with man in every murder committed. Yes, I know the Bible often refers to man as mortal. But where does it say he is “wholly mortal.” That is the passage I want you to have your preacher find for you. As your preacher, he is under obligation to do this for you, if he has been preaching such doctrine. So don’t let him rest till he produces the Bible text that says so.