

Hearing the gospel preached is both a pleasure and a privilege

They say that “familiarity breeds contempt.” If so, that is a most unfortunate thing with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. No matter how long we have been hearing gospel sermons and no matter how familiar the words have become, we ought never to let our appreciation for gospel preaching diminish. We ought, rather, to maintain a high level of interest in the proclamation of God’s truth. For us, it always should be true that *hearing the gospel preached is both a pleasure and a privilege*.

It may be that we need from time to time to “count our blessings” regarding the preaching of the gospel. First, we live in a land where we can assemble any time we desire for the purpose of worship and preaching from the Scriptures. Second, we have the financial means to provide comfortable places for preaching to be done. Third, it is easy and inexpensive for us to buy copies of the Bible so we can follow along while God’s word is being proclaimed. And fourth, there is in our country a multitude of men who preach with surpassing devotion and skill so as to engage our interest in spiritual truth. Lest we take these blessings for granted and become lackadaisical about gospel preaching, let us remember that there are brethren in other parts of the world right now who do not enjoy a single one of these good things.

We need to be aware of our need for God’s truth. Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn. 8:32). Without the truth contained in God’s word, we will perish eternally. But we ought to do more than acknowledge our need for the truth. We ought to enjoy hearing it taught. We ought to be able to say with the Psalmist, “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97).

When we have set our minds on things above (Col. 3:1,2), we will truly look forward to any occasion when God’s word is going to be discussed. We will have a keen interest in sermons about God when we have acquired a deep thirst for God Himself: “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God” (Psa. 42:1), and “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!’” (Psa. 122:1).

Monday: 1 Peter 2:1-3

Key Idea: We should be as eager for God’s word as a baby is eager for milk.

Questions for Family Growth: Does a mother normally have to force a newborn baby to drink milk? Why not? In v.3, what does Peter say we can “taste”? In v.2, what does he say the word of God will do for us?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:11.

Tuesday: Acts 10:24-33

Key Idea: Cornelius and his family were eager to hear God's word taught to them.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.24, what people had Cornelius gathered together to hear Peter speak? What attitude did he seem to have? What, in v.33, did Cornelius say he and his friends were ready to hear?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:12.

Wednesday: Acts 13:42-48

Key Idea: In the days of the apostles, some "begged" for more of the gospel to be taught to them.

Questions for Family Growth: Who was it that "begged" that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath? Is it surprising that the Gentiles were more interested in the gospel than the Jews? What do you think might have been some reasons for their greater eagerness?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:13.

Thursday: Acts 20:7-12

Key Idea: If we are truly interested in the gospel, we will not mind if the sermon runs long.

Questions for Family Growth: Why did the Christians in Troas come together on the first day of the week? What else was done while they were assembled? How long did Paul's sermon last? What happened while Paul preached?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:14.

Friday: 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Key Idea: When preaching is from the Bible, it is the word of God and not the word of men.

Questions for Family Growth: When the apostles preached, was it their own message or God's word? How do we know if God's word is being preached today? Regardless of who the preacher is, how should we listen to gospel preaching?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:15.

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