

Equipping The Saints

"...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." ~ Ephesians 4:12

May 1, 2016

1.44

Consider the Apples in a Seed

(By Jerry Fite)

I Remember the thought as if it were yesterday. But over 20 years ago, while flying into Houston after an encouraging week in a Gospel Meeting, I saw all of the housetops and considered the many souls that live around me and in need of the Gospel. I did not have to wonder if they needed the Gospel, for all have sinned and have fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Jesus died for all dead in sin (2 Corinthians 5:14), and the saving gospel message is for all: Jew and Gentile (Romans 1:16). Therefore, with Paul I too felt constrained to do what I can to reach as many as I could with the Gospel.

We know the Gospel is for all and as followers of Christ, we understand our responsibility to spread the seed of God's word to others (Matthew 28:18-20). With the weight of this responsibility on our heart, it is good from time to time to have encouragement that keeps us going. An aerial view reminding me of just how many potential souls are out there to be saved opened my heart to the possibilities. But the thought of counting the apples in a seed is another stimulating thought.

In June of 1996, an article appeared in the Guardian of Truth written by Dennis Gullledge and entitled, "*Can You Count the Apples in a Seed?*" He writes, "*Someone has said that you can count the number of seeds in an apple, but you cannot count the number of apples in a seed.*" The point is you may be able to

count the number of people being saved at a given time, but “*you cannot count the number of good things done in the life of the one person who becomes a Christian.*”

The example given is the baptism of James W. Shepherd. In 1877, an elder of the church was asked about the Gospel Meeting preached by James A. Harding. The elder said, “*Oh brother Harding did his usually powerful preaching, the attendance was fair, but the results were negligible. Only little Jimmy Shepherd was baptized.*”

This “*little Jimmy Shepherd*” grew up to preach the Gospel in New Zealand and Australia in the late 1800’s. His classic work entitled “*Handbook on Baptism*” was published in 1894. J.W. McGarvey said it was “*the best and most comprehensive work of its kind in existence.*” Brother Shepherd also compiled and edited “*Queries and Answers*” containing questions answered by David Lipscomb. “*Little Jimmy*” grew to produce many good things in the Kingdom.

In 1999, Ann Stevens was encouraged by the 1996 article and wrote a hymn entitled “*The Apples in a Seed.*” The third verse reads: “*Do not doubt that someone will believe it, though a hundred hear and turn away, for if only one heart will receive it, through the one, a thousand may obey. It may be a gentleman of ninety. It may be a child of only ten. Sow the precious seed for the Almighty, You can watch it multiply again.*”

“*Who can count the apples in a seed? Who can say how much the fruit will grow? Who can know the harvest of tomorrow? Who can count the apples in a seed?*” Let us spread the word to the next soul!

[Note: This article was originally published in “Glad Tidings,” the weekly bulletin of the Parkview church of Christ.]

Have You Shared the Gospel Recently?

(By Andrew Dow)

When was the last time you had a conversation with a non-Christian about God and the Bible? Have you offered to study with an unbelieving friend recently? How long has it been since you invited a co-worker, waiter, cashier, or the person next to you in the doctor's office to read the Bible with you? Has it been a while? Have you ever done these things?

Sharing the gospel is your job! Just before His ascension Jesus spoke to His disciples telling them, **“Go therefore and make disciples”** (Matthew 28:19). Jesus was not speaking to elders, deacons, or preachers; He was not speaking to older men and women who *“know a lot about the Bible.”* He was speaking to disciples. He is speaking to YOU! Paying an evangelist or appointing elders does not relieve you of your God-given responsibility to find and teach lost souls. *You must do that!*

Sharing the gospel is doable! Many refuse to share the gospel of Jesus because it seems like a daunting task. However, in the eyes of Paul, evangelism does NOT require **“superiority of speech”** or **“persuasive words of wisdom.”** Instead, he summarizes evangelism simply as **“proclaiming... Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”** (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Many well-intentioned Christians think intense *“evangelism programs”* are needed to reach the lost. In reality, evangelism isn't that hard. It simply involves sharing the gospel wherever you happen to be in every day conversations with normal people. *You can do that!*

This week (May 1st-5th) we are studying the salvation that the gospel offers. Let me encourage us all to be here! This is an opportunity to equip ourselves to be able to share the gospel with those around us. *If you're not sharing the gospel, who is?*

Notes:

Saving Lost Souls

Speaker: Jerry Fite

SUNDAY

The Inspired Word Of God

The Lost From God's Perspective

Shod Your Feet With The Preparation Of The Gospel Of Peace

MONDAY

The Power of Fulfilled Prophecy

TUESDAY

Saved Like Cornelius

WEDNESDAY

Philippian Jailor: Baptized Immediately

THURSDAY

The Ephesians: Saved By Grace Through Faith

"Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19-20)