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East Columbus Bulletin

Putting It Into Words

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1-2)

King Cyrus made a proclamation, and he also "put it in writing." We may not be among the great kings of the earth, but we are Christians (Mt 11:11), and we must make our words work for "the LORD God of heaven."

Often **thoughts linger in the air** without ever being validated by speech, to discourage the wrong or to prompt the good.

Thirty years ago a preacher wrote about being in one of those teenage garage bands, at last being invited to play at a local honky-tonk. They were all excited for being recognized and how they might soon be on the road to stardom, until one of them finally blurted out, "But it won't be right." There went the fame, the fortune, the gold records - sacrifices on the altar of godliness - all because a young man had the muster to put into words what they all knew already.

"I-love-you's" really do matter. When a divine mission awaits the actions of Christians, a single "Let's go" can make all the difference in the world.

Times of Services

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Bible Study
10:00 a.m. Worship

Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Other Study and Worship Opportunities

- The Pines/Cady Hills Bible Study -Sun. & Thurs. at 7:00 p.m.
- Young Bible Scholars --To be announced.
- Lady's Bible Classes at YMCA – To be announced.
- Don't forget homebound members can view the Sunday Bible Class live (9:00 a.m.) and Sunday Sermon (about 10:20 a.m.) on Facebook on the public East Columbus church of Christ Facebook page or view afterwards streaming anytime.
- Third Sunday Neighborhood Bible Study – 3:30 p.m. TBA

News and Notes

- **Prayer Requests:** Doug Wheeler, Steve Coburn, Mike Butler, Lee Gallop, and the Andy Elliott Family.
- **Others to Remember:** Lee Gallop will have cataract surgery on December 8.
- **Sick:** The COVID virus has affected many in our congregation including Wade McCrary, Desiree' and Andy Wilson, Mike and Marilyn Lavender, David and Elizabeth Fry, Andy and Jennifer Elliott and their children Sarah and Matthew. Darrell and Dolly Powell, Ed and Nancy Williams, and Dylan Haas have had flu-like virus illnesses. Steve Coburn's sister, Lynn Mignon (Nonnie) Martin suffered two broken legs and underwent surgery for treatment.
- **Deaths:** We were all saddened by the news that Willena Woods passed away November 21st. We also mourn the loss of Elbert Logan on December 4th. Also, former member Carolyn Roberson passed away December 4th in Jackson, MS.

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President Bill Clinton popularized "*a moment of silence*," at a time when a nod for vocal prayers would have been the right direction for the nation. Many of our friends and neighbors do not know how to utter a prayer, thanks to political correctness and concern for the feelings of atheists. Silence is not a good alternative to supplication.

And when it is time for God to be heard, meditation is good; reading is better; but audible reading of the Scripture is best. (Lk 4:16) And, yes, Jesus did have something to say about being ashamed of Him and His words. (Lk 9:26)

Vocalizing authenticates. Paul the apostle quotes from Moses to prove the point. He said we do not have to go into Heaven for the message or go back across the Sea for what God has said, "*But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart....'*" (Rom 10; Deut. 30) The spoken Word is the real thing. God put His thoughts and will into writing anticipating that His Word will be spoken into the ears of our friends and neighbors, our children, our brothers and sisters. The Bible is a timeless public notice overshadowing the proclamations of Cyrus and all other kings.

Paul concludes, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" (Rom 10:17) Peter says that tie knowledge of Christ, the great and precious promises, the grace and peace which come through Christ; all motivate us to live godly lives. (2 Pet 1:1-3) But the message must be put into words. The apostles paid a dear price for the preaching of Christ. When called into question, they said "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*" They put the faith into words.

The Word gives authority to Christ better than a million tanks or fighter jets. The faithful are directed by the commandments of Christ, moved by the apostles' examples, and bolstered by proofs and conclusions. (2 Tim 2:15; 3:16-17)

Jesus asked, "*The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?*" (Mt 21:25) Do you believe that the words of Jesus and the New Testament are from Heaven? (Heb 1:2) To what greater authority will you appeal for right or for hope?

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (Jn 12:48)

Such a **gospel proclamation is worthy of the human race.** Jeremiah's words had a place in the world. (Jer 29:10) He was referenced by Daniel at the close of the days of the captivity (Dan9:2); now by Ezra in the passage above concerning the King's proclamation; quoted by Christ (Mk 11:17), and later in the book of *Hebrews* (chapter 8) concerning another world-changing event, the coming of the New Testament. God's Word will not return to Him void. (Isa. 55:11)

But each generation must have its own Jeremiahs, putting out the Word. Sinners must somehow be told to repent. The humble must somehow be told to confess their faith and obey. (Rom 10:9-17) The Great Commission still says that every person must believe and be baptized for remission of sins. (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 2:38)

Jonah could not count on the Ninevites to do what they already knew to do - repent. God insisted that the message be put into words, and the whole city repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah. His simple message was a catalyst to move a sinful city to do the right thing.

The three thousand who first obeyed the gospel of Christ "*gladly received the word*" however that message was put into words by the humble disciples of Christ who had been sequestered in an upper room, awaiting the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2) The Word was the agent of change. "*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*" (Acts 2:41)

Whether by utterance, shouting, eloquence, whispering, or stammering, it has to be said. As the great defenders of integrity sometimes say, "*Silence is consent.*" Speak out against sin; speak up for the truth; and speak out to your neighbor the things he might very well know already. Let the Word have its effect.

George Hutto, "Tidings", August 2014