

**Teaching**  
John Dicus  
Lorain Avenue Church of Christ (09-29-2024)

Good morning.

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To begin this morning ... I'd like to take the opportunity ... to introduce a new addition to our Sunday morning worship services.

Eddie and I are beginning a series of sermonettes ... short lessons between 10 and 15 minutes in length ... focusing on the basic principles of Christianity and the Church.

We are blessed with such a wide range of needs in the Sunday morning audience.

And it can be challenge ... to figure out what to teach and preach.

In attendance we have a range of ages from young to mature.

We have those who have been Christians a short time ... and those who have been children of God for many years.

We have some ... of various ages ... who are just beginning their Bible learning journey.

And we often have visitors ... who want to know what the Lord's church stands for ... and what we teach here.

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We believe ... that we can all benefit ... from the teaching of the basic building blocks of New Testament Christianity ... in a careful yet simple manner.

We hope to accomplish a number of things by what we propose.

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Let me tell you how we see this working.

Once every three weeks or so ... a speaker will present a 10-15 minute lesson on one of the building blocks. 15 minutes max.

Whoever is normally scheduled to preach that morning will prepare a shorter lesson. Again, 15 minutes maximum.

At the close of the regular sermon ... the "building-block" sermonette will be presented.

The two lessons may coordinate in some fashion ... if possible. But they may not. That will not be a requirement.

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We will build a collection ... as it were ... of these sermonettes ... and have them available ... as a library of easy-to-understand basics.

The first trial of this effort will take place ... the Lord willing ... on Sunday Morning (October 20<sup>th</sup>).

Our first "Basics speaker" will be Bro Alex Svensen. He has graciously agreed to pilot the effort by preparing a lesson on Baptism.

Alex has suggested that he put together two lessons. He's still thinking it through.

One ... the "what" and "why's" of baptism.

And Two ... exploring the resistance to baptism ... and answering the objections to baptism (such as being saved by "faith only").

We hope to appeal to all ages ... yet especially to the young and to those who are seeking something "different" in their religion.

These basic lessons will be made available ... both video and audio format.

So ... in a few weeks we'll get going with this.

Please suggest topics we ought to cover. Of course we want to address the origin, name and organization of the Church. Forgiveness of sins. Prayer. Worship. Giving. Use of the treasury. The Lord's Supper. The second coming. The Judgement.

Your input is valuable. You may have a specific need to learn something. You may have a family member or a neighbor that has questions.

We expect to have to adjust ... to tune things up as we go along.

And we need to be sure all is done in an edifying and orderly manner.

It will take a bit of work. A huge byproduct of this effort ... is being able to give our men more opportunity to develop.

And so, we'll need you guys to step up and teach us.

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I'd like to spend the rest of our time this morning ... talking about preaching and teaching.

This is for everyone ... not just those who stand up before this audience.

Every Christian is a teacher in one way or another.

One may teach a Bible class. Another may teach a co-worker or a family member.

Each of us needs to be confident and have the courage to stand firm.

In **2 Timothy 2:15** ... Paul tells young Timothy ... a young preacher ... "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved ... a worker who has no need to be ashamed ... rightly handling the word of truth."

Be ready ... and be of good courage ... speak the truth boldly concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Use the Word of God ... as a tool you are practiced with ... a tool that you are comfortable with.

Your "go-to" tool. Be like Christ ... "It is written."

Always remember ... we are working **with God** when we teach ... and we are working **for Him**.

Our job is to get the Word of God out there in a way that the hearer is most willing to receive and consider it.

Then God will do His part. It's God who gives the increase. Trust Him. Trust the power of the Word.

Paul wrote in **Romans 1:16** ... "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes ... "

We need to be ready ... to be prepared. So that when the opportunity appears ... we can be effective.

I remember hearing about a man who was being questioned to see whether he was telling the truth. The detective said ... "I believe him. His answers came quick. He didn't have to stop and think about his answers."

Consider this verse. **1 Pet 3:15** ... "Sanctify Christ (set Him apart and give Him a special place) as Lord in your hearts ... always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you ... to give an account for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and reverence ... and in good conscience."

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I hope these following suggestions will help all who teach God's Word.

**One** ... You are an idealist. Don't apologize for this characteristic.

In today's divisive culture ... anyone with firm, unwavering guiding beliefs ... is belittled and called an ideolog. Anyone who stands firm ... and is unwilling to embrace ideas that go against God's will is seen as stubborn and contentious.

Don't waver. Be gentle as Peter says. Be respectful. But don't give in.

You love God and Christ's church. You want to do the very best work you can do ... in service to God and mankind.

Your goals for yourself and for the church are pure and your ambitions are high.

Do not allow anyone to deprive you of those goals and ambitions ... or turn you aside from their pursuit.

You are willing to sacrifice to follow Christ ... and you have "set your affections on things above."

If you find yourself taking flak ... it's a good indication that you're on the right track.

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**Two** ... But you should also be a realist.

It is often hard to find the right balance with idealistic and realistic attitudes. But to some degree, you will need to find a way to do this ... if you are to be successful.

Because of how and where you were raised ... differing experiences ... and other circumstances ... many brethren will not (at least immediately) ... share your concepts regarding your ideals.

You may become discouraged ... and come to the conclusion ... that others are without zeal ... or perhaps they are ineffective or unfruitful ... or worse yet, unfaithful.

In turn, they may think that you are too visionary and without wisdom.

You want them to look into the future ... help guide the church and keep it safe.

They want you to get down off your mountain top and help them get to work and take care of today.

Just as God is "long-suffering" toward us ... you will need to be patient with Brethren.

Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 ... that they had been as gentle among the brethren ... as a nursing mother with her own children. And that they had become very dear to them.

And be patient with yourself. Be gentle with yourself

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Three ... First and foremost ... you are a Christian.

If Brethren do not behave in accordance with Godly principles ... you must still be Christ-like at all times.

When others are angry, you should be calm.

When others frown, you need to smile.

When some become bitter, you ought to find reason for gladness.

If others waiver, you must stand, firm and true ... even if you have to stand alone.

Preachers ... teachers ... members who teach at home ... we're all in the same boat.

We all have the same standards ... the same challenges ... the same ups and downs.

We all have the same work to do.

We all have the same obligations ... just perhaps in different settings.

Some may say that God expects more of a preacher in the pulpit than a member teaching her neighbor.

But I'd not rush to that conclusion.

When we open our mouths to teach God's Word ... God expects us to set the highest possible example before men.

We all need to demonstrate a life of real sacrifice in service to God and mankind.

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Four ... Don't let anyone deprive you of the time you need to read, study, meditate, and pray.

When our minds are filled with divine precepts ... and our hearts are full of the Love of God ... souls can be won to Christ.

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Five ... Allow time.

As we said earlier ... God expects us to teach ... to sow the seed of the Gospel ... not to force an outcome.

Some will not hear.

Some will hear but not act or obey.

Many who are baptized ... may fall away.

The once strong may become weak.

Yet others will hear ... will act ... become Christians ... grow and stay strong.

It is God who gives the increase. Not us.

It is His Word that convicts. It is His Word that converts. It is His Word that sustains.

Give it time.

Or it may bring fruit you see. It may bring fruit far away in time and space ... and you will never know it. Like the wind-born seeds that fly from the trees.

Trust God. Trust His process.

[Story about man who was abusive in a workshop]

[Patty]

Stay firm. Don't drift. Be patient. For sure God is patient with me and you.

Never try to accomplish your teaching objectives by your own eloquence ... or your persuasion ... or God-forbid ... pressure or fear or guilt tactics.

The Word of God is self-sufficient.

**Hebrews 4:12** says ... "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword ... piercing to the division of soul and of spirit ... of joints and of marrow ... and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Trust the tools God has given you to use. Learn to use them well.

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If people need to give more (of their means or time) ... don't try to force them. Teach them how and why.

If people seem to have gone to sleep in the middle of their lives ... wake them up with exhortations ... not criticism.

Remember not to hate the sinner ... but the sin.

Teach with truth ... sincerity ... humility ... and love.

If you are a good teacher ... people may flatter you. But do not let that go to your head. That will be your downfall. Beware of vanity and pride.

Be careful how you respond to criticism. How you respond ... will quickly demonstrate your maturity ... or lack thereof.

Don't be explosive ... indignant ... or defensive.

Accept criticisms graciously ... and use them to better yourself.

Be sensitive to the needs of others ... for you are their servant ... all in service to God in Christ.

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Thank you.

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Invitation

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