



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

February 14, 2016

The Booing Spectators Bill Hall

Have you ever noticed who does the booing at a ball game? It's not the players on the field. They make their own mistakes and they are not inclined to boo their fellow player when he makes his. They are pulling for one another, encouraging, helpful. They play as a team, win or lose as a team. It is the spectators who boo. So it is in every walk of life: it is the spectators who, as a rule, do the criticizing, not the participants.

Unfortunately, in every congregation, there are the spectators and the participants. The spectators never teach a Bible class, preach, lead singing, or preside at the table; they really don't get that much involved in the worship itself. But more often than not, they are the very ones who are found criticizing the preacher or song leader or Bible class teacher. They are the ones who are so embarrassed and incensed when someone inadvertently commits an "error" in his efforts to lead the group. They come wanting to hear something that is interesting and that will make the time fly by. If they hear it, they "cheer"; if not, they "boo."

Not so with the true participants, those who are really involved in the Lord's work. They are the ones "cheering on" that "rookie" who is preaching his first sermon or leading his first song. When a brother attempts to teach his first Bible class, they are looking for ways to be helpful. They are sympathetic; they rejoice in the success of others; they mourn over the sorrows of others; they feel for the one who has failed, make allowances for him, encourage him to try again, and assure him that he will do better next time. They rejoice especially in the development of the young men and women in the Lord's work. They are just as nervous and excited when the young people make their first attempt at presiding at the table or teaching a class as they would be if it were their own children.

How many preachers have decided to move because of the booing spectators, right at the time when the participants were enjoying their greatest spiritual growth? How many elders have planned the work around the demands of the spectators rather than the needs of the participants?

Spectators need to become participants and find out what it's like out there "on the field." Participants need to keep on doing their best, ignoring the "boos" while looking to their all-seeing and understanding "Manager" for approval. All need to be preparing for judgment, where it will be the "doers of the word," not the critics, who will be saved. "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).

Christians, like ball players, make a sad mistake when they listen too closely to the "boo-birds."

If We Believed What They Believed - Gary Kerr

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: Num. 34-Deut. 2

Tues: Deut. 3-7

Wed: Deut. 8-12

Thurs: Deut. 13-17

Fri: Deut. 18-22

One of the reference works I usually keep close at hand when studying any part of the New Testament is the paraphrase translation of J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament In Modern English*. I don't agree with all of Phillips' suggested wording, but I often find his efforts helpful in clarifying some particular passage or point. The translation was originally produced in sections, with the first, *Letters To Young Churches* (Romans through Colossians), being published in London during World War II (it included a preface and recommendation written by C.S. Lewis).

In his introduction to that book, Phillips writes the following about the New Testament epistles and their authors and recipients:

"Without going into wearisome historical details, we need to remember that these letters were written, and the lives they indicate were led, against a background of paganism ... Slavery, sexual immorality, cruelty, callousness to human suffering, and a low standard of public opinion, were universal; travelling and communications were chancy and perilous; most people were illiterate. Many Christians today talk about the 'difficulties of our times' as though we should have to wait for better ones before the Christian religion can take root. It is heartening to remember that this faith took root and flourished amazingly in conditions that would have killed anything less vital in a matter of weeks. These early Christians were on fire with the conviction that they had become, through Christ, literally sons of God - they were pioneers of a new humanity, founders of a new Kingdom. They still speak to us across the centuries. Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved."

That final sentence is profound and powerful -- "Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved!"

Within a generation of the establishment of the church, the apostle Paul could write of those who carried the gospel message that "their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18). Paul wrote about the gospel that it had been preached "in all the world" and that it had been "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:6, 23). This is an incredible achievement -- to begin with a few comparatively unknown and uneducated people (cf. Acts 4:13), and to have a message did not appeal to the "wise", the "mighty," or the "noble" according to the flesh (1 Corinthians 1:26). But they had strong faith and a zeal born of that faith, that caused them to launch out boldly and sacrificially, to the point of being willing to give up their lives for the cause they had taken up. And God gave them amazing success. They were "on fire" for the kingdom, for the gospel, and for the souls of their fellow human beings, believing with all their hearts in the sacrifice and promises of Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of men. Being a Christian and going to heaven meant everything to them, and they wanted "all creation under heaven" to share with them in these blessings.

Do not be deceived into thinking that their achievements were easily accomplished. Right from the start they were opposed and persecuted. When the first of their number was martyred, such a widespread persecution developed that all except the apostles were driven from their homes and scattered abroad (cf. Acts 8:1). But this did not slow them down or dampen their enthusiasm. Wherever they went, they were found "preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). They preached it as they had opportunity, not depending on others (i.e., preachers, elders, etc.) to do the work for them. Each Christian considered him/herself both privileged and responsible to win souls for Christ. Their cause was new -- they were pioneers.

I fear that today we do not appreciate our "spiritual blessings" as they did. It is not our life as it was theirs. We are not spending and being spent for it as they were. To some degree, at least, perhaps we do not "believe what they believed."

"Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved." If we did, I am convinced that God would give us success, too.