

“Is The Lectureship Just For Preachers?”

Gary McDade

A friend in another State recently asked that question. Should an in-depth study of “Restoring the New Testament Church” be reserved for preachers only? Could children possibly benefit from being taught that the salvation which is in Christ is available in one body and only in one body and that unique body is the church of Christ? Could couples dating possibly benefit from listening to a lesson on “restoring respect for unity”? Could ordinary non-Christians possibly benefit from hearing a lesson on “restoring the place and purpose of baptism” and one on “restoring the mission of the church”? Could brethren who have been faithful to Christ for many, many years ever benefit from hearing a Bible study on “restoring the love of the brotherhood”? Could seriously misled brethren in wayward congregations gain encouragement from biblical lessons like “what is the church of Christ” and “the indestructible kingdom of Christ”? Would hearing the subject “the church of Christ: distinctive in destiny” discussed be of general edification value? Or, “is the lectureship just for preachers?” Is the Bible “just for preachers”? Is salvation “just for preachers”? Is the church “just for preachers”? Is heaven “just for preachers”? No, good friend of mine, the lectureship is not “just for preachers.”

Lenwood Luttrell circulated a copy of the *Tri-State Christian Observer* from October of 1976 Sunday that carried a front page article announcing the very first Spiritual Sword Lectureship. The back page presented all the speakers with their topics and even their pictures. We were all very interested in seeing it. Of particular interest in the article were Thomas B. Warren’s comments defending Getwell hosting a lectureship that would focus on doctrinal teaching under the theme “Living Messages of the New Testament.” In the article “Warren said, ‘Recently, I was startled when a

preaching brother told me, “Brethren are tired of lectureships in which **doctrine** is discussed. What they want is ‘how-to-do-it’ workshops. And that is what we are giving them.” My reaction to that is: While there is a place for so-called “how-to-do-it” workshops (the “let’s get the job done” syndrome), it must be noted (1) that **zeal** in doing the job is a part of the **doctrine** of Christ and (a) that if brethren are tired of **doctrine**, then they are tired of **Christ**, for the reactions we make to the **Word** of Christ is actually our true reaction to **Christ himself!** Thus, we not only make no apologies for having a “doctrinal” lectureship, we insist that the only kind of lectureship [that] is pleasing to Christ is a doctrinal one. Come and hear this lectureship which exalts Christ by exalting his Word.”

If brethren thirty-one years ago had paid closer attention to brother Warren’s admonition, surely much of the tsunami into denominationalism experienced by so many congregations of the Lord’s people could have been averted. The historical record shows that many of the “how-to-do-it” lectureships across those three decades constituted step-by-step directions on how to apostatize. In order for the church to continue and to be strong and faithful in the next three decades, the Lord delaying his coming, doctrinal declarations must dominate lectureships, gospel meetings, workshops, and weekly sermons. The first line of defense those who have led the departure away from the truth and into denominationalism had to breach was to succeed in criticizing the doctrine of Christ. The words of the apostle Paul are appropriate here when he wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).