

Equally important with the date of His return, and equally unknown to us, is the date of our death. We do not know when our natural life will end. It could be today, tomorrow, or next week. It most certainly will not wait twenty thousand years! Still, we do not know when it will be. Now if people ignorant of their own approaching death will not live rightly, is it any surprise that something that may yet linger twenty thousand years distant has failed to move them?

In the final analysis, it does not matter when He comes or when we die if we are living rightly. To be prepared for the one is to be prepared for the other. To live rightly is to die rightly, and that is to be with Him in Heaven forever. Are you living rightly? May God bless us all as we study and obey His Word.

— Tim Smith, Dothan, AL



The Northpoint Lighthouse

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THAT YOU MAY KNOW...

Let us pray for...

- Tonya Thatcher**—difficulty with pregnancy
- Judy Reid**—treatment for auto accident injuries (sister in NJ, planning to move here)
- Mike Mallett**—fighting leukemia (faithful brother in Evant, TX)
- Ken Chumbley**—fighting cancer and other physical problems (Gospel preacher)
- Janice Ruffner**—fighting various physical issues
- Ann Henderson**—fighting cancer (Sheri Woodall's aunt)
- Brian Ritter**—fighting rare autoimmune disease (son of Rick Ritter, Gospel preacher)
- Tim Smith**—fighting chronic physical problems from auto injuries (Gospel preacher)
- Richie Aidoo**—Joshua Aidoo's 8-year-old son (fighting seizures)
- Samuel Bagsangi**—Gospel preacher in Philippines we help support
- Joshua Aidoo**—Gospel preacher in Ghana we help support

Records you helped make last week...

Bible Classes	15
Sunday AM Worship	15
Sunday PM Worship	15
Wednesday PM Bible Class/Worship	17
Contribution	\$670.00
Contribution average (2014)	\$833.09

Internet Sermon broadcasts...

Both sermons each Sunday are broadcast, beginning at approximately 10:45–10:50 a.m. and 1:12–1:15 p.m., via Internet through our Website, www.northpointcoc.com.

Assignments...

Bible class teacher for October	Rick Beauchamp
Chairman of Men's Meetings (October–December)	Phil Smith
Preacher, <i>The Lighthouse</i> editor	Dub McClish



The quality of balance lends grace, order, and beauty almost to anything. The work of preaching the Gospel is no exception. God's Word contains descriptions of the balance with which God wants His preachers to preach, and men had better not tamper with it. A good example is Jeremiah's prophetic commission: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). This charge typifies the work God gave to all of the Old Testament prophets. Although uninspired, Gospel preachers of today are God's post-apostolic "prophets." We should not be surprised that the charge to Gospel preachers is very similar to that given to the prophets of old. It is well summarized in the familiar, but often ignored, words of Paul: "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2).

When we analyze these two passages, we will see God's idea of "balanced" preaching. It includes both "negative" and "positive" elements, as men are wont to describe them. The plucking up, breaking down, destroying, and overthrowing Jeremiah and the Old Testament prophets were to do is parallel to the reproving and rebuking Gospel preachers are to do. These terms all relate to what people generally call "negative" preaching, which so many brethren like to criticize. The farmer or gardener that sows seed in a field that has not been cleared of various "trash" plants will have little, if any success with his crop. Jesus underscored this obvious fact in the Parable of the Sower. The thorns in the uncleared ground choked out any sprouts the seed produced (Mat. 13:7).

Many pulpiteers (I hesitate to call them "preachers") have abandoned anything that smacks of what they judge to be "negative" preaching or writing. The steadily increasing cries for "positive" preaching that began in the 1960s paved

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Sunday
Bible Class 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 1:00 PM

Wednesday
B.C./Worship 7:00 PM

the way for much of the catastrophic apostasy the church has suffered (pardon the “negative,” but nonetheless true, assessment of history).

I have grown exceedingly weary of such critics over the years. They display either an abysmal ignorance of God’s requirements of His preachers and/or a rejection of these requirements. God has been **against** sin and false doctrine from the beginning. He requires His people to **oppose** them, also. There is no way one can be a faithful child of God, preacher or otherwise, if he (or she) does not **reprove** and **rebuke** the things God despises. Now should one incessantly reprove, rebuke, and overthrow in his preaching, he would surely be unbalanced. It appears certain, however, that some are determined to eliminate all “negative” elements in preaching (except, of course, their very **negative** protestations **against** “negative” preaching).

Balanced preaching requires “positive” preaching (as men generally describe it), too. Jeremiah was to build and plant, and Gospel preachers are to exhort. It is not enough to overthrow false doctrine. We must erect the Truth in its place. Preachers must not only rebuke and expose ungodliness and error, but they must also exhort men to be righteous. Positive preaching will include the great subjects of faith, grace, hope, Heaven, and love – as the New Testament defines them. However, by the Gospel’s standard, positive preaching is not defined by making hearers feel good about themselves when they need to repent. And just for the record, both of these passages contain twice as many “negatives” as “positives.” Shall we call the Lord’s preaching “unbalanced” because He said much more about The Judgment and eternal punishment than He did about Heaven?

– Dub McClish
Denton, TX

Righteous Anger

At the beginning of His ministry our Lord found an **intolerable** situation. The chief priests in the temple in Jerusalem were allowing merchants to use the “Court of the Gentiles” to sell sacrificial animals and exchange secular money for temple shekels. The priests were showing contempt for the God-fearing Gentiles and for the temple by turning a place reserved for their worship into a **stockyard** and a **bank**. By allowing this they probably got a “cut of the action” from the merchants.

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up (John 2:15–17; Psa. 69:9).

Jesus displayed a side of Himself that His disciples probably had not seen yet – righteous anger or **zeal**. He showed something greater than ordinary anger. He

had found sin flourishing in the temple of God (cf. Mal. 3:1–3). His zeal caused Him to act on behalf of God’s glory. (John 2:17; Psa. 69:9).

As Christians, what sins get us angry?

- Do I get upset when I see my friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers dying without **obeying** the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Do I get worked up when I witness the rampant immorality and ungodliness that fills our television sets, movie screens, the internet and popular culture?
- Do I shake my head in disgust when I hear the old **sinful** cry of denominationalism which declares, “One church is as good as another”?
- Do tears of anger well up in my eyes when I witness religious **liberalism** diluting the power of New Testament Christianity and making it into a modern-day gutless wonder?
- Do I rise up at the spiritual **laziness** of many Christians, which hinders the Cause on this earth?
- Do I get angry and ashamed about my own sins and shortcomings?

Do I get angry enough to **do something**? Jesus did! He did not stand passively by when confronted with sin. He did not just shrug it off and walk away. He did not just tolerate it. The Son of God physically cleansed His Father’s house. The result was that evil fled from Him. “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little” (Psa.2:12).

Likewise, 21st Century Christians must **do something** about sin. We must overcome our fears and face the legions of darkness about us (Eph. 6:12), using the armor God has given us and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). With **love** in our hearts and hatred of sin we must “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

– Roelf Ruffner
Columbia, TN

Living Rightly

We know that “of that day and hour” we are ignorant – and so forever shall remain right up until “that day and hour.” We are given no signs concerning its arrival, no warnings, no pre-indicators – nothing. He will come “as a thief in the night.” That being true, could it be that many, out of sheer exhaustion from fighting against the error of the prevaricating prognosticators, have grown careless in their watching? The fact that we have no signs or indications whatsoever in no wise means that He will not come today!

We do not know when He will come, but we do know that He is coming. It may be today. It could be tomorrow. It could be next week. It could be twenty thousand years in the future. We do not know. Our part is to live rightly. So living, it will not matter when He comes.