

## **Welcome to Our Spring Gospel Meeting! (2618, April 20, 2005)**

It is with much anticipation and great excitement that we welcome you to our Spring Gospel Meeting! If you are a guest with us today, we delight in your presence. It is a genuine joy to have you with us. If you are visiting from the local area, we are especially glad to have you as our guest. We sincerely hope you will visit again during this special effort (as well as during our regular times of worship).

Our very special guest speaker for this series is Allen Webster. Allen comes to us from Jacksonville, Alabama, where he has worked with the great Jacksonville congregation for 10 years. He is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching (1986), Faulkner University (B.A.) and Freed-Hardeman University (M.Min.). He is the founder and general editor of "*House to House, Heart to Heart*" which is currently being mailed to over two million households with each issue (now in its 11th year). He has written countless articles and numerous tracts. He is one of the founders and directors of "*Polishing the Pulpit Preachers' Workshop*", a very popular and practical seminar in its 11th year of existence. He is in great demand as a lectureship and gospel meeting preacher (and when you hear him, you will understand why). It is good to have Allen with us for this series.

Allen's family is accompanying him this week. He and his lovely wife Melissa have four children: Rosa (10), Daniel (4), David (2) and Lois (17 months). It is so good to have them with us for this great occasion.

We will assemble at 7:00 each evening (including Sunday) through Wednesday (May 4) for our services. Allen will be speaking at the Area-Wide Preachers' Meeting on Monday at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting. Afterwards we will have a Dutch-treat lunch together at an area restaurant. He has also agreed to speak for the W.O.W. group at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday. This will also be followed by a Dutch-treat luncheon together.

Again, thank you for your presence with us today. Each visitor is an honored guest. We invite you to stay and eat with us after our morning services today. Come back as often as you can this week.

Eddy

## Let's Uphold Our Great Women (2615, April 10, 2005)

Thus far, our theme for 2005 and current sermon series ("Let's Build God a Great Church") has found us looking into the areas of purpose, vision, unity, leadership, "fellowship", homes, worship and the Bible school program. This past Lord's Day we looked at the subject of women. Of the Shunamite woman associated with Elisha the Bible states, "*And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman*" (II Kings 4:8). Great women have always had a part in the great work of God. Numerous can be named in both the Old and New Testaments. No congregation has a great work without the involvement of great women. Let's uphold our great women:

**Because of their great accomplishments.** Too often we have the tendency to focus on what she can't do and not on what she can do. Certainly, the Bible gives limitations for her work in the public realm (I Timothy 2:11-15, etc.). And, indeed, these restrictions must be respected and obeyed. But, we should never let these overshadow the great work that she can and must do. Great wives and mothers of great men can be pointed to for their tremendous influence, compassion and support. Few men attain greatness without such a woman behind them. Great women of old (Sarah, Ruth, Hannah, Esther, Deborah, Mary, Priscilla, Mary and Martha, Dorcas, Lois and Eunice and others) accomplished so very much for the Lord's cause, often working in the shadows, out of the limelight, simply filling their roles on a regular basis. Every great congregation of God's people will have such dedicated ladies.

**Because of their great abilities.** When God created the world, six times He stated, "It is good." Only once did He proclaim that something was not "good". "*And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him*" (Genesis 2:18). Man (and indeed the world) was incomplete without her. Women of great ability are seen throughout Scripture. Women with tremendous abilities are present in every growing and good congregation. Wise leadership seeks to utilize such abilities in every Scriptural way.

**Because of their great allegiance.** Great women have always had great allegiance: to their Lord, to their husbands and homes, to the divine role that is theirs exclusively. None other can fill the roles that she does. Every man married to a godly woman is made a better man. Every home guided by a godly mother is a home guided by the very hand of God Himself. As the crowning gem of God's creation, made from the finished product and thus even finer, she has captured man's heart with her charm and beauty, determined the course of nations with her values and molded all of life with her steady hands.

If indeed we are going to "build God a great church" in this or any other year, great women will certainly have an integral part. Great ladies of West Side, we commend you for your abilities and willingness to carry out your God-given tasks. We praise you for your part in helping build God a great church. We could never do it without you!

Eddy

## **Time Marches On! (2614, April 3, 2005)**

It is hard to believe, but the first 100 days of 2005 will be behind us in about a week. That means our "First 100 Days Challenge" will be over. This means that those who have completed the challenge will have read the book of Matthew eleven times and are now very familiar with the contents of each chapter as well. Congratulations to each one who successfully completed the challenge.

The completion of this time period also means that we are almost finished with our series on "Let's Build God a Great Church". Because of the lectureship week at Memphis this past week, I was gone on Sunday and did not preach, so today's lesson and next week's lesson will complete this series. This is also our theme for 2005. There are a great many ways each of us can help build God a great church at West Side this year. It's time to roll up our sleeves!

The close of this period also means that almost one-third of the year is gone. It seems only a few days ago we were celebrating the New Year and getting started again after the holidays. Now, Spring break is behind us, and we are all looking forward to Summer. Time marches on. This is a good time for reflection. What have you done to benefit the Lord's Cause so far this year? Have you begun to teach someone? Have you increased your contribution or volunteered to teach a class or rededicated your life to more faithful service? Are you praying more, studying more and worshipping more enthusiastically? Have you written to someone who is sick or visited someone who is lonely or called someone who is down? If now, when do you plan to do these things? Time marches on, you know... at least until it stands still for each of us.

Eddy

## Let's Applaud Our Great Deacons (2613, March 27, 2005)

Our study thus far on the subject of "Let's Build God a Great Church" has found us in the areas of great purpose, vision, unity, leadership, "fellowship," homes, worship, the Bible school program and women. This past Sunday we studied the subject of deacons and saw how very vital they are to building a great congregation. God does not view things as man does (II Samuel 16:7). God sees greatness in service (Matthew 20:26, 28). Deacons are the very epitome of God's golden path to greatness. They are God's special servants. Let's applaud our great deacons because:

**Their work is serious.** It didn't take long for a need for special servants to arise in the first-century church (Acts 6:16). Seven great men were chosen for the task. As a result, the church grew (Acts 6:7). The need for such special servants was permanently established for the body of Christ (I Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1). Theirs is serious work and must be seen as such by them. As in the first-century church, godly deacons make a difference today!

**Of their willingness to serve.** Good deacons have the attitude of Isaiah—"Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). He is a selfless individual. His service as a deacon involves sacrifice on his part. One of his great tasks is to free the elders to be about the business of shepherding the souls of the flock. Great is the need in the body of Christ for elders to get out of the "deaconing" business! In order to build God a great church, elders must do the work of elders and allow deacons to do the work of deacons. When a deacon serve sacrificially, worships enthusiastically, gives liberally and encourages (through word and deed) others to do the same, he is an instrument in the hands of the Almighty in accomplishing His great work!

**Of their worthwhile service.** The word translated "deacon" is a compound Greek word. *Dia* means "through" and *konos* means "dust". Literally then, the word "deacon" means "through dust". He is one who kicks up dust in his service. He is a live wire, a go-getter for the Cause. Interestingly, those first seven (of Acts 6) were appointed because of a problem with unity in the church. There was a murmuring among the people because of the way various widows were being treated. The appointment of these seven men brought about the desired unity, and the work progressed beautifully. This, then, perhaps gives us some insight into the kind of man to be appointed to this work. One who serves God faithfully through the office of a deacon is greatly rewarded (I Timothy 3:13). One who so serves enriches the local congregation of which he is a part. He is a serving instrument in God's hand, the essence of what Christianity is all about.

If God's great church is going to be great in any one place, it must have the full support and participation of every individual and every key component group. Let's support these great men who serve admirably and faithfully in this capacity.

Eddy

## Let's Uphold Our Great Women (2612, March 20, 2005)

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## **Let's Construct God a Great Bible School (2611, March 13, 2005)**

In our series of sermons to begin our theme for 2005 ("Let's Build God a Great Church"), we have studied many key components for making this tremendous challenge a reality. We have noticed the areas of purpose, vision, unity, leadership, "fellowship", homes and worship. As we continued studying this great theme and laying out this great challenge this past Lord's Day, we looked at the in-house teaching work of the church, the Bible school. If we are going to build God a great church here at West Side, we must give some attention to continual growth and development in this area. We are blessed with a number of good Bible teachers and good leaders in this department. However, like each of these other areas, there is always room for improvement. Great Bible school programs are constructed:

**With great preparation.** Each of us is and must be a learner (a disciple) all our lives. Likewise, each of us must also be a teacher to some extent; again, no exceptions. The Hebrews writer stated, "*For when the time ye ought to be teachers...*" (Hebrews 5:12). Notice, there is no "if" involved in this statement. The early church was a teaching church (Acts 5:42; II Timothy 2:2). The great commission commands a continuation of the teaching process (Matthew 28:19, 20). Those who teach in the public arena of the Bible school program must prepare themselves through diligent study, prayer and obtaining and arranging needed materials. The church must provide the means, materials, encouragement and training needed by those who sacrificially give of their time in this program. The souls of the students demand no less.

The rewards of a great teaching program are invaluable.

**With great presentation.** The ancient prophets told of a new day of Christ when the teaching process would be the primary focus (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus stated that it is through the learning process that one comes to God (John 6:44, 45). The primary work of the church is to teach (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). We must provide quality and variety in our teaching program. We must be excited about the Lord's great Cause, and that excitement must be evident in our teaching efforts.

**With great participation.** The value of a great teaching program in the local church cannot be counted. It is valuable to each member, each home, each child and for the kingdom in general. There is no reason why each of us cannot be involved in some fashion. Why is there such disparity between Bible class attendance and worship? Are we studying a different book? Are we reverencing a different God? How will we ever convince the world of the need to obey God and seek the kingdom first when we won't do it ourselves? Constructing an even greater Bible school will demand the involvement of each of us. How about you? Won't you assist in this great endeavor?

If God's church is going to be great here, it is up to us (through His grace and mercy) to make it so. Constructing an ever-growing, ever-greater Bible school program will aid tremendously in the accomplishment of this goal this year. Can we count on you to help?

Eddy