

RESPONSES EVERY SERVICE

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Acts 2:36-42](#). From Roy H. Enoch (8-28-94).
- B. We marvel at the powerful gospel and the receptive hearts that resulted in 3,000 baptisms.
 - 1. Sometimes the question is asked, "Have you had any responses recently?"
 - 2. Some remarked, "It would be wonderful, if we had responses at every service."
 - 3. In this month's *Firm Foundation*, (p. 28), there is a thoughtful bulletin article by Bubba Philips entitled "Responses Every Service."
 - 4. He suggests that everyone responds at each service.

I. SOME MAKE A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THEMSELVES.

- A. They are motivated by the power of the love of God described in His word. They look deeply into the mirror of the "perfect law of liberty" and examine their lives (Jas. 1:21-25).
- B. Their faith is living and active (Gal. 5:6) in doing God's will.

II. OTHERS RESPOND BY GETTING ANGRY.

- A. When Jesus preached the truth, those who rejected it (it conflicted w/their traditions), tried to kill Him (Mt. 12:9-14).
- B. When Stephen proclaimed the truth, they stopped their ears, gnashed upon him w/their teeth, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him (Ac. 7:54-58).
- C. Many today still get angry when the word is preached and it does not fit their religious traditions and church doctrines.
 - 1. But Paul told Timothy to preach the word anyway (2Tim. 4:2-4).
 - 2. Those who sincerely seek the truth will continue to desire to know what the Spirit says.

III. SOME TRY TO IGNORE THE MESSAGE.

- A. In the parable of the sower, Jesus described the hard heart (Mt. 13:4,19). It is like sowing seed on the "hard road." Those will not listen to anything that they do not like.
- B. Paul described the Gentile world as unwilling to keep the knowledge of God in their heart (Rom. 1:18-23).
- C. The world today still rejects God and ignores what they do not want to hear.

IV. A FEW RESPOND BY ACTING IN AN IMMATURE MANNER.

- A. They do not have respect for the Bible as the "word of God."
 - 1. Some claim that their opinions are just as good as what the Bible says about a subject.
 - 2. Some think that the wisdom of men is as good as the Bible.
 - 3. Some think that we can take what we want from the Bible and what we want from man, and do as they please.
 - 4. Some want the worship to please them rather than what God says would please Him.
 - 5. Some are more committed to sports than to religion or to pleasure more than service.
- B. The Bible is to be responded to in a mature manner, w/honesty and sincerity.

V. SOME RESPOND BY MAKING FUN OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

- A. Some ridicule the necessity of doing what God says.
 - 1. They often say that all we have to do is to believe that Jesus is God's Son to be saved. See Lk. 6:46; Jn. 14:15; 1Jn. 5:3.
 - 2. Some say that if we have to do anything to receive salvation, that we would earn it.
 - a. It was earned by the sinless Son of God shedding His blood for our sins.
 - b. We are not trusting Him if we will not do what He says.

- B. Some ridicule the idea of an eternal punishment.
 1. They say that if God is love that He will not punish. But one characteristic of God's love is discipline (Heb. 12:5-8).
 2. God loves us enough to warn us of the consequences of our actions.

VI. MANY RESPOND BY REJECTING SALVATION.

- A. Most of the Jews rejected Jesus.
 1. The Jewish leaders and most of the teachers rejected Him (Jn. 12:42,43).
 2. Many still would rather be popular with the world than w/the Lord (Jn. 7:45-49).
- B. Many of His disciples left Him.
 1. After feeding the 5,000 Jesus preached to them in John 6:66-69.
 2. The false teachers that Peter condemns in 2Pet. 2 were disciples who had left the truth.
 3. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that after he left, grievous wolves would not spare the flock. Some would come from the elders themselves, and lead disciples away, after themselves.

VII. A FEW RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD WITH DOUBT.

- A. They are not sure that they understand and believe what they have heard.
 1. If these love truth, they will study for themselves as the Bereans (Ac. 17:11).
 2. If not really interested they may delay as Felix (Ac. 24:25).
- B. These need to study further until they have faith in the word.

VIII. OTHERS RESPOND BY TAKING OFFENSE AT GOD'S WORD.

- A. The self-indulgent who want to please themselves will not deny themselves to accept Jesus as their Lord or Master.
- B. They often resent anyone telling them what they do not want to hear.
- C. We need to hear the truth and love it enough to accept it.

IX. SOME RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD WITH OBEDIENT SUBMISSION.

- A. The "good and honest heart" will receive the word with readiness and bear fruit for the Lord.
 1. Those who appreciate what the Lord did for them will want to what the Lord wants them to do.
 2. Trusting the Lord means we will do whatever He says w/o having to understand why.
- B. Those who are not children of God will want to do what the Lord says about being saved. (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
- C. Those who really believe Him will not doubt what He says (Mk. 7:16; 8:36,37).

CONCLUSION.

- A. What is your response to the preaching of God's word?
- B. Are we responding to His teachings, or do we reject them?
- C. We respond to every service.
 1. Some stay at home because they are not interested.
 2. Some give an excuse.
 3. Some take offense and say, "Do I have to?"
- D. What will your response be?