

The Terre Haute

SPEAKER

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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SPIRITUAL SHORTAGES

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More than likely, if you've gone to buy something that you needed within the last few weeks and months, you've encountered shortages. Did you know there have been shortages since Bible times? Corn (Gen. 41:57), money (Gen. 47:15), bread (2 Ki. 25:3), and hay (Is. 15:6) are among some of the shortages mentioned in the Scriptures. Amos 8:11-12 says, *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it”* (Amos 8:11-12). Thus we think about spiritual shortages:

HEARING THE LORD'S WORDS. Imagine not being able to find the word of the Lord (Amos 8:11-12). 1 Samuel 3:1 records, *“And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.”* There is no shortage of Bibles today — the word of the Lord is readily available and widely accessible — yet there is a shortage when it comes to hearing what the Lord says. In Deuteronomy 31:11, provision was made for the word of the Lord to be read before all Israel

in their hearing. Just think what could be learned, if the word of the Lord was read before the nation today. Proverbs 28:9 teaches, *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”* Some, like those in Matthew 13:15, have *“...ears dull of hearing...”* the Lord's words. Luke 11:28, *“...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”*

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. In the days of Hosea the prophet, there was a knowledge shortage! Hosea 4 reports, *“... there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land”* (v. 1). *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”* (v. 6). Isaiah 5:13 tells this story: *“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge...”* Jeremiah 4:22 depicts the Lord's people as *“... wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”* Like the Romans 1 Gentiles, some do *“...not like to retain God in their knowledge...”* (v. 28). Paul wrote the Corinthians, *“...some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame”* (1 Cor. 15:34).

GAP-STANDING MEN. The book of Ezekiel tells of a shortage of men to stand in the gap. *“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the*

gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none” (Ezek. 22:30). The Lord's indignation was poured out and they were consumed with the fire of His wrath because of this shortage! How sad, that a man was not found to stand in the gap! Today, there is a real shortage of men who stand in the gap in the service of our Lord! Will you?

LABORERS. The Lord taught in Matthew 9, *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest”* (vv. 37-38). 1 Corinthians 3:9 reveals, *“For we are labourers together with God...”* Some things that should motivate us to fill the labour shortage: Knowing *“... every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour”* (1 Cor. 3:9). Recognizing *“...your labour is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:58). We have to labour to be *“accepted”* of God (2 Cor. 5:9) and *“enter into...rest”* (Heb. 4:11).

GODLY HOMES. The home as God made it at the beginning (Gen. 2:18-24) is in short supply today! The home with one woman for one man for life (Mt. 19:4-6), with the husband being the head and loving the wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:23, 25-30), with the

wife in submission to her husband (Eph. 5:22, 24) with reverence (Eph. 5:33), with children being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), with children obeying and honoring their father and mother (Eph. 6:1-3) is difficult to find these days!

GREAT FAITH. A reading of Matthew 8 makes some things stand out. A centurion had faith that was in short supply. When he besought the Lord on behalf of his grievously tormented servant he said, “... Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed....When Jesus heard it, he marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (vv. 8-10). There was a shortage of great faith as expressed by this man! A reading of Hebrews 11 reveals that “By faith” includes whatever is commanded to whoever it is commanded. We need great faith like the Hebrews 11 heroes to do whatever is commanded of us today by God.

THANKSGIVING. The Lord

encountered a thanksgiving shortage in Luke 17. Remember the leper story? Ten leprous men “...lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (v. 13). All ten were cleansed (v. 14). Know how many turned back and gave Him thanks? One! Jesus said, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger” (vv. 17-18). Ever notice how few really express much thanksgiving? It is said in Romans 1:21, “...neither were thankful...” Perilous times discussed in 2 Timothy 3 includes “...unthankful...” (v. 2). We are taught, “...be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15) and “...abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col. 2:7).

RIGHTEOUSNESS. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would have been spared, but there was a righteousness shortage! The Lord said, “...I will not destroy it for ten's sake” (Gen. 18:32). The fact that “...the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (Gen. 19:24) shows there was a shortage of righteousness as 10 righteous

people could not be found to inhabit those cities! We need to know: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). We need a real “...hunger and thirst after righteousness...” (Mt. 5:6). Peter preached, “... God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

May there be no shortage of such with us today! We close with the reminder that there are no shortages in the Lord. When the Lord is your Shepherd, you will not want (Ps. 23). “O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing” (Ps. 34:9-10). Paul wrote, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). The Lord will not fail thee (1 Chr. 28:20). He is plenteous in mercy (Ps. 86:5) and plenteous in redemption (Ps. 130:7). His compassions fail not (Lam. 3:22)! Obey the gospel by being baptized into Christ.

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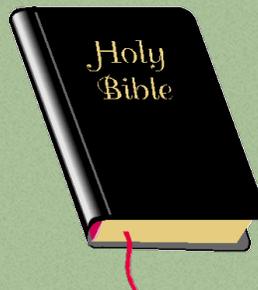
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