

Minding My Own Business
By Evangelist Lester Roloff

The text is found in Acts 24:25, "*For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,*" and 1 Kings 18:17, "*And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?'"* Amos 7:10-17, "*Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court. Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac. Therefore thus saith the Lord; thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land."* Acts 17:5, "*Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.*"

In a distant city a few weeks ago, I was asked to go talk to a lady concerning sin in her life and how it was affecting another home. It was nearly midnight when I rang the doorbell and the lights were off, but in a little while, the lady came to the door. I asked her if I could have an audience with her and she asked me what I wanted to talk with her about to which I said, "Your life." And she said, "It's none of your business." But after a little reasoning, she opened the door and said, "Come on in and sit down, but I wish people would mind their own business." I said, "That is exactly what I am doing here in your home tonight." At least a thousand times in the twenty-eight years I have been preaching, people have said to me, "Keep your nose out of my business," "Mind your own business," or "It is none of your business. "

God's business has never been a popular business, but it is a very necessary business. Truth and the man who preaches it always run at least fifty years ahead of the reception committee and of its acceptance.

I would like to give you some false notions that people and the world have about the preacher's business. In the first place, the world says that it is the preacher's business to marry people, and yet it seems that one of the main businesses of the preacher now is to refuse to marry. So many people are not qualified to be married according to the Word of God. Personally, I would not attempt to marry an unbeliever to a Christian. They could not be joined together any more than midnight could be joined to midday. The marriage vow is being kicked around like a dirty football.

It is bad enough for those in the pew to do it, but when it enters the ministry and the organization of the deacons, we need to return to the simple Scripture that says the deacon and the bishop should be "the husband of one wife." In the last ten years, we have seen a scourge of broken homes and remarriage in the ministry. If God does not put His blessing upon the home, it will not help a great deal for the preacher to put his upon it.

And second, there is a notion that about the main business of the preacher is to visit the sick and bury the dead. As important as that may be, that is not the preacher's main business. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

Third, a popular notion among the people is that the preacher must be a promoter. Fact is, most of the training that he gets points him in that direction. The preacher's work has become a very complex work. He must be a financier, an organizer, a promoter, a mixer, and a lot of other things that are only distantly related to his main calling.

The fourth false notion is that the preacher, if he is to be a success, must be a denominational servant. In one of our big denominational papers the statement was published the other day that no preacher can succeed unless he becomes a denominational servant. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit is going to share His honors with the flesh.

One of the greatest needs of this hour is a return to the sovereignty of the local church and the importance of the local pulpit with complete freedom and liberty for the man of God to stand on the housetop and speak God's eternal truth. But sad to say, the average preacher is busy with his oilcan squirting oil on dead machinery. And I believe more than anything else this explains the failure and fall of many preachers because their resistance runs down and sin sets in and they are helpless before the onslaughts of Satan. They lose their freshness and their zeal and thrill of preaching and become weary with the mechanics of the ministry.

The preacher has become a nervous, miserable, and unhappy man. We need to remember that, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," and "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "It is not reason," said the preachers of old, "that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables."

The fifth false notion that is abroad in the land is that the preacher is to save the nation and the world; therefore, many are dissipating their energies trying to save America. But the Bible says, "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee." It is not our business to save nations; it is our business to save souls. I will admit that it sounds more glamorous and a lot bigger to make a running attempt to save society or our nation from Communism or the abomination of some denomination or false religion.

Why don't we look at Jesus and see what He did? He walked into Samaria and sat on the well curb and waited until a woman came and said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." And in a little while, she left her empty bucket and carried away the well. Yes, she went away singing and she came back bringing others to the water that was not from the well.

What do you suppose Jesus was doing at the midnight hour and possibly into the morning hours sitting and talking with one man about the new birth or another instance dealing with a fallen woman, saying to her, "Go, and sin no more"? Jesus stopped dying long enough to make a man live who was hanging next door to Him on a Roman cross. Paul lifted the hinges off of the Roman Empire by preaching the Gospel and setting up New Testament churches that had a blood-red interest in evangelism. Paul was not interested in saving a world, but in saving some.

The sixth notion that is false is that the pastor is to build a church and to pack the pew, but Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." Jesus is the One who will build the church and very plainly the pastor is commanded to fill the pulpit, not the pew. I have heard this statement until I am nauseated with it- "Let's get a preacher or an evangelist that will be a good drawing card." Brother, a preacher is a

lot more than a card; and a preacher's greatness may not always be properly evaluated by the crowd that hears him. God told Isaiah to tell the people that all flesh is grass.

Now, I am not one of these preachers that would just as soon preach to five as five thousand. It was the multitude that moved Jesus and brought about compassion; and I long to see the crowds, but by the grace of God, I am determined not to compromise in order to get the crowd. Back in the seminary, many years ago, a young man made the statement in Dr. Conner's doctrine class, "I am going to get the crowd if I have to stand on my head to get them," to which old Dr. Conner said, "My advice to you, son, would be to keep the light end up."

The seventh false notion concerning the preacher's business is that he is to be a good mixer, yet nowhere in the Bible can you justify such a notion. "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." In the next verse he said, "I sat alone." Paul said, "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" The old prophet Amos said, "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate." Abraham had to get separated. So did Noah.

Moses lived a lonely life for forty years as he took his postgraduate course in the wilderness before he could lead millions of Israelites to the land flowing with milk and honey. Elijah missed every convention for three and a half years while he walked alone with God at the brook, but where is the preacher that would not like to have a double portion of his spirit who could call down fire from heaven and pray down rain to break a drought?

I am amazed, shocked, and disappointed that some of our lifelong friends have forsaken their convictions, turned their back on the Bible, and have joined the clubs and secret orders in order, they say, "To reach the people." My conviction is that they are gently drifting down the stream of failure.

I heard about a deacon that asked the new pastor to join the lodges and the clubs with him to which the preacher said, "No, I cannot afford to do it." The deacon said, "It would be a way to win these men." The preacher with conviction refused. A few days later, the deacon was in the ditch alongside the road when the pastor drove up in his car. He asked the pastor if he would pull him out and the pastor said, "Yes, I will back down in there with you," to which the deacon said, "No, keep your wheels on the concrete!" And then the preacher with a smile said, "You asked me to join the clubs and lodges with you- that is exactly what I would be doing- backing down in the ditch to pull them out."

Now, let us look at seven results of such a ministry. In the first place, notice the churches- the average preacher will admit that there is a spiritual deadness in his church. The pews are half empty, and yet there is not enough humility to declare bankruptcy and fall upon the mercies of God and plead for Bible revival. The Sunday night evangelistic service is just a shadow of what it used to be. The first sermon Jesus ever preached and the last sermon was repentance. He said to the seven churches, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." They refused to repent and were blotted out. The average church is busy cutting corners, shortening services, turning out for various entertainments. A church with thousands of members, baptizing less than a hundred people in a year, is a sad sign that the tide is low.

“Where is the blessedness I knew
when first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul refreshing view
of Jesus and His Word?”

In the second place, the homes have been destroyed. Three out of five marriages end up in divorce. Juvenile delinquency is a scourge in this land. About seven million alcoholics slobber and stagger their way to a drunkard's grave. Drug addicts can be counted in hundreds of thousands. For years, we have operated the City of Refuge for alcoholics, which is completely a work of faith, and every day we read letters and listen to destitute cries from alcoholics across the nation. While we were at the City of Refuge yesterday, two new alcoholics came in. We have received fourteen alcoholics from one rather small city in a distant state. The social gospel and modernism will not save to the uttermost.

The average home has its dirty magazines, its daily newspaper, and its alcoholic beverages and last but not least, hell's monster, the Frankenstein of this generation with its harlots from Hollywood belching forth their filth and immoral standards- television. There was a time when the home was clean and people had convictions about when to go to bed at night. The family would sit together and talk or gather around an old piano and sing, but not so any more.

In many homes I have noticed lately, there is a double-barreled television set-up, one sitting right on top of the other in the living room. Sure, I've heard the cry- "Television is here to stay and you are against progress," but I'd like to remind you that the Bible hasn't changed, nor the three keys on the devil's key string- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the EYE, and the pride of life. Eve fell when she *saw*. Achan fell when he *saw*. David fell when he *saw*. The sons of God fell for wicked women when they *saw*. David gave the right answer when he said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." Paul had it straight when he said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." And again, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

We are on the battle front and soldiers don't watch television sets at the battle front. Don't fuss at me- I'm just preaching what I preached twenty-eight years ago. I know your cry is, "Control it"- that is the same cry of the liquor crowd. Why control a rattlesnake in your living room? Why don't you kill it? As a preacher of righteousness, I am on the same side of the world's authority on crime. Go ask Mr. J. Edgar Hoover what is wrong with our young people today and he will say again like he said before a great assembly to the parents. "Go look in your living room. Your carpet is soaked every day and night with the blood of criminals and murderers."

The third result is our schools are diseased with infidelity and sin. The old-fashioned Bible truths have been laughed out of the schoolroom and we're sacrificing our young people on the altars of so-called higher learning and scholasticism.

The fourth result is that our denominations are busy building the tombs of the prophets and garnishing the sepulchers of the righteous instead of filling graves with new martyrs. We are busy visiting old battlefields and viewing relics of the past, talking about our great heritage, instead of making new beachheads for Jesus and launching an all-out campaign for back to the Bible evangelism.

The fifth result is that there is no real voice for righteousness. We have become satisfied with our successful evangelistic campaigns with so many additions when the real complexion of the community

remains unchanged. The old-fashioned evangelists would close up theaters for six years because of the lack of customers after the revival was over.

The sixth result is there is no fear of God like there ought to be and like there was when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost, when Achan lusted and lied and died, when Miriam criticized and was stricken with leprosy, and when God dropped an army of rebels in a hole in the ground.

The seventh result is rotten religion and Communism are in a mad race to dominate the world while the hands of the sleeping church hang helplessly down. We used to hear messages preached on "The Church Militant," but now it would have to be "The Church Tranquil."

In the last division of this message, I would like to lay out my business as a preacher- "Minding my own business!"

First, the Word of God is my main business. If Satan could get me away from the Bible, I would have no message. Paul said, "Preach the Word." The early preachers said, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God." Paul said that we are to rightly divide the Word of God. The Psalmist said, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "The entrance of Thy Words giveth light." "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." They could find nothing wrong with Daniel save his relationship to the law of his God.

Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Modernism is not a cause, but a result of the lack of the Word of God, since faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The preacher must be a man of one Book. Great old John Wesley said, "If I feel my power waning, I go on a Bible and prayer diet for days until I feel the Spirit of God moving in my soul again." The preacher is minding his own business when he is on his knees before an open Bible.

Second, my business is to pray. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The disciples in the presence of the Prince of preachers, the Lord Jesus, said "Lord, teach us to pray." Daniel's prayer life locked the lions' jaws. Hezekiah's prayer life pushed back the undertaker fifteen years. The Hebrew children prayed till fire could not burn them. Elijah repaired the altar and prayed until fire fell and religion was rebuked and the drought was broken. The church prayed until heaven unlocked earth's jail house and turned their pastor out. Paul and Silas prayed till their souls got happy and they sang at midnight and the earthquake of deliverance came.

Third, it is my main business to preach. Titus 1:3, "But hath in due times manifested His Word through preaching." I Corinthians 1:21, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Churches are made great by great preaching- simple preaching that names sin and also names Christ as the Answer. Jesus was a preacher. John was a preacher. Paul was a preacher. Revival is a result of great preaching. "Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Paul said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus." "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is my business to be filled with the Spirit, thrilled with the message, and let the sinners be drilled with Gospel bullets. Films, plays, and programs are all miserable substitutes for the preaching of the Word of

God. The preacher must occupy and reign on every inch of the pulpit platform if he is to see souls saved and a great church built up in the faith.

In the fourth place, my business is to build a Christian home. There must be a family altar. The members of the family must practice what we preach or suffer the consequences.

In the fifth place, it is my business to witness and to be a personal soul winner. We become ineffective in our ministries when we lose our personal touch with precious souls. For seventeen years, we have had a jail ministry and for many years, we have operated the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission where nothing but the blood of Christ will go deeper than the stain of sin has gone.

In the sixth place, it is my business to cooperate with every other Christian on the basis of the Book, the blood, and the blessed hope. I've said a lot of times, if a mangy dog came to Corpus Christi preaching the Gospel and getting people saved, I would feel obligated to cure his mange and give him some feed. But when I say that, I do not endorse modernistic sponsorship. There is something wrong with a man's message when the modernist wants to sponsor it. The right kind of love and certainly the leadership of the Spirit will do away with jealousy and envy and criticism that separate God's people.

The seventh thing that certainly is my business is to keep myself unentangled. My life must be lived in subjection to Jesus and His Word and my ministry must be channeled through a Bible church. My evangelistic efforts, as well as the nationwide broadcast, must be aimed at encouraging the preacher and strengthening the church that believes and practices the Word of God. I cannot join hands with clubs and lodges and worldly movements that would grieve away the Dove of the Spirit and take away my spiritual discernment.

In conclusion, let us look at some men who were busy minding their own business. Abraham is packed to travel and is moving from Ur of the Chaldees with a deep-seated satisfaction that he was right in looking for a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Of course, he was misunderstood by his neighbors and friends, but he was minding his own business. God had given him the moving order. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Now he is called the friend of God and the father of the faithful and when a lost man fell into hell, he looked up and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and cried, "Father Abraham."

Old righteous Noah for a hundred and twenty years hauled logs and hammered out the Gospel truth to his pleasure-loving generation, branded no doubt the number one fool of his day, building an ark over a hundred miles away from the closest water it would take to float it, preaching, "The flood is coming," when there had never been a clap of thunder or a streak of lightning or a drop of rain to fall on the earth, yet he was minding his own business. But I would remind you that in just thirty days after he entered the ark and God closed the door, he and his little family were in the majority and they floated in perfect safety while the world perished in style. He minded his own business and got his whole family in the ark.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing the affliction of the people of God and gave up the palace for a forty-year sentence in the wilderness with goats and sheep and got his degree at the burning bush seminary, stepped into the inner office of Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go that they might serve God." And in a little while, he was crossing the Red Sea dry shod because he dared to mind his own business.

Nathan stuck his index finger like a single-barreled shotgun into the face of a wicked king called David and said, "Thou art the man." David wept and repented and wrote half of the songbook and the prayerbook of the Bible because there was a preacher who had enough courage to mind his own business. Elijah walked in upon old wicked Ahab in Naboth's vineyard and sentenced him to doom by telling him that the dogs would lick his blood in the streets of Jezreel and a pack of hounds would eat his wife's body. That may not have got him in the "Who's Who" of Ahab, but at least he was minding his own business.

Amos climbed down out of a sycamore tree and started a city-wide revival and Amaziah, who must have been president of the National Council of Churches or either the ministerial alliance, came and said, "Son, you are out of your territory," and Amos read the riot act to him. Amos was minding his own business.

Daniel appeared before King Belshazzar and announced that there was not enough merit in his soul to balance the scales of God-"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." God give us preachers who will mind their own business.

John stepped into the presence of an adulterous king and said, "It is not lawful for you to have her." It cost him his head, but he died minding his own business. Peter and John were told not to preach in the name of Jesus, but they said, "We ought to obey God rather than men," and they continued to mind their own business.

Paul was called a pestilent fellow and mover of sedition and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes when he determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, but thank God, he was able to say at the end of life's trail, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Now let us look away from the shadows for just a moment and behold the Son. Jesus stepped across all lines and sat on the well curb and pleaded for a fallen woman to give her heart to Him. The disciples did not ask Him why because they knew He was minding His own business. Jesus identified Himself with the crying need of a fallen woman in the eighth chapter of John and rebuked the stone-throwers and wrote love letters in the sand to this precious soul and then in a moment said, "Go, and sin no more." Jesus ate with the publicans and sinners and became a walking rescue mission and City of Refuge because He dared to mind His own business.

In politics, He was branded unpatriotic; in society, a misfit; in finances, bankrupt; and in religion, a trouble-maker. In Gethsemane, while the church blundered, He bled. In Pilate's judgment hall, without a lawyer, the Divine Advocate of every soul pled His own case without opening His mouth. There wasn't a soul that had been healed or helped or blessed that stood to say, "Your Honor, this man opened my blind eyes, healed my sick body, straightened out my crooked limbs, unstopped my ears, or raised my dead body." Jesus was minding His own business according to Isaiah 53, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Under the load of that Roman cross, He trudged up Calvary's hill. While He hung suspended between heaven and earth, despised by earth and locked out of heaven, He still prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and in a moment, a bleeding, dying thief said, "Remember me," and Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He died minding His own business. No wonder we sing today,

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;

My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

Sinner friend, will you receive Him today as your Saviour? "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." And Christian friend, it is our main business to so live that we may win others to Christ.