

I was 17 years old, playing summer-league baseball in Oklahoma, when I had the opportunity to visit and worship with a church one Sunday morning a few hours from home. I had the privilege that day to be accompanied by two friends who were not members of the Lord's church. They had graciously come with me because I needed a ride to worship, and they volunteered to drive me and stay with me until the close of the worship service. Only a few minutes after walking into the building, however, the mood was severely darkened when a member of that church greeted us with a joke about some individuals he knew from our hometown who were of a different religion—with the emphasis being on their religion. It just so happened, the two individuals with me that morning were of that same religious persuasion.

Needless to say, my friends were highly offended by such a greeting from someone who called himself a Christian. And, sadly, they did not get over the insensitive "welcome" very quickly. In fact, it seems they have never gotten over it. Nearly 20 years later I ran into one of these men while visiting family back in Oklahoma. One of the first things he said to me was: "So-and-so was just talking the other day about that time you invited us to come to church with you and that guy greeted us by jokingly condemning our religion."

By no means am I suggesting that Christians should not unashamedly teach the truth, or that we should not defend the faith whenever given the opportunity. Nor am I suggesting that I have always said things the right ways at the right times. (I've certainly failed miserably on this account more times than I like to remember.) What I do know is that God has instructed us to teach "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). He has commanded us to defend the faith "with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Paul taught the saints in Colosse: "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (4:6). Similarly, the wise man taught: "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool shall swallow him up" (Ecclesiastes 10:12).

We should never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16); we should never pass up an opportunity to teach the Word of God—but may God help us to do so with "all longsuffering" (2 Timothy 4:2, NKJV), and "with great patience" (NASB). Remember, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

Order of Service

Opening Remarks	Chris Windham
Song Leader	Tom Barr
Song #17	<i>All People that on Earth Do Dwell</i>
Song #22	<i>All the Way My Savior Leads Me</i>
Prayer	Ray Parks
Song #359	<i>Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross</i>
Communion	Don Petrosky, Jr. Don Petrosky, Sr.
Song #532	<i>Praise Him! Praise Him!</i>
Song #16	<i>All Creatures of Our God and Kind</i>
Sermon	Clay Bond
Song #677	<i>There's a Stranger at the Door</i>
Offering	
Closing Remarks	Chris Windham
Song #405	<i>Love Divine</i>
Dismissal Prayer	Leonard Meredith

..Announcements:..

- Today! Business Meeting after evening services
- Monday Memorial Service for Don Walker at 11am at Southwest Church of Christ

Wednesday Devotional

Jan. 30th Ray
 Feb. 6th Holton
 Feb. 13th Chris

...Prayer List...

Gay Kyle, Eugene & Barbara Haydon, Don Walker, Gary Schneider, Kathy Ivanciw's mother Shirley, Butch Crownover, Chris' cousin Tyler, Melvin Wright, Chris' nephew Colt

Remember our college students who are away at school: Jarrett & Luke Haydon
 Shut-Ins: Robbi George

Attendance: Sunday AM: 27 PM: 31 Wednesday: 24 Contribution: \$2309.89