

Introduction:

1. It has been more than a half-century ago that Harry Truman served as President of the United States. He was a man of wisdom whose words could certainly be appreciated and respected.
 - a. It was Harry Truman who had the sign on his desk that read, “The Buck Stops Here!”
 - b. He is admired for his willingness to accept responsibility and not shift blame to others.
2. He once said, “What I’m looking for is a good one-armed economist.” What could that mean?
 - a. He explained, “Some economists say the future looks bright,’ but then say, ‘On the other hand...’” “I want an economist who can tell me the truth and who doesn’t have another hand.”
 - b. Truman was looking for certainty in economics—a hard thing to come by.
3. What Truman was looking for in an economist, is what God is looking for in preachers.
 - a. The “one-armed preacher” doesn’t preach doubt or uncertainty about the Bible. He preaches that truth is knowable, can be understood, and that God has clearly spoken to mankind.
 - b. He says what God says and doesn’t say, “But, on the other hand...,” 1 Peter 4:11.

The Lesson:**I. New Testament teaching is definite and certain.****A. New Testament preachers spoke with certainty:**

1. Note what Luke wrote, Luke 1:1, 4. Luke had a definite message; no equivocating, no “maybe it was this, or maybe it was that.” Luke gave a direct, positive message about Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. Luke was a “one-armed preacher.”
2. Jesus Himself spoke with certainty, John 8:14a. The modern Jesus of movies and novels often doubts Himself and is uncertain about everything. The real Jesus was certain of Himself and wanted His disciples to be certain of who He was, John 16:30, 17:8.
3. The apostles preached a certain message, Acts 2:36-38. “Know assuredly” means to believe with confidence. Peter wanted there to be no doubt in the minds of his hearers.
4. The author of Acts spoke with certainty about the resurrection of Jesus, Acts 1:1-3. None of the apostles or New Testament writers presented a gospel “on the other hand.”

B. Why? What gave the gospel such certainty? There are two things:

1. First, because it was historically true. Jesus—like Caesar, Washington, Lincoln or Kennedy—was a real person. The events actually happened, 2 Peter 1:16.
2. Second, because the things in the gospel came from God, Galatians 1:11-12. God is not vague, uncertain or vacillating about His plans or intentions, 2 Corinthians 1:19-20.

II. We live in a time when certainty is challenged.

- A. There are preachers who will teach a little gospel and then say, “but on the other hand.” Why can’t men just say what God says?
- B. The Bible’s moral precepts are doubted even by preachers of mainline churches.

1. We have seen “reverends, priests and pastors” who have been out front advocating homosexuality, abortion rights and liberalized divorce. When confronted with what the Bible teaches, they say “Yes, but, on the other hand...” These same men generally deny the inspiration of the scriptures—as they argue that the Bible contains things not from God.
 2. God is looking for “one-armed preachers” who will *preach with certainty*...
 - a. The inspiration of the scriptures without another hand, 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - b. The all-sufficiency of the scriptures without another hand, 2 Timothy 3:17.
 - c. The God-given pattern of family without another hand, Matthew 19:4-5.
 - d. The permanence of marriage and consequences of immorality, Matthew 19:6, 9.
 - e. That sexual relations outside of marriage are always wrong, Hebrews 13:4.
 - f. That what the Bible calls “the works of the flesh” will condemn souls--and that Jesus came to save men from such works, Galatians 5:19-21.
 3. Our society is lost and confused when it comes to a standard for living. One reason for that is we don’t have enough “one-armed preachers.”
- C. The issue goes beyond moral matters. Our culture is clueless when it comes to how to be saved!
1. Preachers may acknowledge that the Bible teaches Jesus is the Savior; that Bible baptism is immersion and it says it is for the remission of sins; that Jesus established a body of people called the church, that faithfulness to Christ is commanded by God—but will say of these things, “On the other hand...” Is it any wonder that people are confused? Are we surprised that people think it makes no difference what you believe? They got it from these “other handed” preachers.
 2. God is looking for “one-armed preachers” who will *preach with certainty*...
 - a. Jesus as the only hope of salvation without another hand, Acts 4:12.
 - b. The Bible plan of salvation without another hand, Acts 2:36-38.
 - c. That water baptism is immersion and not something else, Romans 6:4.
 - d. That walking in the light is essential to our salvation, 1 John 1:6-9.
 - e. The church is the one body of the saved, Acts 2:47; Ephesians 4:4; 1:21-22.

Conclusion:

1. You can have it however you want it. You can have an uncertain doctrine that is unsure of who Jesus is, unsure of how to be saved, unsure of how you should live and unsure of your eternity. You can listen to preachers who have more doubts than facts, who have lots of questions and no answers.
2. Or, you can believe what God requires the “one-armed preacher” to preach. You can be sure of who Jesus is, how to be saved, and how you should live and be sure of the future. The preaching of the “one armed preacher” gives people one mind, Philippians 1:27. (Remember the double-minded man? James 1:8.)
3. What will you do? May God give preachers the courage to preach His will with conviction, and may He give hearers the courage to believe and obey His will with conviction!