

E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge

Legacies of Light, Part 14

Acts 4:13

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge lived their lives in ways we should imitate today. What mattered to them was the gospel of Christ. What motivated them was the approval of Christ. What mesmerized them was the glory of Christ. Indeed, their dedication to truth and their love for God is worthy of imitation.

Discussion Points:

E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge are worth imitating in several ways. What mattered to them was the gospel.

- Why should the gospel matter in day to day living?
- Who do you know that lives their lives in a way that shows the gospel matters to them? What do they do that reflects their love of the gospel?
- How do you live your life? Does the gospel matter to you? Is the gospel shown through the way you live your life and make decisions?

Though by most standards these two men were uneducated and untrained, they were undeterred in their love for Christ. What motivated them was the approval of Christ.

- What motivates you as you live and make decisions each day?
- As read in Acts 4:13, the Sanhedrin observed the confidence of the untrained and uneducated apostles, yet they were amazed and realized they had been with Jesus. How can Hill, Lockridge, and the apostles be an encouragement to you and others around you?
- Are there areas of life where you seek the approval of others rather than Christ? Are you satisfied in Christ? Whose approval do you crave?

What mesmerized them was the glory of Christ.

- Does the glory of Christ mesmerize you? Why or why not?
- What are some of your favorite Bible verses that reflect the glory of Christ? If you don't have any, perhaps do a short study and uncover some in the scriptures.

Discussion Guide Cont.

Gospel Connection:

These two men lived their lives for the sake of Christ and His gospel. Their lives were dedicated to spreading the truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice to those in their sphere of influence. They knew that a life-transforming relationship with a risen Christ was worth the sacrifice and hardships they might have had to endure.

Practical Implications:

Think: What are some of the ways that Christ's glory and sacrifice mesmerizes me?

Pray: Ask the Lord to give me boldness to faithfully seek to live in the approval of Christ.

Do: Share the gospel. Live mesmerized by the glory of Christ.

E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge

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Acts 4:13

We continue today in our brief series of identifying the lives of believers who have gone on before us and who lived lives worthy of imitation.

Growing up, my father was a missionary to men and women in the military, so he frequently traveled to supporting churches in the community to seek prayerful and financial support. He preached in all kinds of churches – Presbyterian, Methodist, Missionary Alliance, Baptist, and Brethren churches.

Every Sunday night, he'd load us up in a school bus full of sailors and we'd head to a church where he would preach.

By far, one of the best memories I have from those days was the Sunday night he preached in a church predominantly made up of African American believers. I'd never seen a worship service quite like that before – and to this day it brings back fond memories. Nobody was sleeping in their pew! The service was riveting to me – from the opening announcement to the final benediction. It was, without a doubt, the most fun I'd ever had in church.

I was still taking piano lessons at that time and I remember being blown away by their piano player. She was phenomenal. I remember the upright piano vividly. It was painted red – which I thought fitting – and, as far as I could tell, it really was on fire. The music lifted you off your feet. It was wonderful.

To this day, there is something in me that is particularly inspired and moved by the preaching of evangelical black pastors. I love

bringing to this congregation the preaching ministry of Richard Allen Farmer, Robert Smith, Charles Ware and E.B. Charles.

Some of my favorite preachers today are African American pastors. Perhaps that is because I know they are standing on the shoulders of incredibly courageous fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers who remained faithful to Christ in spite of suffering.

I can't imagine how difficult it must have been for them to pastor a church in America in 1860 or even 1960. So when I hear these men preach about freedom in Christ and the faithfulness of God and the blessed hope of the Promised Land for God's people, there is something richer and deeper in their voices that I so admire.

Two of my favorite pastors from recent history – both of whom have been with the Lord now for nearly twenty years – are E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge.

Unfortunately, there are no biographies written on these men, but there is material available if you take the time to hunt around for it. As I have read their sermons, listened to recordings of their preaching, and read whatever biographical scraps of information I could find, I discovered that both these men lived with similar devotion and passion. Three traits they shared are worth remembering and imitating:

- **What mattered to them was the gospel of Christ**

- **What motivated them was the approval of Christ**
- **What mesmerized them was the glory of Christ**

First, let me tell you briefly what I discovered about E.V. Hill. Hill was born in the early 1900's in a log cabin in Texas. He was born into poverty and grew up in poverty. However, he would later write, "I didn't know I was poor, because we never equated material things with poverty; to us, poverty was a matter of the spirit and we were rich in spirit."

Through hard work and nothing short of the providence of God, he graduated from High School and was given a scholarship to attend Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Benefit of Colored Youth. How's that for the name of a college? The college had been chartered in the late 1800's to give the descendants of slaves the opportunity to attend college.

Hill's mother sacrificed greatly to purchase a bus ticket for him. When he arrived at the college, he had less than two dollars to his name. The college was not a theological or biblical training school, but it provided a valuable education to E.V. Hill.

At the age of 21, Hill became the pastor of his first church in Texas and he would go on to pastor for 49 years. Even without a formal theological education, Hill studied the Scriptures and preached them unapologetically with wisdom and power.

I recently listened to an audio recording of his sermon to several thousand pastors gathered in Moody Church in downtown Chicago and it was one of the best sermons I've ever heard on the power and glory of God.

Reading about E.V. Hill's life took me back to Luke's words in **Acts 4:13**. I believe this verse describes him and his ministry in one sentence. In fact, this ought to be the highest objective of every pastor and believer on the planet.

Acts 4:13 says:

Now as they (the Sanhedrin) observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

That word **confidence** carries the idea of expressing yourself without holding anything back.ⁱ The Sanhedrin is trying to shut them down, but the Apostles won't quit.

Here Peter and John are speaking with confidence to Israel's Supreme Court (the Sanhedrin), delivering the truth about Jesus Christ. And they aren't holding anything back.

The Sanhedrin – no doubt some of the most biblically educated men in Israel – are stunned. The word for **uneducated** literally means unlettered. The word for **untrained** means unschooled.ⁱⁱ

Notice again what Luke writes next: **they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus**. The only conclusion the Sanhedrin can draw from the powerful ministry of these men had nothing to do with education, but, rather, association.

They have been with Jesus!

Maybe the reason you and I aren't having the spiritual fruit we'd like to have is because while we're more educated than ever, the world isn't recognizing us as having been with Jesus.

What is clear from E.V. Hill's ministry is that he cared more about his association with Jesus than anything else. He would be disliked by people from the white community, the black community, and every community in between, simply because when he spoke the truth he did not hold anything back.

I found it interesting that E.V. Hill is not listed as one of the notable alumni of *Prairie View*. But on that list of notable alumni are the names of corporate CEO's, University Presidents, professional athletes (in the WNBA, the NBA, the NFL) along with the names of

recording artists and concert musicians and civil rights leaders.

The most famous pastor to have graduated from that school is not even listed. But if you study his life and listen to his preaching you can understand why.

- He placed the gospel above racial issues
- He was more interested in building the church than a political party
- He had close friendships with people like Martin Luther King Jr. (to whom he was a confidant) and Jerry Falwell
- He preached a pro-life, six-day-creation message
- He left the Democratic Party and began identifying with conservative political leaders
- He prayed at the inauguration of one Republican president and become a key mentor to another conservative president
- He once called the American Civil Liberties Union “satanic”

One thing was clear: Edward Victor Hill delivered the gospel of right and wrong and heaven and hell and he didn't hold anything back. What mattered to him was the gospel of Christ and what motivated him was the approval of Christ.

In his book on Christians and politics, James Montgomery Boice commends the gospel centrality of E.V. Hill's mission. Here is an illustration from that book of how Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church impacted the Los Angeles area for Christ.

At one time early in his ministry, E.V. had served as a ward leader for the Democratic Party before switching allegiances to support conservative Republican politicians. As a ward leader, his assignment was to raise votes for the Democratic candidates and his chief strategy for doing this was to enroll a block captain for each block of his ward. On Election Day, he told these captains to encourage every resident of their block to get out and vote.

When E.V. Hill came to Los Angeles and began pastoring, he was convicted by the thought that if he had been such a good missionary for the Democrats, why shouldn't he be one for the Lord? Why not have a Christian block captain for every block of Los Angeles? There were 3,100 blocks in that area at that time, but Hill was up to the task and that became his church's mission.

Boice wrote that when He first heard E. V. talk about this goal, the church had already elected captains in 1,900 blocks. Church members were strategically moving from their homes, stationing themselves as block missionaries. They had adopted Hill's conviction that they existed for the sake of proclaiming and spreading the gospel.

E.V. Hill tells of a funny thing that happened on one occasion. One man had been so put off by the block captain where he lived. Day after day, she invited him to church and talked to him about the Lord. She was friendly, but persistent. So he decided to move to the other side of Los Angeles.

The moving truck came. He loaded up his possessions. His block captain came out to say goodbye to him. He didn't say all that much in return; he was probably thinking, “I'm glad to finally get away from you people!”

As soon as the moving truck was out of sight, the block captain ran into the house, got out the directory of the Mount Zion block captains, and dialed the person in charge of the block to which her neighbor was now moving. As soon as the moving truck pulled up to the new residence, the new block captain welcomed the driver and invited him to church! His response is classic. He said, “Good Lord, you people are everywhere!”ⁱⁱⁱ

Upon reading that story, I was deeply convicted. What could we do if we truly believed that we were called to *this* city, at *this* time, in *this* generation, to deliver to every person the gospel of Jesus Christ? E.V. Hill gives us a picture of what that would look like and it is worth imitating.

Now let me introduce you to a colleague of Hill's who grew up equally passionate about the gospel. His name was Shadrach Meshach Lockridge. He was born in 1913 and lived to the end of that century. Again, there is not a biography on his life and I uncovered much less information about him than I did on E.V. Hill.

What I did find was intriguing. S.M. Lockridge grew up in the depression days of the Midwest. Like E.V. Hill, his first church was in Texas and one can only imagine the difficulties he experienced during the early 1900's.

Eventually, he moved to California where he was called to become the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego. He would serve in that church for nearly 40 years, before dying at the age of 87 years old.

While pastoring in California, he became a powerful religious and social voice, especially in San Diego. He also became the president of the California Missionary Baptist State Convention and was known for his courageous and powerful preaching. Like E.V. Hill, S.M. Lockridge developed a reputation for declaring what he believed and holding nothing back.

Later on in ministry, he served on the faculty of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and the Greater Los Angeles Sunday School Convention. He published two books entitled *Rekindling the Holy Fires* and *The Lordship of Christ*. He also preached at crusades, evangelistic rallies, and conferences all around the world.

Colleagues called him a giant among preachers – and if you've ever heard him preach, you would agree. His best-known message is a sermon entitled *That's my King!* His unforgettable descriptions serve as a moving exaltation of the glory of Christ.

To date, this sermon has been downloaded millions of times and has become one of the most listened-to sermons in the Modern Church Age. Here is an excerpt from that sermon:

That's My King! Do You Know Him?
by S.M. Lockridge

My Bible says:
He's the King of the Jews.
He's the King of Israel.
He's the King of Righteousness.
He's the King of the Ages.
He's the King of Heaven.
He's the King of Glory.
He's the King of Kings and He's the Lord of Lords.
That's my King. I wonder; do you know Him?
He's the greatest phenomenon
That has ever crossed the horizon of this world.
He's God's Son.
He's a sinner's Savior.
He's the centerpiece of civilization.
He's unparalleled.
He's unprecedented.
I wonder if you know Him.
He sympathizes and He saves.
He strengthens and sustains.
He guards and He guides.
He forgives sinners.
He discharges debtors.
He serves the unfortunate.
He regards the aged.
And He rewards the diligent.
I wonder if you know Him.
His light is matchless.
His goodness is limitless.
His mercy is everlasting.
His love never changes.
His Word is enough.
His grace is sufficient.
His reign is righteous.
And His yoke is easy,
And his burden is light.

I wish I could describe Him to you.
But He's indescribable.
He's incomprehensible.
You can't get Him out of your mind.
You can't get Him off of your hand.
You can't out live Him
and you can't live without Him.
The Pharisees couldn't stand Him,
but they found out they couldn't stop Him.
Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him.

Herod couldn't kill Him.
Death couldn't handle Him
and the grave couldn't hold Him.
That's my King!^{iv}

E.V. Hill and S.M. Lockridge are worthy of imitation not because of their oratory or politics or the size of their congregations. They are worthy because what mattered to them was the

gospel of Christ, what motivated them was the approval of Christ, and what mesmerized them was the glory of Christ.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 06/16/2019 by Stephen Davey.

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i Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church* (Moody Press, 1975), p. 84

ii R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire* (Crossway Books, 1996), p. 64

iii Edited from James Montgomery Boice, *Two Cities, Two Loves* (Intervarsity Press, 1996), p. 168

iv www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE&feature=related<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qrS8-PljLI&feature=related>