

Lesson 6- Dr. Harold B. Sightler (1914-1995)

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FROM
DR. BEN CARPER, GRANDSON OF HAROLD B. SIGHTLER



The Purpose of The Bright Spot Hour

On May the 15th of 1914, my late grandfather, Harold B. Sightler was born in St. George, South Carolina to Horace and Pauline Sightler. The son of an automobile mechanic, the young family was moved by the Packard Motor Car Company from Columbia to Greenville in 1925. This was the obvious hand of God in that Harold Sightler was to spend 55 years of his long life pastoring three churches in Greenville County, Mauldin First Baptist, Pelham First Baptist and Tabernacle. For 43 years, he pastored the Tabernacle Baptist Church which at one time was the largest church in South Carolina. He would achieve the title of the oldest active pastor in Greenville County for several years prior to his death.

Having graduated from Greenville High School in 1932, his desire to go on to college and become a practicing physician was a dream placed out of reach by the depression. The family was not poor but medical school money was not available, so "Papaw" went to work at Thomas and Howard Wholesale where food products were cleared for grocery stores. For more than 10 years, my grandfather faithfully labored at public work, being an example of honesty, integrity, and devotion to his company and his boss.



In 1935 my grandfather married miss Helen Vaughn of Greenville County and their marriage of more than 60 years produced 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

My grandparents were members and attended East Park Baptist Church and it was there that my grandfather began to sense God's call on his life to preach the Gospel. In late 1939 and early 1940, my grandfather answered God's call and preached his first sermon at East Park Baptist Church the first Sunday in March, 1940. The next 55 years would be involved in the gospel ministry and would carry my grandfather across America and to many foreign countries as well.

As is the case with any young preacher, my grandfather was searching for an opportunity to preach. He preached street corners, at prison camps and in a small tent. Then January of 1943, a great door opened while my grandfather was still working public work and attending Furman University, The Bright Spot Hour was born. He began on radio station WMRC 1490 KHz in Greenville.

As mentioned before, he was called to pastor Mauldin First Baptist Church and Pelham First Baptist Church, both were "part time" churches at that time. During this time, 1943-1947, my grandfather left public work, resigned from Mauldin Baptist and took Pelham full time. Mauldin also became a "full time" church at this time. The Bright Spot Hour also went on WESC, 660 in Dixie and the broadcast moved into its own during this time. By 1948, the program was heard on about 5 radio stations and after 5 consecutive years, was Greenville's oldest daily gospel broadcast. Many people were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ by hearing the gospel of God's grace and untold others were encouraged and strengthened as they listened day by day. I run into people in my meetings regularly who testify that their mother's listened to the Bright Spot Hour every day.

By the 1950's my grandfather was sought after as an evangelist, preaching revivals almost every week, while still pastoring at Pelham and conducting the Bright Spot Hour. The broadcast was sought after by radio station managers to have the program on their station as well. My grandfather expanded the program as much as he could financially but he had to pay for the radio time, just as we do today.

The money was always tight and my mother relates the story of how my grandfather would mortgage his house to borrow the money to pay the radio bills. Many times through the years, my granddad would take personal loans to make the radio budget when the money would be slow coming in.

In 1950, Mr. Horace Jones died of cancer, who from the very beginning of the Bright Spot Hour sang on the program. This was a blow to my grandfather and the many listeners who enjoyed his gospel singing. But out of tragedy, it was at this time that the wife of Reverend Preston Garrett began to play the piano, organ, and vibra harp for the program. An accomplished musician and music teacher, she played from 1950 until her death in 2017 and more than 90 years of age. Through the vast recorded archive she and my grandfather produced, she will never cease being a part of the Bright Spot Hour.



In 1951, while my grandfather was preaching at Woodlawn Baptist Church in High Point, North Carolina, a drunken driver plowed into the back of my grandmother's car on U.S. 29 highway in Spartanburg County. In the crash, the late Horace Jones' daughter was tragically injured and my grandfather's middle daughter, Carolyn, was thrown from the car and died almost immediately. She was only eleven at the time. My grandmother remained unconscious for six weeks, coming only within inches of losing her life and spent the next six months recovering from this tragic accident.

My grandfather was as low as he could possibly be and wondered how he could go on. Through all this upheaval, the thousands of Bright Spot Hour radio friends stood faithfully at my grandfather's side, encouraging him to go on. Through all this tragedy, the Bright Spot Hour continued and prospered, adding other radio stations to its network of coverage.

During the remainder of the 1950's my grandfather continued faithfully, day in, day out, summer, winter, spring, and fall, good times and bad times, to preach everyday on the Bright Spot Hour. At the same time, he was building a new church, Tabernacle Baptist Church, located on U.S. 25, which was founded on the 3rd Sunday of July, 1952.

In 1963, The Bright Spot Hour celebrated it's 20th anniversary. It had become one of the mainstay, solid, national radio broadcasts in America. My grandfather continued doing the same thing then we are doing today; preaching the gospel to the lost, teaching believers and befriending those who are in need.

In 1972, Tabernacle Baptist Church voted in regular church conference to "assume responsibility of the Bright Spot Hour, so long as he (Dr. Sightler) is the pastor." It was at this point that the network of the Bright Spot Hour network exploded. In 1972, my grandfather was hovering at between 15 to 20 stations. By 1982, with the help of the church, the program was heard on about 100 stations from coast to coast. The budget of the program also rose from \$1,000.00 per week to \$1,000.00 per day. My grandparents gave many thousands of dollars into the work of the Bright Spot Hour, as well as pouring their lives and effort into it.



During this time, my grandfather was praying for God to call one of his three grandsons to preach and thus carry on the work after his death. In the fall of 1981, I began to feel the hand of God dealing with me about the gospel ministry. I did not volunteer for the ministry and had little interest in preaching. But in January of 1982, I could not escape the call and like my grandfather did 40 years earlier, looked for a place to preach. Immediately after announcing my call publicly at Tabernacle in February of 1982, my grandfather encouraged me to purchase some radio time on a local station in Greenville County and began my own program for 15 minutes once per week. In 1984, I increased the program to 25 minutes and set the format to be identical to my grandfather's "Bright Spot Hour" program and even broadcast on several stations immediately before or after him.

In January of 1983, my grandfather let me speak on The Bright Spot Hour program for the first time to introduced me to his listeners. In June of 1983, I assumed the production of the program which I have done ever since. My grandfather, now past 70 years of age, continued to produce the sermons for the program but by the later 1980's, he was allowing me more air time to before the loyal listeners of The Bright Spot Hour. In the fall of 1990, my grandfather asked me to end my radio program, "Seeking The Lost" and to come on with "The Bright Spot Hour" every Saturday. Then in 1993, my grandfather turned the daily program responsibilities over to me for about 4 months. Of course this was done in view of trying to perpetrate the program, seeing that my grandfather was 79 years old at this time and not in good health. In 1994, my grandfather signed and witnessed and notarized statement turning full responsibility of "The Bright Spot Hour" over to me in the event of his death or insanity.

In the winter of 1994, my grandfather was placed in the hospital for 10 days and though he did return to the pulpit at Tabernacle and preached for another 9 months, he only returned to the "radio mike" one time, on his birthday, May 15, 1995. During the last year of my grandfather's life, he and my grandmother were the most faithful listeners "Bright Spot Hour" broadcast had. My grandfather passed away on September 27, 1995, bringing a ministry of more than 55 years to a close.

As of his death, the church according to the minutes from regular church conference, no longer assumed the responsibility of the broadcast and thus "The Bright Spot Hour"

returned to the same status it had from 1943-1972, an independent, listener supported Gospel broadcast.

For nearly 25 years, it has been my desire and earnest effort to see the program continue. The Bright Spot Hour has not been of the air since its inception, some 75 years ago. That is a miracle unto itself. We are one of the few dispensational, King James, conservative music programs with a national footprint on the radio in America today.

My goal for the last quarter century has been for the "The Bright Spot Hour" to retain the same mission and goals since the inception of the broadcast. Our purpose for existing and investing many thousands of dollars each month is to 1) preach the gospel of God's grace to as many people as possible and hope to see them saved, 2) to teach, exhort, strengthen and build those in the faith that have placed saving faith in Jesus Christ, and 3) to befriend those who are discouraged, down cast, and defeated.

It is for this reason that we request our listeners to give as they can to keep the program on the air.

The only change "The Bright Spot Hour" has undergone is the change of voice. Our activity, purpose, goal, and desire are all the same. Since 1943, "The Bright Spot Hour" has been on the air for 75 years and we are hoping for the honour to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Bright Spot Hour.

God Bless you!
Dr. Ben Carper

