

November 28, 2021

## **Preaching The Gospel Of Christ**

By Everett Hardin

Preaching the Gospel of Christ is the greatest privilege any person on earth has been granted. Truly its undertaking is fraught with fearful responsibility; yea, one loaded with possibilities affecting the eternal destiny of the souls of men. If sound gospel preaching is not done, worldliness, spiritual weakness and digression will be the result. If we have weak preaching the church will be weak. Faithful gospel preaching has the power to lift the fallen, restore the erring, and convert the sinner.

### **Abide In The Teaching**

In his introduction Luke wrote to the Book of Acts, he speaks of, *“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach”* (Acts 1:1). It is significant that Jesus began to do and to teach. An urgent instruction to Timothy is given by Paul: *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”* (I Tim. 4:16). One must practice what he preaches. Failure here not only means the loss of his own soul, but renders his teaching ineffective. Paul recognized the possibility of apostasy on his part, *“I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”* (I Cor. 9:27). *“Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work this man shall be blessed in his deed”* (Jas. 2:15).

### **Give Us Straight Preaching**

Religious chaos and confusion plagues this present world. Many honest seekers for truth are bewildered and frustrated. Sectarian strife and party factions have sown discord among men who believe in God, and disrespect among them that believe not. A skeptical world turns away in frustration, bewilderment and confusion because of men claiming to preach the Word of God; when in reality they are preaching the doctrines of men. If ever this old sin-cursed world needed plain straight forward preaching of the gospel of Christ, it is **NOW!** Whenever false teachers are allowed to teach their false doctrine in the church without being challenged, corruption and apostasy are the results. Paul said *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”* (Gal. 5:9).

The world does not need “social gospel” sermonizing, and all fanfare-seeking campaigns! The world need Christ preached as He was proclaimed under inspired men. We need fearless men such as brought forth the Restoration movement. Men, who will hew the line, and forcefully repudiate every false way. We need preachers who will show an intolerance to any error, and great fervor the truth in Christ Jesus. We need to define clearly the line of demarcation between the people of God and those who are servants of false doctrines. *“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your soul”* (Jer. 6:16). This is the path that God’s children have followed for many generations. This is the good way — as opposed to the evil ways of iniquity that many people are now traveling. It is impossible for man to direct his own steps in religion (Jer. 10:23).

We can forfeit all claim to precious scriptural grounds by departing from the “*old paths.*” Sermons which emphasize polished manners and oratorical sermons which are for only a social impact will not suffice. Preachers are no more to blame than church members who desire to hear soft words and fair speeches, and do not want to be rebuked for sins.

### **Preach the Gospel In Its Fulness**

Paul was very conscious to preach the gospel of Christ in its fulness, with no additions or subtractions. “*And I, brethren, when I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” (I Cor. 2:1,2). To this he also said, “*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Gal. 1:11-12) “*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake*” (2 Cor. 4:5). “*Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech*” (2 Cor. 3:12). “*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel*” (I Cor. 9:16). Yes, we still need men who will preach it as did Paul! The world, though, unknowingly, still needs the salvation found only in Christ. His gospel must be presented to the lost while they live.

It is quite noticeable that when Paul gave instructions to young preachers, he never stressed diplomacy, tact, or softness. To Timothy he said, “*I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Rather than tickling the itching ears of the world, Paul wanted Timothy to strike at its sinful heart. Never did he advocate appeasement or compromise. To Titus he said, “*This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*” (Tit. 1:13). “*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear*” (I Tim. 5:20). As there was a need then, so there is presently the need of preaching a powerful, inspirational, dynamic message to the lost. The philosophical treatise on world affairs is not for God’s pulpit. Let the world handle political problems; the preacher of the gospel must preach Christ. Let His terms of salvation be sounded forth to dying men without apology or camouflage. We must show people today what made Christians then and some will obey the Lord. The power is not in higher education, theological scholarship, or a modern approach. The “*power*” is in the “**GOSPEL**” (Rom. 1:16), and it must be openly and plainly presented again and again.

### **The Church Needs Bold Preachers**

When persecution drove the early church from Jerusalem, it only served to spread the gospel to the world. “*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). When Paul was persecuted, he wrote, “*And many of the brethren, in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more **bold** to speak the word without fear*” (Phil. 1:14). Paul himself sought greater courage in his preaching, and asked for prayers to that end: “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit,...And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth **boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel...that therein I may speak **boldly**, as I ought to speak*” (Eph. 6:18-20). To his beloved brethren in Thessalonica, Paul said, “*Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all man have not faith*” (I Thess. 3:1-2). Paul asked for prayers, not for selfish things,

but for the spread of the gospel; to be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

We need more bold preachers like Paul to stand before such political figures as Felix, Drusilla, and King Agrippa, to denounce cheap hypocrisy and political intrigue, while defending the truth. We need more men like John the Baptist who confronted Herod to condemn his marriage to his brother's wife, saying, "*It is not lawful for thee to have her*" (Mk 14:4). We need more upright preachers like Stephen, who still preached Christ as a risen Lord, even as they stoned him to death (Acts 6 and 7). We need preachers with such faith and trust in God that they can say with Job: "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him*" (Job 13:15). We need preachers who will courageously declare the whole counsel of God on such subjects as adultery, divorce and remarriage, abortion, homosexuality, lasciviousness and all other forms of ungodliness, and do it without fear or favor. The church stands in need of strong men to proclaim God's word to lost men. The power is not in higher education, theological scholarship or a modern approach. Indeed, as previously stated, "the 'power' is in the **Gospel** (Rom. 1:16). And it must be preached openly and plainly presented again and again."

Let every preacher today rededicate his life with this revelation by Paul: "*But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts*" (I Thess. 2:4). May the people of God demand that preachers of the gospel be just that. Keep them out of civic and social clubs, and demand that they denounce sin, rebuke sinners, and honor Christ!

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