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P R E A C H I N G

There is an idea advocated by religions in general and some in the Lord's church that preachers should preach so as to favorably impress the world and project an acceptable image of the church in the mind of the public. The cry is for a dehorned, camouflaged, diluted gospel to scratch the itching ears of those who will not endure sound doctrine (See 2 Tim. 4:1-4). This demand is made by impenitent sinners who want to be left alone, and by lukewarm, compromising, spiritual weaklings in the church, who, for one reason or another are fearful of the consequences which may result from the type of plain preaching as done by Jesus Christ, his apostles, and faithful evangelists today. The argument is that "It won't do any good; it will drive people further away from the church." This manifests either a shameful lack of Bible knowledge, or a willful disregard of its teachings.

The apostle Paul said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I just please men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). He also said, "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. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know Nor of men sought we glory ..." (1 Thess. 2:4-6).

Gospel preachers today must seek to please God, not men. They are obligated to preach the word, reprove and rebuke sinners in or out of the church, in season, out of season, even rebuking some sharply that they may be sound in the faith (2 Tim. 4:1-4; Tit. 1:13). He who would preach only what the people want to hear, rather than what they need to hear, for popularity, financial gain or any other reason, would not be worthy to be called a gospel preacher, but would be an "ear-scratcher."

The word of God is quick, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. (Heb. 4:12). Some who are pricked by it are converted (Acts 2:37-41). But some turn back to walk with Christ no more because of it (Jno. 6:66). Some become offended, but Jesus did not apologize (Matt.

15:1-14). Some are hardened by it (Acts 19:8-9). Some who were cut to the heart by the preaching killed the preacher (Acts 7:51-60). We ask those who criticize and oppose the plain preaching of the truth now whether they endorse JESUS, PAUL and STEPHEN? (Read above scriptures). DO YOU DARE ANSWER?

Preachers are obligated to convict the world of sin, not please sinners of the world. We must convict them before we can convert them. We must prick or cut them to the heart with the sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God (Eph. 6:17). Certainly this is emotionally painful to the guilty, and it should be, else how will they sorrowfully repent of sins? But whether sinners are convicted and converted, offended and hardened, driven away from or drawn to God, regardless of the reactions of the hearers and resulting consequences, the full gospel must be preached, sin must be identified and reprov'd; applications to the guilty must be made. "Good words and fair speeches" may glorify the speaker and appease and please the audience, but such will not convict and convert aliens or erring brethren. Preaching with the wisdom of words to lessen condemnation of sin and dilute the truth makes the cross of Christ OF NONE EFFECT (1 Cor. 1:17).

Let us forever forget about trying to establish an acceptable "image of the church" in the eyes of a sinful world and stand solidly upon and for the pure, plain, sin-condemning, soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us earnestly strive to cut sinners to the heart with the sword of the Spirit, calling upon the guilty to obey God or be lost. This is the only way we can faithfully serve God and save man. The Bible teaches throughout that God, Christ, the prophets, apostles and preachers of God COULD NOT and DID NOT SEEK TO please the multitudes. The only way it can be done is to compromise with the devil and become a sinner. "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). Let us not try to appease and please, but convict and convert.

HOW DO YOU STAND, BROTHER?