

Preachers Who Hold the Line

Written by George Bentsch

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Do preachers need encouragement as they go from place to place to preach the gospel? Most assuredly they do. Leaving their families they travel many miles in hope of bringing someone to accept the truth. We shake their hand, tell them how we enjoy their sermons. Then we sigh with relief when the week's meeting is over. Meanwhile, they are in route to another meeting. Do we know they love us? Without love for us and love of the truth they would not make the sacrifices to preach to us.

Some time ago, at the end of a week's meeting the brethren came to the preacher. They said, "You are doing us so much good we would like another week of your time." Now, that was a compliment! That was encouragement. That night they announced the meeting would continue another week. No doubt the preacher was impressed by such interest. No doubt he preached his heart out that second week. No doubt there was good accomplished by the Word spoken. In Isaiah 55:11 the Lord said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The preacher is an amplifier through which the Word of God is sent. An amplifier does not change the Word sent through it. Woe to that preacher who adds to or takes from God's Word. Revelation 22:18-19 warns that God will add plagues to the man who adds to His Word. To the man who takes away, God shall take away his part out of the book of life. We need to pray for God's blessings on those loyal and faithful men who preach the truth to us. In 1 Thessalonians 5:25 Paul wrote this plea, "Brethren, pray for us." Then in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 he said, "..pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." This is the unspoken request of every preacher of the gospel.

Those who preach the pure, unadulterated gospel sow the seed of the kingdom. In Matthew 13 Jesus gave the parable of the man who sowed good seed. Then under cover of darkness his enemy sowed tares in his field. His explanation (vs. 38-39); "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil..." Note, verse 37 says "He that soweth the good

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seed is the Son of man." Since every seed brings forth after its kind, the pure Word produced Christians. It was the doctrine of men (inspired by Satan) that produced the tares. Jesus told the hard hearted Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth..." There has always been conflict between those who speak the truth and obey God, and those who do not. We thank God for preachers who preach the truth without fear or favor. If their preaching bothers you, mend your ways. It is their hope to turn us from our sins.

We wonder sometimes why those who promote false doctrine rise up among us. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). So, one reason false teachers arise is that they desire a following. Then in 1 Corinthians 11:19 Paul wrote, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Consider Deuteronomy 13:1-3 where Moses said, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Today the Lord may try our hearts to see if we will hold fast. It is not easy when those we love are the ones who would lead us astray. God considered the promotion of a false doctrine a deed worthy of death. He has not changed. He is offended by every false doctrine taught in the world. In Romans 16:17 Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Good words and fair speeches do not make error any less false! Our preachers are criticized harshly (and unjustly) for demanding a "thus saith the Lord" for doctrine. Be sure you stand on Scripture, not opinion.

It has never ceased to be important that preachers preach the truth. Paul told Titus to "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Sadly we have reached the time of 2 Timothy 4:3, "For ...they will not endure sound doctrine..." This is not new. Isaiah 30:9-11 reads, "...this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Don't upset us by preaching against error!

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Too many sermons speak of love and heaven, without warning of transgression and hell! Romans 2:13 warns, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." James tells us, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). The preachers who hold the line, and preach only the Word are the most valuable of men. May God richly bless them. —PO Box 628, Blum, TX 76627