

## VII.3. Lambs to Rams: Preachers

Preach- Gk.2784- to *herald* (as a public *crier*), especially the divine truth (the Gospel).

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, **evangelists** (Gk.2099- a *preacher of the Gospel*); and some, pastors and teachers; (Emp. added)

Like teachers, preachers have an important role to play in the health of every congregation of the Lord's people. They are not to be misunderstood as having the same authority as elders since they also are to be under them (*Heb 13:17*) as fellow members of the body. They do, however, carry authority in making sure the whole congregation, including her shepherds, adheres to truth. How many times in the history of the church have elders taken their flock down the wrong path as Paul warned those of Ephesus to be careful of (*Act 20:28-31*). Therefore, it is the preacher who is responsible, without his paycheck holding him hostage, to make sure truth is preached "in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (*Col 1:9*).

1Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the **foolishness of preaching** to save them that believe (Gk.4100- to *entrust [especially one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ]*). (Emp. added)

Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent (Gk.3340- [*morally to feel compunction*]), for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Compunction is regret, so one of the most difficult subjects to preach on is repentance and repentance is one of the steps necessary for salvation. People who have had "their conscience seared with a hot iron (Gk.2743- to *brand* [*"cauterize"*], that is, [*by implication*] to *render un-sensitive*)" (1 Tim 4:2) don't believe anything they do is to be considered sin which needs to be cause for regret. And they are often offended when given

biblical passages to show how immoral their choices truly are.

Jesus told the disciples of John the Immerser that “blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me” (*Mat 11:6*). Preaching truth will offend many. When Jesus was told by His disciples that the Pharisees were offended by what He said (“*that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man*”- *Mat 15:11-12*) He didn’t stop preaching the truth. When He preached that He was the bread sent down out of Heaven and that those who “eatheth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life” (*Jn 6:54*) He lost some disciples (*v. 60*) but that didn’t stop Him from preaching truth. Many people throughout the world have been offended by what Jesus has said and what has been recorded in the Bible but that doesn’t mean that preachers (*and the church as a whole*) should stop preaching truth. True, our words are to “be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that [we] may know how [we] ought to answer every man” (*Col 4:6*) but that gives no relief of speaking truth. Preaching and defending truth brings true growth and the growth of the early church was made possible by such preaching. Her purity was due to the consequences that true believers suffered at the hands of the unbelievers.

“As people called Christians were in danger of death all who were insincere were deterred from becoming Christians. The church was able to remain comparatively pure and the courage with which the truly converted confessed their faith in time of trial made a profound effect upon the non-Christian”

F.W. Mattox: “The Eternal Kingdom- A History of the Church”- pg. 98

Are preachers (*and congregations since preaching isn’t just for paid preachers- 1 Cor 9:14*) proclaiming Jesus “upon the housetops” (*Mat 10:27*), i.e., boldly and with zeal no matter the consequence? Or are we afraid of what others will think or what the government will do because of the mob mentality of those who are offended by the truth? The apostle Paul felt he was obligated to preach because of his conversion from persecutor

to one being persecuted, so shouldn't we all have some measure of gratitude for the blood of Christ?

1Co 9:16 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!

How would we think the apostle Paul would feel about modern day styles of preaching compared to how he told Timothy to preach?

2Ti 4:1 I charge (*Gk.1263- protest earnestly*) thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom (*concerns the resurrection when Jesus returns to reveal the true nature of the kingdom- see VI.5. The Church: Militant and Victorious*); 2 **Preach the word**; be instant (*Gk.2186- Thayer: "be ready"*) in season, out of season (*both when opportunity arises and when it doesn't*); reprove (*Gk.1651- admonish*), rebuke (*Gk.2008- forbid*), exhort (*Gk.3870- invoke [by imploration]*) with all longsuffering (*Gk.3115- forbearance*) and doctrine. (*Emp. added*)

1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the Gospel which I preached** unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, **unless ye have believed in vain**. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (*"comparing spiritual things with spiritual"- 1 Cor 2:13*); 4 And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (*Emp. added*)

The Gospel, the good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ truly is profitable when we are established in it, when we consume it, when we live it and when we make the

effort necessary to show the confidence we have in it. It's the boldness the apostles prayed for in order to proclaim it amidst the pressures of the persecution.

Act 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word,

We live in a society where preachers are looked at as if a “side show attraction” until they preach truth concerning the sins of the present age that have been accepted as “alternate lifestyles”. Under the pressure of the ‘squeaky wheel’ minority of those who live and practice what the Bible condemns, governments have cowed to their demands out of fear of loss at the ballot box. Where are the Stephens of today (*Acts 7*) who will speak out as he did not fearing death at the hands of “those that oppose themselves” (*2 Tim 2:25*)? How should preachers today preach from their pulpits the message of salvation where congregations only want their itching ears tickled (*2 Tim 4:3*)? Do they worship their paychecks over the Lord? Do they preach what the people want over what they need? Sadly, it seems that has become the norm in many churches of Christ. The only way to recognize them as such is by the sign outside their building which can be deceptive.

True preaching will bring persecution because “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them”; which is the reason Paul stated that “we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (*2 Cor 4:4-5*). Jesus said that “if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” (*Jn 15:20*). After the apostles were beaten for speaking in the name of Jesus they rejoiced “and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (*Act 5:40-42*). What an example they showed to the church and all who heard them! Can we not use them as an example of the way we are to teach and preach Jesus today?

Sadly, with all the denominations that exist in the world, it is becoming even more difficult to preach Gospel truth because of preconceived ideas or false preaching concerning the Bible. There are many who “have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (*Rom 10:2*).

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

False teaching and divisions began almost from the start. This is why it is so important for preachers to preach truth no matter what. Preaching is for “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (*Col 1:28*).

### VII.3. Questions

1. True or false: Preachers have the same authority over the congregation as the elders. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
2. What is an authority that preachers should and do have? a) to make sure the whole congregation adheres to the truth; b) to entertain the faithful; c) to speak his heart.
3. Name one of the most difficult subjects to preach on and why. a) Hell; b) sin; c) repentance.
4. Explain what Paul meant when a person's conscience is seared with a hot iron. a) it has been pressed; b) it has been rendered un-sensitive; c) it has been burned beyond recognition.
5. Why is preaching truth so important? a) it brings growth and keeps the church pure; b) it helps the elders in reaching the lost; c) it pays the preacher's paycheck.
6. What is the Gospel? a) repentance; b) the baptism of Christ; c) the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
7. Why will true preaching bring persecution? a) it doesn't; b) the devil has blinded the minds of the unbelievers; c) it appeals to the conscience.
8. Name two things that preaching does. a) it warns and teaches; b) it condemns and praises; c) it shuns and condemns.