



The Voice of Truth



September 16, 2012

Am I Your Enemy By Jimmy Pettigrew

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" **Galatians 4:16**. Paul did not desire to become an enemy of these brethren he loved. Because he loved them, however, he told them what they needed to hear rather than what they wanted to hear. It is hard to know people's reaction when you speak the truth, the whole counsel of God. It may hit and hurt. We are to speak the truth in **love (Ephesians 4:15)**; but we must speak the truth. It was Paul's duty to tell them the truth of God. It is the duty of every member of the body of Christ to present the truth even if it hurts, even to people who have itching ears. Too many people want soothing, deceitful messages instead of the truth (**Isaiah 30:10**).

We have been taught that preaching and teaching the oracles of God will make some enemies of the cross and of those who stand for the truth (**Philippians 3:17-19**).

In the words of Paul, "*I am your enemy if I tell you the*

truth" that:

(1) There is one true church. This fact is seen in Paul's proclamation: He declared that there is "one body" (**Ephesians 4:4**). He affirmed that the body is the church (**Ephesians 1:22-23**)."

(2) That salvation is only in Christ's church. All spiritual blessings are "*in Christ*" (**Ephesians 1:3**); forgiveness (**Ephesians 1:7**); redemption (**Colossians 1:14**); sonship (**Galatians 3:26-27**). The same process whereby one gets into Christ is the same way one gets into the body (church) of Christ (**Galatians 3:26-27**; **1 Corinthians 12:12-20**; **Ephesians 5:23**).

Men need to hear the truth. Those who pervert the gospel are our enemies (**Galatians 1:6-9**). Error will not save; it condemns (**2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**). ♦

"CHRISTIAN LIVING" By Jimmy Pettigrew

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (**Revelation 14:4**). Jesus is the One we should follow, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (**1 Peter 2:21**). He is the way, and the truth, and the life (**John 14:6**). Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (**Luke 9:23**). We need to walk as Christ walked (**1 John 2:6**). Why is Jesus the One we should fashion or pattern our life after? He was tempted like us, (**Matthew 4:1-11**; **Hebrews 4:15**) and did no sin (**1 Peter 2:22**). He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (**John 1:29**), the Son of God (**John 3:34**) and lives forever (**Revelation 1:18**). Salvation is found in Him (**Acts 4:12**). Truly He is King of kings, and Lord of lords (**Revelation 19:16**). These are some of the reasons why man should fashion, pattern, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (**Revelation 14:4**).

The perfect pattern of Jesus describes the Christian life as a life of service to God (**Luke 22:42**). It is the Christian's responsibility to serve God, not mammon (**Matthew 6:24**). Serving God means serving Christ, which in turn, means following and living for Christ (**John 12:26**). It is mockery to claim to be a servant of Christ while living in disobedience to Him (**Luke 6:46**). Living for Christ demands us to live differently. Jesus Christ changes people for good. Those once enslaved to sin (**Ephesians 5:8**), now walk in newness of life (**Ephesians 4:24**). The apostle Peter gives a good insight into the power of pure Christianity changing people (**1 Peter 4:1-5**). To be a Christian, our manner of life is different. We do not live the way we did before. The Christian is distinctive! He dares to be different by the way of life. The conduct of a Christian is a powerful preacher. Let me ask some important questions:

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1. Would you verbally proclaim that worship to God is insignificant, Bible study is unimportant, giving time, talent and financial resources are incidental to Christian living? What do you preach by your manner of life? Preachers should not have to **BEG** Christians to study, give generously, and attend every time the doors are opened. **TRUE SERVANTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE BEGGED!**

2. Would you declare the impossibility of apostasy (**1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12-13**)? What does your conduct preach?

3. Would you preach that erring brethren are not to be restored (**Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20**)?

4. Would you preach that a Christian can dress in immodest clothing (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**)?

5. Would you preach that a Christian does not have to watch his\her speech (**James 3**)?

The conduct of the Christian will either adorn the doctrine or it will reveal a lack of dedication to Christ (**Titus 2:10**). Following our Master is the way we adorn the doctrine of Christ! Which are you doing? ♦

"Godly Characteristics Of Preachers"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Knowing that the preacher is set forth in the "public light" more than others due to the public nature of his work, I thought it would be good for us to examine what God considers godly characteristics of a preacher of the gospel. Many are confused at times when it comes to the nature of a preacher's work, and how he ought/ought not be. Let us take the Bible, and learn from God what ought and ought not be a part of the preacher's life.

While we could study this subject in a number of ways, I have chosen to focus this article on **I Thessalonians 2:1-12**. Please read that section of Scripture, and then study with me. Godly characteristics that ought to be seen in the life of a preacher include:

Boldness (v. 2)

Boldness is missing from much of the preaching we are hearing today. Yet, this was characteristic of the apostle Paul's preaching (**Acts 13:46, 14:3**; etc.). In fact, boldness is encouraged in the lives of God's people no less than 31 times in the Scripture. It is imperative that we be "bold," i.e., "to be frank in utterance, or confident in spirit and demeanor to venture plainly" (Strong's) in preaching. Certainly, this was the case when Paul entered Thessalonica, and preached Christ with boldness in the synagogues and the city (**Acts 17:2-6**). Boldness is needed today when speaking to folks about sin and error and how to correct that. Let us never mistake boldness for arrogance, though. There is a vast difference between the two!

"Speaking The Gospel of God In The Midst Of Much Conflict" (v. 2)

Let no one deceive himself into thinking that preaching is "easy" and "free from problems or concerns." A reading of **Acts 17:4-8**, reveals some of the conflict ("an effort or

anxiety:-- ... fight, race," Strong's) Paul faced while in Thessalonica! Preaching the gospel is not for the faint-of-heart, nor the thin-skinned! Preaching the gospel is not for the "social butterflies"! Preaching demands courage, a true love for souls, and a commitment to fight against Satan's schemes!

There is conflict associated with preaching because when folks are faced with the reality of their sins, some will balk at this fact, and wish to "kill the messenger" instead of listen to the message. Paul faced this at Thessalonica, and in many other places he preached (**Acts 17:5, 18:12-16**, etc.). Conflict is a part of the work! Thus, the reason for the military imagery used by Paul in his writing (**II Tim. 2:3-4**), as well as the reminder that Christians wear the "whole armor of God" (**Eph. 6:13-18**)! This is needed when in a spiritual conflict!

Not Deceitful (v. 3)

Paul had no intention of misleading people. He spoke the truth (**Rom. 9:1; II Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20**). Any man who wishes to preach must be of an honest character (**Rom. 12:17; II Cor. 13:7-8; Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:9**). Dishonesty/Deceit will ruin a man's reputation and his effectiveness in the gospel. How can one be expected to be taken seriously when spreading the gospel, if he is dishonest in business dealings, or will not pay his bills, etc.? (**Rom. 2:21-23**)

"Not To Please Man, But God Nor Did We Seek Glory From People" (v. 4, 6)

Let the preacher never forget who he is serving! Paul understood this, and not only did he tell the Thessalonians his work was to please God, he also told the Galatians, "If I

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were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (**Gal. 1:10**). Preachers work FOR the Lord, and WITH the brethren! Let there be no mistake about that. Reversing the prepositions ("for" and "with") is the recipe for apostasy. To borrow a phrase from Christ, if a preacher is preaching so as to please men, "he has his reward"!

Not Using Flattering Words (v. 5)

Flattering words do nothing to help a lost soul. Christ taught His apostles not to use such words (**Matt. 23:7-12**). Even Elihu knew not to "show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person" (**Job 32:21**). Let us learn that lesson! Such actions can destroy the work a preacher is doing in a location.

Not Covetous (v. 5)

Unfortunately, "greed" is a temptation that can strike at anyone (**Jas. 1:14-15**). Therefore, a preacher preaching for money will not preach for the Lord (**I Tim. 6:10**)! God said this is idolatry (**Col. 3:5**). Yes, may every preacher be paid according to his work (**I Cor. 9:14; II Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15**). Yet, let God defeat every man preaching for money. (There is a **great** difference between those two men!) I thank God for men like Paul who sacrificed in years gone by so that the gospel was preached in our country and souls were saved. They may have had a small amount of this world's goods, but they were rich in faith and bore much fruit for Christ. May their tribe increase!!

"Gentle" (v. 7)

Preachers must remember to be gentle when dealing with people. Men, like sheep, must be led to the living water, not driven (**Ps. 23:2; Jn. 4:10, 14**). Let us show that gentle side by caring for those who are in a lost condition and wish to repent, as well as for the saved folks who need encouragement (**I Thess. 5:14**). Therefore, note that there is a time for having "mercy on those who doubt" and a time to "save others by snatching them out of the fire" (**Jude 22-23**). "Boldness" and "gentleness" are not contradictory terms as Paul shows in this very text (**v. 2, 7**). A preacher must have characteristics of both in his life!

"Labor And Toil" (v. 9)

A stereo-type often joked about is the "lazy preacher." A preacher mustn't be guilty of contributing to this stereo-type! Preaching demands self-motivation, because spreading God's word is work from beginning to end (**II Tim. 4:5**)!

It is hard work to study (**Ecc. 12:12**) and prepare to teach, and then to go and be active in teaching others (**II Tim. 4:2-5**). It is hard work to look for avenues where the gospel can be spread and then being active in pursuing them! When preachers forget this, they open themselves up to being tempted by covetousness, i.e., just preaching for the money! (see: **v. 5**) There is much to do in the Lord's kingdom! It is "labor and toil"!

Behaving "Holy And Righteously And Blamelessly" (v. 10)

How necessary it is that a preacher's behavior reflect what he preaches! Many a preacher has ruined his reputation, and even caused great harm to a congregation by not living what he was preaching. This is also true when folks in the world see Christians not living up to what the Lord teaches in Scripture! A "good reputation" is key in so many areas of life (**Prov. 22:1**)! In connection with the Thessalonians, we know that what Paul taught is what he practiced (**I Cor. 9:27**). May this be true of us! Ezra of old behaved in a manner consistent with his teaching, as did Jesus (**Ezra 7:10; Acts 1:1**). Preachers, do your actions match your preaching? Some need to repent!

Exhorting, Encouraging, And Charging (v. 11-12)

This is the final responsibility noted in this section of Scripture. Notice please that the preacher is to "exhort," "encourage," and "charge" that men and women, "walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you unto his own kingdom and glory" (**v. 12**)! This message was not limited to the Thessalonians, though. Paul had the same prayer for the Colossian Christians (**Col. 1:9-10**). How this type of living is needed today! Christians need to be reminded at times of Who they are serving! This life is not meant to be a pursuit of worldly things. Those things are temporary at best (**Matt. 6:19-21; II Cor. 4:18**). Let us all walk worthy of God that we might see Heaven one day.

Conclusion

Are the preachers here obeying **I Thessalonians 2**? Hopefully, you see these attributes in these men the longer we are together. What is set forth in **I Thessalonians 2** is a tall order, but it can be accomplished, and folks will be blessed when we do things the "Bible way", following the Bible pattern, not merely in this area of life, but in all areas of life!! (**Col. 3:17**)

"Truth is universal — that is the reason a person sometimes thinks the speaker is aiming every thing he says at him." Credit: The Old Paths - 6/3/12 ♦

Are You Like The Bereans?

By Jonathan L. Perz

You might be wondering, "Who are the Bereans?" Though the Bible says little of this people, what it does say speaks volumes!

"Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men." (Acts 17:10-12)

- The Bible says they were "fair-minded!" Are you?
- The Bible says they "received the word with all readiness!" Do you?
- The Bible says they "searched the Scriptures daily!" Do you?
- The Bible says they wanted "to find out if these things were so!" Do you?

The Bible says "many of them believed?" Have you?

INDEED, THE LORD'S CHURCH NEEDS MORE OF THE BEREAN SPIRIT! *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

The church of Christ

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (Eph. 5:23)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
- The kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28)
- The depository of those saved (Acts 2:47)
- One body, not many bodies (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believe that Christ is the Son of God (Jno. 8:24)
- One must repent of sins (Lk. 13:3)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
- One must be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27) ♦

A pint of example is worth a barrel full of advice.

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com