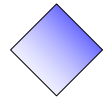


The Voice of Truth



February 16, 2014

The Lord's Church Must Stop Treating Sin Lightly

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). Likewise he said, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all that the rest also may be in fear" (1 Timothy 5:20 A.S.V.).

At times I wonder if some have even read this charge today. There are those who are disgusted, displeased, offended by sound gospel preaching. **REPROVE** implies that one is in error and needs arguments presented to convince him of the truth. **REBUKE** implies that one must be warned of wrong doing. There is a trend to believe that the possibility of offending someone in preaching the Bible is to be avoided. We are to preach the word not pamper the world. We are to reprove, rebuke, not relax in sin, approve, and exonerate it! We hear such remarks as: "None of us are perfect", "You will drive them away," "We don't want to make anyone mad", "That will split the church," being used by some. There is an attitude, a stance that has crept into the Lord's church to abolish, banish, expel, eliminate reproving, and rebuking from our message. "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:5). In some areas, the Lord's church looks more like a "social club" of religion, than it does the blood-bought body of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:19).

Today, we hear, "Don't rock the boat," and "It will tear the congregation apart if you preach on that," "This is called getting too personal." Many preachers are afraid to take a strong stand and help the congregation see the need to bust sin out of the camp. God did not allow His people of Israel to continue in sin because He was afraid of stirring up a hornet's nest, or getting personal or that His name would suffer if He allowed His people to be taken into captivity. The Lord desires that His church be pure. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the

washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26- 27). Christian's are to put off sin (Colossians 3:8); and, the word from whence put off is translated signifies moving out and away from. It is unthinkable that Christ will own His bride if she becomes unchaste, plays the harlot after the world, and has her affections taken away from Christ and set on things of the earth.

Paul told the elders from Ephesus, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27). Paul is saying in these verses that we have the charge to point out brother sins (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). We have many in the Lord's church who assembles with the saints when they want to, who haven't attended in weeks, instead of reproving and rebuking this member about his sin, we ask him to serve on the Lord's table or lead prayers. We act like nothing is wrong! And that tells the member he is fine in the sight of God, and this tells him also that he can miss and still be called on these duties. Instead of tolerating sin, we are to reprove it (Ephesians 5:11). Tolerance of sin is condemned (Revelation 2:20-21). If a congregation permits impure individuals to remain unchastened within its fellowship, it thereby becomes a partaker of their sin and will also drift out of favor of the Lord (Revelation 2). Failure to reprove, rebuke and purge out sin leads to toleration of sin, and toleration of sin leads to a love of sin, the love of sin leads to a practice of sin, and the practice of sin leads to spiritual death (Romans 6:23). The church is wounded when we fail to reprove and rebuke sin. A single sin which is permitted to remain in the body will destroy the whole body (Revelation 2:1-5).

When we cover up sins in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its efficacy to

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honor God or to save men. Sin must be exposed and purged out of the church or the church becomes corrupt and a synagogue of Satan instead of the church of Jesus Christ. God cannot be honored by covering up evil in the church. To expose sin, error and false teachers is to proclaim to the world that they seek truth, purity, holiness, and godlikeness. But sadly, Bible preaching that gets to the heart of the matter is often rejected. Sin is just a misunderstanding, not transgression of God's will. Sin is something you just do not bring up, even if it is true. One

preacher was told that there were certain subjects which he was told not to preach. What happens when a man preaches on a Biblical topic and is then told his preaching is "too hard?" The cry is not to "repent of sin," but "get rid of the trouble maker, the preacher." We need to "*hate every false way*" (**Psalm. 119:140**). The key to the whole matter is love. "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent*" (**Revelation 3:19**). To ignore or tolerate wrong doing among its members is not a sign of true love. How much do you love God, His word, the church, your brothers and sisters? ♦

"Satan Works Overtime"

By Jarrod Jacobs

The Scriptures describe Satan as being active! In Job's day, we see Satan "*going to and fro on the earth, and ... walking up and down on it*" looking for a righteous man (**Job 1:7, 2:2**). Peter warned, "*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*" (**I Pet. 5:8**). A lioness will creep and wait patiently for her time to strike and kill the gazelle. In hunting, she is active, and has a goal in mind — food for herself and her cubs. Notice, Satan is also described as being as being as active, as that hungry, hunting lion! Jesus said that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (**Jn. 8:44**). His actions continue to this day.

sanction sin (ex: gambling/lotteries, drinking alcohol, abortion of babies, homosexuality, etc.), you can rest assured that Satan has been working overtime among our government's leaders! He has been working among the nations of men ever since government began. Consider the wicked kings God names in the Old Testament among the Jews and the Gentiles! Then, look into the New Testament and be reminded of the sins of Herod the Great, Agrippa I and II, Caesar, etc. In studying these leaders, we find such sins as pride, lying, stealing, murder, etc. When we look at government leaders today, we find many of them falling into the same trap! These facts all bear record to the fact that Satan has been at work in the government!

Notice the terminology used in reference to Satan. Satan is not sitting somewhere on a beach relaxing, is he? We do not get the impression that Satan gets up some mornings and says, "Today, I will take the morning off." Look at this world. Satan has his hand in the TV stations, in the newspaper, in magazines, in radios and on the computer. He is in our schools, our military, our government, and in our homes. No, friends, Satan does not rest! In fact, Satan is working **overtime!**

Satan Works Overtime Among Individuals.

The book of I John lets us know that men are tempted with the lusts of the flesh and eye, and the pride of life (**I Jn. 2:15-17**). We are told that Satan walks around as a lion looking for his next meal (**I Pet. 5:8**). Satan has not stopped yet, but continues to look for the "weak," "sickly," and those who are just unaware of their surroundings. When we see folks caught up in alcoholism, abusive behavior, lying, stealing, pornography, being unfaithful to God, ignorant of His word, not praying, not living as we should in Christ, etc., we are seeing the evidence of a people who are victims of Satan. Yes, Satan works overtime!

Satan Works Overtime In Our Families.

Observe the character and content of most families, and we will see Satan's work. Divorce, abuse, ungodly behavior, being lax in training the children, hypocritical behavior, and many other things are present in families due to Satan's influence. Remember, as goes the home, so goes the nation. Therefore, we find Satan working "overtime", especially in the homes of Christians, to try and lure them away from God and His will.

My observation is that many Christians are lax in their attitude toward Satan and his work. For this, we can also thank Satan, for he wants folks to be unimpressed with him, and make light of his tactics. If folks think Satan is a myth, or a joke, he is happy with this, for he knows such people will not take him seriously, and therefore will not take the salvation of their souls seriously, either (contrast Jesus' teaching: **Matt. 16:26**). Solomon wrote, "*Fools mock at sin*" (**Prov. 14:9**). How Satan loves those "fools"!

Satan Works Overtime In Government.

When laws of men are enacted which encourage and

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He also wants more people to be foolish, and he works "overtime" at making sure this happens!

Conclusion

Can we fight against Satan? Absolutely! He is powerful, but Christ has given us the weapons and armor for fighting

Satan (Eph. 6:10-17; Rom. 13:12, 14; II Cor. 10:3-5). Now, we must **use them!**!! Perhaps we forgot that we are at war with Satan. Let us awake from sleep and be busy fighting temptation, as well as living a faithful life (I Cor. 15:58). Look to God (not self) for strength (Phil. 4:13). Exercise your senses (Heb. 5:14). We can win!

Credit: The Old Paths - 1/19/14 ♦

"Many False Prophets (?)" By Larry Ray Hafley, Cookeville, TN

Are there truly "*many false prophets*" who "*are gone out into the world*"? Jesus said there would be "*many false prophets*" who should arise "*and deceive many*" (Matt. 24:11). The Holy Spirit made a similar statement (1 Jn. 4:1). As Peter said, "*there were false prophets*" among the people of the Old Testament, and even so "*there shall be false teachers among you*" (2 Pet. 2:1).

But how can this be? If, as many people believe, everyone's religion is equally valid and acceptable, how can there be "any" false prophets, let alone "*many false prophets*"? The fact that the Bible says there shall be "*many false prophets*" implies that not everyone's religion is pleasing before God.

Even in his own day, the Lord Jesus did not receive the worship of each person. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 7:21). "*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ...*

Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:8, 9, 13, 14). The "*blind leaders*" were false prophets, false teachers.

Again, that "*false prophets*" exist is indicative of the fact that not all religions, not all "belief systems," are approved of God (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 2:2). Why do some say we may serve God according to the dictates of our own conscience? If all religious concepts of faith are equally valid, why did John say to "*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God*" (1 Jn. 4:1)? Why say that if it does not matter "in what" or "in whom" you believe?

Since there are, as the Spirit of God says, "*many false prophets*," are there not also "many false religions" (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:4-6)? That being so, what of your faith? What of your religion? Is it of God or of man (Isa. 8:20)? "*Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves*" (2 Cor. 13:5). *Credit: The Old Paths - 4/14/13 ♦*

THE ONE BODY

The church is the body of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18). There is only one body, one church. "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*" (Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament teaches that there is only one body; this one body is the church. We are "fellow heirs of the same body" (Eph. 3:6). We are "reconciled to God in one body" (Eph. 2:16). Christ is founder of only one church. "*Upon this rock I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). Jesus did not say that we would build a church, His church or one of His churches. He said, "I will build my church." The word "church" signifies singularity. Jesus did not build many different churches, but one! None should encourage any to seek the church of your choice, but the church of Christ's choice, that is, the one that is Christ-built, blood-bought (Acts 20:28), the one in which He is the Saviour of (Eph. 5:23).

Since there is one, and only one church and since Christ saves only those in that one church; thus, if one living today is not a member of that church (Rom. 16:16), then he is not saved. ♦

**Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
Error is error if everyone believes it. ♦**

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

THE WAY IT USED TO BE!

- What used to be called. . .
“self-control” is now called “unhealthy repression.”
- What used to be called. . .
“disgusting” is now called “adult.”
- What used to be called. . .
“living in sin” is now called “a meaningful relationship.”
- What used to be called. . .
“drunkenness” is now called “a disease.”
- What used to be called. . .
“perversion” is now called an “alternate lifestyle.”
- What used to be called. . .
“depravity” is now called “creative self-expression.”
- What used to be called. . .
“nudity” is now called “fashion.”
- What used to be called. . .
“an unborn baby” is now called “a fetus.”
- What used to be called. . .
“murder” is now called “choice.:
- What used to be called. . .
“a God fearing country” is now called “an enlightened society.” ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn** - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe** - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent** - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord** - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized** - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching** - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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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