
Words of Truth

The Church Tends To Go The Way The Preacher Goes

By: Brian A. Yeager

In 2010 I wrote to Maurice Barnett about a congregation (in Cedar Park, TX) we were both somewhat familiar with and had preached among several times. The preacher in that congregation had died (Jim Everett) and they found a new man to stand in their pulpit. I am not saying the congregation there was surely faithful. However, the new preacher clearly was not. The Cedar Park congregation posted a video on their website of their new preacher introducing himself. I sent a link of that to Maurice. He responded: “Well, that doesn't sound like what Jim had in mind. I held two meetings there and it was a different place than what Paul White has made of it. Although, I was concerned about some things when I was there the second time. Too much Florida College influence had crept in. I noted that they will have Don Truex for a meeting in the Spring and Dee and Russ Bowman are scheduled for the future. Gag.” I responded to Maurice saying: “Sad. Paul White looked and sounded like Rick Warren in that video. I certainly hope someone at Cedar Park will see where they're headed and stand up. It may be too late. As you noted below, even while Jim was alive too many things crept in. Maybe it has been too late since then.” To which Maurice replied: “You are right. I'm afraid it is too late. They have run off anyone who would take a stand. The elders, as you experienced, are idiots.”

I have been through this many times in the past twenty years. I have witnessed a preacher, that appeared to be faithful, die or fall away leaving a congregation without a man in his place. EVERY TIME I have seen this happen and a new preacher came into the picture, the congregation fell away. Now you might be thinking that my experiences are not the standard. You'd be right to think that. However, I am going to prove that my experiences are very much in line with what the Scriptures show is a pattern about congregations following men instead of the truth. Let's start by examining the fact that MANY will follow false teachers.

Many Shall Follow Their Pernicious [Destructive] Ways

The inspired Apostle Paul wrote these words: *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And **many shall follow their pernicious ways**; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation*

slumbereth not” (II Peter 2:1-3). The fact that false brethren, false teachers creep in amongst faithful saints and convert them to error is undeniable (Jude 1:3-4). These individuals are generally capable of using the right words at the right times to convert people to their way of thinking (II Peter 2:18).

When you read the New Testament you read Jesus warning about this (Matthew 24:4-5; 11 and Matthew 7:15-20). Congregations then were warned about false teachers (Acts 20:17-31 and Colossians 2:4-23). Even though it was taught about and people were warned, false teachers were still prevalent and successful in their evil works.

Congregations stumbled (Acts 15:1-35). Congregations fell (Galatians 1:6-12; 3:1-3; 5:7-9). Some congregations complacently tolerated false teachers among them (III John 1:9-10 and Revelation 2:14-16). Others appeared to have loved men of error more than men of the truth (II Corinthians 11:1-33). You would think that no man could cause someone’s faith to be shipwrecked. However, false teachers have been able to steer the faith of others until it was wrecked (I Timothy 1:19-20). There was and always will be MANY enemies of the truth that find their way in among the saints (Philippians 3:18 and II Timothy 3:13). They are very capable of targeting and leading people astray (II Timothy 3:1-7). Thus, my experiences may not be the standard, but they are very much in line with the standard. So, let’s learn some things.

Don’t Be Of The Many Whom Follow The Preacher To Hell

Fact - preachers steer people both for good and for evil (proven above). Question - can you discipline yourself to trust a man only so far as his life (Romans 2:1-29 and I Timothy 4:6-16) and teaching (II Timothy 4:2 and Titus 2:1) is in accordance with the entire will of our Lord (I Corinthians 11:1)? Brethren, it has long been a problem that people seem to be more willing to be followers of men than of the Lord (I Corinthians 1:10-17).

If the world stands long enough, the day will come when I will no longer be among you all. You will be faced with a lot of questions about what to do in my absence. I am fearful of that day. I want you all to be saved. I also know how easy of a prey you could become. Brethren, while I am with you, please take advantage of preparing yourselves for when I am not. Let’s use our time together wisely (Ephesians 5:14-16)! If my demise does come, don’t be just another congregation that goes the way the pulpit goes. Follow the Lord!!!!

Conclusion

Paul wrote: *“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us **not to think of men above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another”* (I Corinthians 4:6). AMEN!