
Words of Truth

Preachers Are Not Supposed To Be The Weaker Brother

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The Scriptures teach us that there will be weaker brethren amongst us that, within the framework of our authorized liberties (Romans 14:1-23), we should cater to (Romans 15:1-3). In such a service to our weaker brethren, we have to be sure we don't allow our liberties to become a stumbling block to them (I Corinthians 8:9). Those weaker brethren need more focus than our stronger brothers and sisters in Christ (I Corinthians 12:14-24). These things are good, acceptable to God, and profitable for edification of all.

While we can expect there to be weaker saints amongst us, there is a time wherein all brethren must grow to a state of spiritual maturity (Hebrews 5:12-6:2). While there is not one single Christian that cannot fall away (I Corinthians 10:12), weaker Christians are certainly more easily swayed (Luke 8:13, Luke 22:31-32, Acts 8:13-24, and I Corinthians 3:1-3). Therefore, we all must help our weaker brethren out of that state of weakness so that they are less likely to fall away.

Having briefly stated the above points, let's begin to address the title of this article. Wouldn't logic demand that if a person must grow out of spiritual weakness a preacher of the Gospel would not be our weaker brother? While that seems obvious to me and likely to others, there are a lot of people that apply Romans chapter fourteen to preachers. There are a lot of preachers that are easily offended and nearly ready to fall away at the sign of any adversity. Preachers are certainly not "infallible" (Galatians 2:11-17), but they should not be teetering on the edge of failure either. Preachers are supposed to be strong.

Preachers Are Expected By GOD To Be Strong

Notice the following COMMANDS to Gospel preachers from God: *"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier... But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry... These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee"* (II Timothy 2:1-4, II Timothy 4:5, and Titus 2:15).

Any preacher, who reads the commands written to preachers that we just read, should understand that he cannot be weak and please God in such a state. When a man becomes a leader, he is expected to be strong (Joshua 1:6-9). In fact, as we've already established, the Lord expects us all to grow to a point of being strong. Spiritual strength is a command for all Christians (I Corinthians 16:13

and Ephesians 6:10). Now, how could a preacher preach on such Scriptural commands if he himself is weak?

A Preacher Must Walk The Walk

You've heard people say: "you have to practice what you preach". That is actually a Scripturally true statement. Notice: *"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye... Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God... Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God... But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway... Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 2:1-3, Romans 2:21-23, I Corinthians 9:27, and I Timothy 4:16).

As we just read, it is hypocrisy to say one thing and do another. Preachers certainly must spend their time studying (I Timothy 4:13 and II Timothy 2:14-18) and teaching (Acts 5:42, I Timothy 1:3-7, and II Timothy 4:2). But beyond that, a preacher of the Gospel of Christ must be the ultimate example of living what he preaches (I Timothy 4:12). A man that preaches the Gospel must be able to tell others that they can follow his example (I Thessalonians 2:10 and Titus 2:7-8) as his life will be led by Christ (I Corinthians 11:1).

If a preacher is weak and easily troubled, he is not going to be a good teacher of the word of God. His example will speak louder than his lessons. People might hear the truth, but they will see hypocrisy. Therefore, a preacher must be strong enough to apply the lessons he teaches to his own life before he can expect to help others be saved.

Conclusion

Churches of Christ unfortunately have many problems in our day. Many have fallen completely to the wayside. Weak preachers are not the only ones to blame, but they are a big part of the problem. For the congregation here to stay strong we have to make sure that those teaching are strong. Leaders can cause followers to err (Isaiah 3:12, Isaiah 9:16, and Matthew 15:14). For those considering teaching, they should consider that there will be a greater judgment upon them at the return of our Lord (James 3:1). Therefore, be strong first in your own life before you try to help others.