
Words of Truth

Preachers Who Refuse To Make The Applications

By: Brian A. Yeager

God warns us about false teachers. Notice a few of these warnings: *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them... But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived... For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth... Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (Acts 20:29-30, II Timothy 3:13, Titus 1:10-14, and I John 4:1).

God also warns us that many will follow these false teachers: *“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).

What we have from the Scriptures we looked at is that there are MANY false teachers. We should have seen that those false teachers are sneaky and deceptive. Those false teachers whom are dangerous are RARELY obvious (Matthew 7:15-20 and Jude 4). We see that they turn people from the truth. We saw that many follow those false teachers.

When you think of a false teacher, what do you think of? Have you considered that a false teacher may rarely, if ever, overtly teach a false doctrine? What I mean by that is, a false teacher may never outright say something that is false. What that false teacher may do is teach things that are general and stay clear of certain Scriptures or topics. Some of the textual preachers and pseudo-intellectuals among churches of Christ are notorious for this. A guy named Paul Blake in Pennsylvania often says a whole lot without ever saying very much. He preaches sermons that the members of the congregation there will agree with. He doesn't preach against things like the artificial covering or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as those errors exist among the members there. What he does when he comes to those Scriptures is talk about the Greek words and stays clear of saying the hair is the only covering discussed in the New Testament (I Corinthians 11:3-15). Regarding the Holy Spirit, he talks about everything EXCEPT for what the false members there believe. Thus, he omits truth.

Teachers Of The Truth WILL Make The Applications

Notice how God expects teachers to teach: *“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand... 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... But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God... Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (Ezekiel 3:18, Acts 20:26-27, II Corinthians 4:2, and II Timothy 4:2).

Let me give you clear, inspired examples of how real preaching means you apply the Scriptures to the people you are teaching. When Jesus was asked why His disciples did not keep the traditions of men (Matthew 15:1-2), Jesus applied the inspired words of Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13) to expose the hypocrisy of those He was talking to (Matthew 15:3-9). When Paul assembled with some Jews to teach them about Jesus some did not believe (Acts 28:17-24). Paul then applied the inspired words of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:9-10) to expose them for being hard hearted and spiritually blind (Acts 28:25-28).

Teaching the truth is not about just using Scriptures. If a lesson is irrelevant it is not teaching. An audience of saved people do not need to be taught what they must do to be saved. An audience of lost people do not need to be taught about the qualifications of elders. A preacher of the truth will teach what is needed (Acts 20:20 and Jude 3). While lessons of reminders are needed (II Peter 1:12-13 and II Peter 3:1-2), such cannot become the basis of all teaching. Preachers [false ones] of today know how to preach these lessons of truth, which do not apply to his audience, and stay clear of what is really needed. People hear nothing overtly false, so they conclude the man to be sound. Consider what that means for us.

Applying This To Us

At the time I am writing this article I am preaching a series of sermons on discerning the truth from tradition. I am doing so because we have some new folks assembling with us of whom I am uncertain of what they know and believe. I am doing so because it appears that some of our members of old have forgotten about the errors amongst churches of Christ based upon the willingness to travel and assemble with unknown saints. Our Sunday classes are covering the Old Testament because the brethren here were unfamiliar with such. We make applications to us as we study. Tuesday's I teach a class covering New Testament books and apply them to us. Articles are always focused on supporting the things I have been teaching and giving you the time to read and consider those things again. That's applicable teaching.

Conclusion

This article is really an addendum to last week's article. Many false teachers are such because of what they don't teach rather than what they do. You cannot know these things by one conversation or by a visit or two. Be wise to these things so that you are not lost because you worshipped with those in error (II John 9-11)!