

Apostolic Advice

Preaching The Word

In studying the Apostolic Letters written to Timothy by Paul, the meanings of certain key words regarding the “preaching of the Word” reveal a serious challenge to today’s “preachers”, and a clear path to the Presence of God for the “hearers”.

*“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: **Preach the Word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry”*
2 Timothy 4:1-5

Paul begins by letting Timothy know the seriousness of the forthcoming “charge” in the light of God’s Judgment. Apparently, he is saying that the preacher will be judged for his preaching, and the hearers will be judged for their response. He then lays out the “threefold” content of apostolic preaching that will bring the desired result, and God’s approval. He starts with the word, “**convince**”, which includes in it’s meanings “*to tell a fault*”. Next he says, “**rebuke**”, which means “*to forbid*”. Finally he says, “**exhort**”, which means “*to call near*”. Can you see the progression of thought here, “*tell a fault, forbid it and draw near to God*”. It appears that apostolic preaching starts with pointing out with conviction what is not to be done, “tell a fault” he says. He is talking about the behavior that is not acceptable to God, or becoming to a Christian. Then he says, “*forbid it*”. Telling people that God *forbids* certain kinds of behavior is a challenge for today’s pulpits, with “hate speech laws” and people with “itching ears” who really don’t want to be told that “God forbids anything at all”. It is quite a challenge to “tell it like it is”, knowing that some of the audience will likely never return and go looking for a “softer” message that allows for less than a biblical standard of living, and still can “have God’s best”. There is a great need for “sound doctrine” in today’s Church, preaching and teaching that is of the apostolic standard of “righteousness and holiness”. Paul told the Ephesians to “*Put on the New Man which after God is created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*”, Ephesians 4:24

After “convincing and rebuking”, Paul says it is now time to “draw near”, the Greek word, “*parakaleo*”. To invite people to “draw near to God” for an intimate relationship with the Father, must follow forsaking any lifestyle that is not “compatible” with Him. For intimacy to occur in relationships, there must be compatibility take place, or there is only continual conflict. Usually this means that one or both people will have to change in some area to be compatible with the person they are seeking intimacy with. When it comes to an intimate relationship with Father God, we know who has to change, it is us. We must find out what He is like and change to be compatible with Him. That is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians 5 when he explains that the Bride of Christ will not

have “spots, blemishes or any such thing”. “The Bride has made herself ready” to meet the Bridegroom, she is compatible for intimate relationship with Him now. The aim of apostolic preaching is not just to “lay down the law” and always be preaching against some sin, we have moved well beyond that is our preaching and teaching in the Apostolic Reformation. The aim is to make God’s nature clearly known and tell people that in order to “draw near” to Him for intimacy, we must “love what He loves and hate what He hates” (Hebrews 1:9), we must “love righteousness and hate iniquity”. We must forbid what He forbids and allow what He allows. Is this not what Jesus meant when he told the disciples of the First Apostolic Movement, *“whatever you forbid (bind) on earth is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you allow (loose) on earth is already allowed in heaven”*, *Matthew 16:19*. He was not talking about dealing with demons here necessarily, but about “sin”. Jesus says three things about the Church He would build. First, it would have a “spirit of revelation”. A person cannot know God through the five senses, or “flesh and blood”, but only as God reveals Himself to a person. Next the Church would have a “spirit of faith”. He said, “the gates of Hell would not prevail against the Church”, meaning “to overcome” it. Apostle John said, “Faith is the victory that overcomes the world”, 1 John 5:4. The Victorious Church will be “victorious” because of an “overcoming faith”. Lastly He says, the Church will be have a “spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4) for it will forbid what God forbids and allow what God allows.

Preaching the Word reveals what God’s true nature is like, what is incompatible with Him, and how to become intimate with Him. Convince, Rebuke and Exhort with all long suffering (it will be needed) and teaching.