

THE SHUNNING OF BIBLE PREACHERS

By Pastor Del Wray

Bible preachers are shunned and are no longer welcome in our churches today:

And if you don't believe that you need your head examined and your heart changed. One preacher put it this way, "Sue your brain for non-support." One of my mentors *Dr. Archie Wineager*, a hell fire and brimstone saw dust trail preacher would be shunned as would a number of my preacher friends who have gone on before me if they were around today. One of our more prominent Baptist preachers today who comes to mind, *Dr. Peter S. Ruckman*, faced shunning all his life as did the likes of *Dr. Oliver B. Green*, I can remember here in Maryland when all the ministers got together and denounced, Dr. Green, declaring non-support. I wonder whether Jesus Christ would be allowed to preach in the church today. We've often heard pastors refer to the great prophets and Apostles of the Bible. Rightly so, these Bible men should be lauded as examples for our children and the Bible believers of our day. The problem is, hardly any of those giants of history and our day would be welcome in the church! And the common excuse used by pastors of our day and its nothing new "*he would destroy the church*" or "*he preaches down to people*" God knew they would end up blind and in apostasy! Thus exposing their Laodicea spirit that has taken over the church! "*Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*" *Malachi 3:18* If a preacher, Evangelist can come in and destroy your church you must not have much of a church. Jesus said, "*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" *Matt. 16:18* Could it be that it is not His church any longer but the people's? "Laodicea" means controlled by the people. As *Rev. 3:20* declares: Jesus Christ stands outside the front door trying to gain entrance! On the whole, America's Christians today do not want to hear the truth. They want a place where they can be made to feel good, where they can be entertained, where they can socialize and renew business relationships, and where their children can have a playground to play. Prophecies fulfillment! The end is here! God have mercy on us!

To many professing Christian parents, it is far more important that their church have a gymnasium and constant youth programs than it is that their children hear the truth of God's Word and learn the rigorous disciplines of a Christian life. Recreation is far more important to them than Bible study. In fact, most parents seem to believe that the only way to "keep the kids in church" is through activities. The Devil's program has polluted the minds of church goers. Of course, it'll never work.

Furthermore, it seems that most of today's sermons amount to little more than "Positive Mental Attitude," feel-good drivel: "How to think better about yourself," "How to squander more money on yourself," "How to 'find yourself,'" "How to pamper yourself," ad nauseum, ad infinitum. Comparing the preaching and philosophy of most churches today to that of Bible characters will quickly reveal how unbiblical our churches have become.

For example, can you imagine how the average church in America today would react to the decisions of Daniel and the three Hebrew children? All four of them were unashamed and unhesitant to practice civil disobedience. All four of them were charged with capital crimes by their government and sentenced to death. In Daniel's case, all he had to do was not pray out loud to God for thirty days. Thirty days! I can just hear today's Christian pragmatists screaming, "It's only for thirty days. You can still pray in your heart. We must obey the government." Can you imagine Daniel being asked to preach a message on "How and When to Defy Your Government" to the vast majority of churches in America today? Forget it!

Moreover, take a look at practically every single Old Testament prophet. Ninety percent of their preaching was negative. They seldom had anything positive to say, especially about the way their nation's leaders were behaving. They were often jailed, beaten, starved, or even killed. They were as familiar with prisons as they were with pulpits. They were despised by political leaders, rejected by religious leaders, and shunned by their own people. Today, "the not welcome sign" is posted! Human nature has not changed one bit! Neither has the tactics of the Devil!

It wasn't much better for the Apostles and disciples in the New Testament. John the Baptist was beheaded for "meddling and exposing adulterers." The Apostles were beaten, stoned, and jailed. The Apostle Paul was especially hated. He was hated by Jews; he was hated by Romans; he was hated by the financial elite; he was hated by politicians; he was even hated by fellow preachers. Jesus even warned "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17:14

Can you imagine the Apostle Paul preaching a message on "Conquering Low Self-Esteem"? Wake up! Give Paul an opportunity today to preach to a church of one thousand members one Sunday morning, and by Sunday night (if they even had a Sunday night service), there might be ten people back to hear him.

It is probably difficult for this generation of Christians to even comprehend that this fearless, uncompromising, "like it or lump it" kind of preaching was the kind of preaching that America cut its teeth on. The colonies and frontier of this nation were filled with prophet-like clergymen. And it didn't really matter which church one attended, either; he or she heard the same kind of preaching. Not anymore!

Whether it was the Baptist Joab Houghton or D. L. Moody or George Whitfield or Billy Sunday or J. Frank Norris "The Shooting Salvationists" they were all plucky, pugnacious preachers! Why, I can even recall hearing old fashioned "hell-fire and damnation" preachers when I was a kid. It was a long time ago! Nobody would preach you today!

It was a "hell-fire" Baptist preacher that led my mother to Christ. I can even recall Archie Wineager meetings, I heard the great "hell-fire" preachers of the saw dust trail days. I remember seeing crowds of a thousand or more sitting on those hard, wooden benches for hours listening intently to those masterful sermons. In my mind, I can still see (and smell) the sawdust floors where hundreds of people rushed to the front in answer to those altar calls. Alas, those days are gone. We should be weeping and grieving over the state of our churches today!

No wonder our people today have become so ego-centric, self-centered, sensitive, shallow and complacent. They seldom, if ever, hear honest, straight-forward, fearless preaching anymore. I remember at the age of 30 preaching in my home church, First Baptist Church, Newport News, VA, giving an altar call and having 3 of my closest friends as kids walk the isles and get saved. Talk about having a Baptist fit! After the church was about empty the pastor ask me in to his office and cursed me out, boy was he livid. When I left my 3 friends that had gotten saved were waiting for me outside the office door and had overheard the pastor cussing me out. They were astonished, wanting to know why, so they invited me out to eat. We all went out to Shoney's restaurant where the tears of joy continued to flow and upon leaving a man followed us out, having observed such joy, he told us how he had just come out of the hospital from heart surgery and he wanted to be sure he was saved. We sat down in the back seat of that car and I led that dear man to Jesus Christ. My three friend's lives were changed that night and ever since have been my biggest supporters. Deacons in our churches need to be saved, Sunday school teachers need to get saved, and choir members should and need to be born again! Even many pastors in our pulpits today need to be saved before it is too late! Time is passing! Fear has wreaked havoc over church leadership and souls are dying and going to Hell because of it! We must cry out! Therefore, the next time you hear someone refer to the great men of the Bible, ask yourself, "Would that preacher be welcome in my church today?" In most instances, the answer is a resounding no! And now you know why America is in the shape it's in today: The nation always takes the form of its preachers and churches.

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