

Let Not Many Become Teachers

Just a few minutes before the services were set to begin and during a conversation about preaching, a friend and brother in Christ said to me, "there may be someone here whose soul is hanging in the balance and every word you say could push them closer to Heaven or drive them away toward Hell." That caught me off guard and the first response that came to my mind was, "No pressure, right?"

James gives a sober warning, "*My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*" (James 3:1). Teaching is essential to the growth and strength of the church. We need more people willing to teach. This passage is a reminder of the serious responsibility that comes with opening God's word and presenting that message before others.

Teaching places a person in a position of influence. Words spoken from the pulpit or even in front of a Bible class can shape understanding, convictions, and even eternal decisions. Because of that influence, God holds teachers to a higher standard. Error, carelessness, or opinion presented as truth can mislead souls and do great harm (Matthew 18:6). James goes on to discuss the use of the tongue, reminding us how difficult it can be to control our speech (James 3:2-8). Teachers must not only know the truth but also handle it carefully, humbly, and accurately. Knowledge without maturity, or zeal without understanding, can be dangerous (Romans 10:2).

James 3:1 should lead us to honest self-examination. Before desiring to teach, we should ask ourselves: Am I determined to teach what's in the scriptures? Am I willing to be corrected? Am I practicing what I preach? Paul instructed Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)

We should pray for the preachers and teachers in the local church and be thankful that they are willing to teach others. Their work carries weight, responsibility, and accountability before God. May all who teach do so with humility and reverence and may all who listen test what is taught by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

- by Josh McCord

Can We All See The Bible Alike?

If a statement is made often enough people will come to believe it even though it is not true. A good example is that which you hear so often in religion, "We can't all see the Bible alike." The Apostle Paul disagrees with this idea in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

If we can't all see alike why would Paul, the inspired Apostle, tell us to do so?

- by Hiram Hutto

"Selah"

Often, when reading in the Psalms, we come across the word, "selah." In fact, the word appears 71 times in the Psalms. (It is also found 3 times in Habakkuk.) What does this word mean? Why is it there? Is it important?

Most scholars agree that this term had a meaning in the musical nomenclature of the Hebrews. What that meaning was, though, has been lost and now it is a matter of pure conjecture. Some think the word was used to indicate an interlude -- a pause in the voices as they recited or sang the particular Psalm.

- Greg Gwin

Drifting Away From the Truth

The Hebrew writer declared, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (ASV – Hebrews 2:1). It is interesting to note that the writer speaks of "drifting" away. The idea of drifting suggests a gradual departure over time. Apostasy usually starts with what many see as a "little" thing that really doesn't seem to be any "big deal." Then another step is taken, and another, until one's position doesn't even resemble where he originally started.

Not only have those who do this departed from the truth, but they are ready to oppose teachers of truth who seek their return to truth. When Amos was sent to speak against the idolatry of Israel Amaziah, a priest of Bethel and friend of king Jeroboam, told Amos, "But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." (Amos 7:13). Rather than heed the truth spoken by Amos he attacked Amos. Such happens today and reminds me of a quote by George Orwell. He said, "The further a society drifts from truth the more it will hate those who speak it."

- by James Hahn

Leaving in Anger or Laboring Together in Love

It is always sad when someone leaves a local congregation in anger. That problem is not new. Even first-century churches dealt with conflict and division (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Still, while disagreements may arise, how we handle them makes all the difference.

There are times when leaving is necessary. If truth is abandoned or sin is openly tolerated, faithful Christians cannot simply ignore it (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 5:1-7). In such cases, leaving is an act of conscience rather than anger.

But far too often, departures are not about doctrine or immorality. Instead, they grow out of personal grievances - hurt feelings, wounded pride, mis-understandings, or disagreements that were never handled in a biblical way. James warns that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20). Such anger never improves a situation.

What is especially harmful is when someone decides to "throw a bomb" on the way out - spreading accusations, stirring suspicion, or speaking words that wound. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out" (Prov. 26:20). Words spoken in anger can leave scars that last long after the speaker is gone.

God calls us to something better. Jesus said to go privately to a brother who has wronged you (Matt. 18:15). Paul urged spiritual people to restore others in meekness (Gal. 6:1). Love is not easily provoked and does not seek its own (1 Cor. 13:4-5). When problems come - and they will - let us labor together in love, pursue peace (Rom. 14:19), and protect the unity which Christ desires for His church (Eph. 4:3).

- by Greg Gwin