

POWERFUL PREACHING #2

Jesus The Christ

The Son of God came into this world to save men (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:16). Wherever he went he carried the good news of salvation. In fact, one time when Jesus was pressed to stay where he had performed many miracles, he refused, saying, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (Mk. 1:38). Jesus was a preacher!

Moreover, Jesus was sinless (Heb. 4:15). He came to this earth to do the Father's will in all things, even sacrificing his own life (Lk. 22:42). The night before his crucifixion, the Lord told his disciples, "...I have kept my Father's commandments" (Jn. 15:10). He was perfect! Therefore, Jesus was the one and only perfect preacher! Surely we can look to him as an example of powerful preaching.

Sermon On The Mount

This is perhaps the most well known sermon of our Lord. It is recorded in Matthew 5-7. Truly, it is a powerful sermon by all accounts. It contains that which many people would expect from a loving Savior. For instance, we read of the "beatitudes" where Jesus praises and blesses the righteous (Matt. 5:3-12). Further, Christ teaches the noble quality of loving our enemies, even to the point of blessing them, doing good for them, and praying on their behalf (Matt. 5:44). Also, Jesus gives words of comfort to those who trust God, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). God will care for His children. These thoughts accord with the expectations of many. However, this beloved sermon contain elements that would surprise and shock some. Notice that Jesus says that those who ruin their influence and example are "good for nothing" (Matt. 5:13). Likewise, when considering men who are hostile toward the gospel, he says they are "dogs" and "swine" (Matt. 7:6). As the Savior draws near to the close of this sermon, he says that false prophets will be "cast into the fire"--go to hell (Matt. 7:15-20). Yes, the Lord's sermon on the mount is powerfully positive and powerfully negative!

Other "Sermons"

In Luke 4, the Lord returns to his home town of Nazareth and teaches

the people in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:16). He stands before the people and reads from Isaiah 61 (Lk. 4:17-19). Upon finishing, Jesus says, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:21). The people hear this and feel kindly toward the Lord and his gracious words (Lk. 4:22). However, this loving attitude quickly changes. Jesus points out that the ones before him will reject him and, in turn, God will reject them. To support this he cites two examples from the Old Testament (Lk. 4:23-27). The people "were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong" (Lk. 4:28-29). It is amazing how those who praise a preacher one minute will turn around in the next and be filled with hate toward him--even a perfect one! Yet, this is the nature of truthful preaching.

Further, There was a time when Jesus was an invited guest in a Pharisee's house (Lk. 11:37). The host became alarmed when Jesus did not wash before dinner (Lk. 11:38). Perceiving this, Jesus begins to chastise the host for his hypocritical and shallow religion (Lk. 11:39-44). At this point, one of the lawyers spoke up and wanted Jesus to modify his words because they "stung" him (Lk. 11:45). Rather than sheepishly apologizing to the men, the Lord blasted away at the lawyers too (Lk. 11:46-52).

On another occasion, Jesus reviews the vain religion of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23). Observe some of his comments.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides...Ye fools and blind...Ye fools and blind...Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee...Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt.

23:13-33).

This is the tact that the Lord took with those who perverted the right ways of God.

Moreover, at times, the Lord gave no quarter to those who were honestly mistaken in their views. In Matthew 16, Jesus is holding class (if you will) with his disciples. He is teaching by questioning them about his status with the people (Matt. 16:13-14). Then he turns the question to his disciples, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15-16). Shortly after this confession, Jesus begins to teach his disciples of his coming persecution and death at the hands of the Jews (Matt. 16:21). To this, Peter strongly reacts (Matt. 16:22). He loves the Lord and is determined to keep anything bad from happening to him. Most would say this is GOOD of Peter. However, the Lord severely rebukes him. "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:23).

Conclusion

The world's only perfect preacher was one who offended many, many people. He still does so today. It is not done out of ill-will, but out of love for truth and a concern for the souls of men. In all things, including preaching, Jesus is our example, that we should walk in his steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

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