

## **PREACHING THE TRUTH AND LEAVING OTHERS ALONE**

Jack Thompson

After His resurrection from the grave, Jesus commanded the apostles to go forth into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Matthew 28:18-20. The early disciples did exactly that -- they went forth from Jerusalem and covered the known world with the good news or the gospel of Christ Jesus. Paul told the Colossian brethren that, "the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). We, too, have the same responsibility. To proclaim the gospel to the whole creation as we have opportunity and ability. That message or gospel must be proclaimed in love. Hear the apostle again, "but speaking truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

There should be no doubt or indecision as to the fact that we must preach the truth and only the truth of the gospel. Jesus Himself said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). That truth is found in the Word of God. Hear the Master again, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). A follower of Christ has no other choice, but to speak the word of God, the truth. You, my listening audience, should not be interested in what I think, nor what any other person might think, but we must be exceedingly interested in determining what God's word says. So, examine what you hear from me, as well as from any other teacher or preacher, and be sure that what you accept is founded upon a "thus sayeth the Lord."

There should be no doubt that many false teachers have gone forth proclaiming their particular brand of religion. The new Testament writers warned us that this would happen. Hear them. "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doing" (2 Peter 2:1-2). And again, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). These two passages could be multiplied by the warnings given about false teachers.

Remember, a false teacher is not one who openly announces that he or she is a false teacher. Oh, no!! They will come in sheep's' clothing, they will appear righteous, godly, with honest hearts. But, they teach false doctrines, and that makes them false teachers.

Sometimes, we in the church of Christ are rebuked for condemning the errors in the world. We often are rebuffed because we point out doctrinal errors being practiced by so many. Errors both in doctrine and practice. These errors can come from the pulpits across the land, they may even come from television and radio programs which you listen to.

But, when we point out error, some come along and say, "Preacher why don't you just preach truth and leave others along." The sentiment expressed is, "Why must you speak about others and what they believe and practice, just preach truth and leave others along." Let us examine that statement a little more in detail. Is it possible to preach the truth of God's Word and leave others alone? Can we teach anything without offending someone else? Let us be honest with ourselves and ask the question, "Can one preach truth and leave others alone?"

When I teach that there is a God over this universe I have offended the Infidel. The Infidel denies the existence of Jehovah God. The Infidel does not want me to reach passages such as Hebrews 11:6, where the inspired writer says, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing

to Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6). Paul states that there is but one God (Ephesians 4:6). So, I cannot even preach the truth about God without offending the Infidel. Should I preach faith in God? Why, surely I must. Even if it does offend someone.

In John 3:16, I read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." And in Matthew 3:17, "and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." These two passages, as well as many more proclaim the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God. But, when I teach this fact, the Modernists comes along and says, "That offends me, you should not teach that." The modernists does not believe in God, nor in the Son of God. So, I cannot even teach about Jesus Christ without offending someone.

I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. It so claims to be. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The apostle Peter says, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). When I read these passages I have offended the Skeptic. The Sceptic says I doubt that, I do not believe the book called the Bible is anything more than just another book; filled with fables and exaggerations. So, by teaching faith in the Bible, I have offended some.

I believe the Bible to be the perfect Word of God. "The law of Jehovah is perfect" (Psalms 19:7). James refers to it as the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). It is all that man needs to gain heaven and be well pleasing unto Jehovah. But, when I teach this truth, I have offended those who love their creed books, their additions. When I teach that all one must have is the Bible, I have offended our Mormon friends because they teach that Joseph Smith's books are essential to man's salvation. So, I cannot teach the all sufficiency of the Bible without offending someone.

I believe the Word of God teaches conditional salvation. In Hebrews 5:8,9, I read, "though he was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." Thus, men and women must obey Christ if they would be saved. But, when I teach each person's individual responsibility to obey Christ, there are those whom I have offended, because they teach that God foreordained or predestined each person to be saved or to be lost long before this world began. So, I cannot teach each person's responsibility to obey Christ without offending someone.

God's Word says, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4). It also says, "and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). By putting these two passages together, if the church is His body and there is only one Body, then there is only one church. One need not be a rocket scientist to understand that. But, when I teach that there is but one church, I have offended those who think that many churches are all right. They say, "Just go to the church of your choice." My friends, that is not Bible talk. If you think it is, perhaps you would share your information with me. Jesus Himself said, "I will build my church." How many churches did He build? Two, three, ten, one hundred, five hundred? You see, now I have offended someone. That was not my intention. My intention is to teach what God's word says, and it says one body. Paul says were all baptized into one body. (1 Corinthians 12:13).

I find that God's word teaches that baptism is a burial in water. Paul states, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:3- 4). There is going down into the

water, and a coming up out of the water to comply with the baptism of the Great Commission. See the example of the Ethiopian nobleman in Acts 8. The inspired apostle said there is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:1-6). When I teach these truths, someone comes along and says, "You have offended me, I believe that there are many modes of baptism, you can be sprinkled, or have water poured over you, or be immersed, it makes no difference." Is that what God's Inspired Word teaches? Oh, no, my friends, it teaches there is only one baptism. And I am sorry if that offends someone, but that is what God's word says.

In Ephesians 5:19, I read, "speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." And again in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." Then I make the observation that the only music found in New Testament worship was vocal music, they sung songs of praise unto the Lord. But, now I have offended someone because they believe that it is all right to play upon mechanical instruments of music in worship to our God. Do you believe that? If so, once again, perhaps you would share the passage with me that teaches it is all right to use mechanical instruments of music in our worship today.

God's Word teaches that the early disciples came together to worship upon the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 so states. They took up their collections upon the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2). Now, I have offended those who believe that our worship should be on the Sabbath, or Saturday. Likewise, I have offended those who take up their contributions on any day of the week.

I believe that God's Word teaches the child of God to live a righteous life. Titus 2:11, 12, says, "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." Paul warned, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Yes, God's Word teaches the danger of apostasy, or falling away. But, when I teach this, I have offended some who believe that the child of God cannot possibly fall away. Some say, "Once a child of God, always a child of God." That is so, but one might become an erring child of God. And if one dies in that condition, he or she will be lost. Read Luke 15 to see that danger.

These are some Bible truths which when presented will bring frowns from other people. What Bible truth can I preach without offending someone? If everyone were pleased, then I would be forced to teach nothing. I could not even teach about God and Christ Jesus. No, my listening audience, I cannot preach the truth and leave others alone, because in teaching truth, I must oppose error.

Jesus very often rebuked and condemned the religious leaders of His day and they were highly offended. Could it be that you may have condemned the church for teaching certain things? If so, can you not see from this simple lesson today, that for us to teach anything whatsoever, someone is going to be offended.

Can you give book, chapter and verse for all that you believe and practice? I plead with each one. Allow God's inspired Word to be your authority for all that you do. I do not have that word cornered. You can open the book and find what we need to be doing.