

It's Time to Get Ahabs out of Our Pulpits

Pastors generally believe same-sex marriage and abortion are wrong, but most of them won't talk to their congregations about it for fear of losing members.

Those were the opening words of an article I wrote last week called "Most Pastors Avoid Controversial Issues to Keep Tithes Up." The article was based on a study from the Barna Group.

According to the study, fewer than 10 percent of pastors will speak to key issues of the day even though they agree the Bible speaks to every one of them. Most pastors are passive, willing to do "almost nothing" to get people active in politics.

"Controversy keeps people from being in the seats, controversy keeps people from giving money, from attending programs," George Barna said on America Family Radio's *Today's Issues* broadcast.

I have to wonder. Do pastors who turn a blind eye to sin in the nation—such as same-sex marriage and abortion—to keep people in the seats, giving money and attending programs also turn a blind eye to sin in the church for the same reasons? *Selah*.

Ahab Tolerates Sin

As I considered the Barna study results, I couldn't help but think of leaders in the Bible who were passive about sin. I thought of Adam, who allowed Eve to influence him to rebel against God rather than rising up in his authority over the Garden of Eden. I thought of Eli, who didn't deal with his sinful sons. And I thought of King Ahab, the husband of none other than the prophet-murdering queen called Jezebel.

Ahab tolerated sin and goes down in biblical history as one who “did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” (1 Kings 16:33). What on earth did Ahab do to win that dishonor? He set up altars to false gods, for one thing. He also turned a blind eye to Jezebel’s sinful ways.

Scripture tells us “Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord” (1 Kings 18:4). We also know that Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah after he did away with hundreds of her false prophets (1 Kings 19:1). Later, Jezebel had Naboth falsely accused and killed so Ahab could take possession of his field (1 Kings 21).

Ahab knew quite well that Jezebel was having God’s true prophets murdered, but he took a passive attitude toward sin. Ahab knew that Jezebel was out for Elijah’s head, but he took a passive attitude toward protecting a man who had just led the nation into repentance (see 1 Kings 18:17-39). Ahab knew Jezebel was willing to murder Naboth to steal his inheritance, but he stood passively by as Jezebel signed his name to the man’s death warrant.

Get Ahab out of the Pulpit

Over and over again, we see Ahab was willing to tolerate Jezebel’s sin to get what he wanted. Ahab personalities are weak, easily intimidated, and unwilling to do anything that will rock the boat. Ahab personalities are insecure people-pleasers whom the devil has an easy time controlling. It’s time to get the Ahabs out of our pulpits.

Charles G. Finney, a leader in America’s Second Great Awakening, recorded these words on Dec. 4, 1843:

“Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral

discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.”

It’s time to get the Ahabs out of our pulpits and replace them with leaders who will not tolerate Jezebel; with men and women of God who will confront sin in society and in the church; and with pastors and prophets who are not blind as bats leading the church into a ditch of destruction.

We’re all responsible to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (see Phil. 2:12), but pastors also are to be an example to the flock (see 1 Peter 5:3). That means loving what God loves and hating what God hates. I’m praying for another Great Awakening, and I’m praying it starts in the pulpits.

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