

What Donald Trump Can Teach Preachers Today

“Even when things without life give sound, whether flute or harp, how will it be known what is played unless they give a distinction in the sounds? If the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle? So also you, unless with the tongue you speak words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air” (1 Cor. 14:7-9).

Although the subject here is the gift of tongues and interpretation, the point being made is to speak in order to be understood. Too many preachers are not doing that.

GOP candidate Donald Trump is teaching preachers a lesson. Many may think he's rude and harsh, but he speaks clearly and plainly and is quite difficult to misunderstand. Most of all, the people are responding to his message.

Perhaps we as preachers have robbed ourselves by being gray instead of black and white. Perhaps we've robbed the church of more converts and true followers because we think they don't want to hear plain speech, when in fact, they do. Perhaps it is time to consider that in our quest not to offend them we are repelling them.

Ambiguity has no part in the gospel. There is to be a certain and clear sound coming from our pulpits. Political correctness has no part in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a preacher cannot speak clearly about the tenets of the faith, especially as it relates to such a sacred subject like marriage, he doesn't belong in the pulpit. He needs to get out and find another occupation. A politician might better suit one of such cowardice.

“You be careful when anybody comes to you with a sugar-coated

pill or with a slimy tongue. They are always of the devil. The Spirit of the Lord will always deal with truth.” –Smith Wigglesworth

The root of the problem here is money, friends and influence. Many preachers who are in the limelight will seek to talk in such a way as to not lose money, friends and influence. Such preachers need to be reminded that our loyalty is not to people but to the truth. I don't care how many favors the people have done for you or how much of a friend they may be. I don't even care if they are close relatives. To prefer them over Jesus and the Scriptures is to be a traitor to the highest cause.

Both Elijah the prophet and Elisha, his successor, coined this phrase: “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand” (1 Kin. 17:1, 18:5; 2 Kin. 3:14, 5:16). Paul the apostle coined a similar expression: “For we are not as many are who peddle the word of God. Instead, being sent by God, we sincerely speak in Christ in the sight of God” (2 Cor. 2:17).

In both Elijah's and Paul's day, as it is today, there were many false prophets and apostles who peddled the Word of God for money, favor and influence. However, Elijah and Paul ministered in the sight of God. They were men of sincerity and truth who feared God and hated covetousness. Such were the qualifications for leaders as far back as the time of Moses (Ex. 18:21).

What high-profile religious leaders do when they are faced with a direct question in a public forum is they cower down and sugar-coat things they say to avoid offense and controversy. They say it is to keep the door open for the witness of the gospel and not cut the people off that they are trying to reach. But when do you tell these people the real, plain, clear truth? The way you win them is ultimately the way you are going to keep them. If you are going to win them with unclear speech and fuzzy doctrine, then you must keep them by

feeding them with the same. This is the reason we have so called gay "Christians" in our churches. They don't really know where you stand because you've substituted carnal influence for truth.

There is no question we are to love everyone, but there are certain standards in Scripture for membership in a church that professes the Lordship of Jesus Christ. "For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But God judges those who are outside. Therefore 'put away from among yourselves that wicked person'" (1 Cor. 5:12-13).

In case you didn't know the subject at hand that Paul is addressing, here it is:

"I wrote to you in my letter not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I did not mean the sexually immoral people of this world, or the covetous and extortioners, or the idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. But I have written to you not to keep company with any man who is called a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. Do not even eat with such a person" (1 Cor. 5:9-11).

Paul is addressing habitual sin, especially sexual immorality, in the church. In this case, it was incest. Paul was commanding the Corinthian Christians not to keep company with sexually immoral people who call themselves a brother (or a sister).

Here is a shocker for many: Exclusivity is a part of kingdom culture. Say what? That's right. There is an exclusivity in Christianity. That would include gay "Christians." Our sympathetic views toward this celebrated group in our culture is a form of cowardice and low esteem for the standards laid out in Scripture. Yes, you will be called hateful and bigoted. But that has been our problem.

We want to blend in with the pop culture instead of stick out. We don't want to be hated or misunderstood. But isn't that also a part of our kingdom culture?

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, the world therefore hates you" (John 15:18-19).

Yet in all this, we are not to exclude the world. We are to keep company with them and love them just as our Lord and Master taught us (Luke 15:1-2).

The issue of habitual sin is a church and kingdom issue, not a world issue. I trust that in attempting to love the sinner—in many cases today it's the LGBT community—we will find the wisdom to do so without compromising the Scriptures.

It's time for a preacher revolution. We need an uprising against the status quo. To regain our ministerial authority, we must swing away from political correctness and allowing people's preferences to lead us. We need to return to the roots of biblical preaching. We need preachers who say what they mean and mean what they say.

Love with truth, compassion with conviction, mercy with might—that is the certain sound that everyone should be hearing.

Anything else is speaking into the air.