

“Preach the Word!” [continued from 281703]

by Wayne Goff

The passage also teaches us that a preacher must “*exhort.*” The Greek word (PARAKALESON) is a form of the same word that identifies the Holy Spirit as “*Comforter.*” Preachers must also give positive reinforcement to his hearers, after having convinced them of sin and the need to repent of it.

I do not think it an incidental matter that God gave preachers the ratio of 2:1 here. In Jeremiah’s commission we see the same exact ratio! “*See I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant*” (Jer. 1:10). Furthermore, you see the same sequence as well. One must “*root out*” and “*pull down*” error, false doctrine, and sin. One must “*destroy*” and “*throw down*” every false thing! Then, and only then, is there good ground on which to plant. Then, and only then, is there a good foundation upon which to build solid faith. The preacher’s work is difficult but necessary.

The passage finally speaks of the preacher’s disposition in the process of his work: “*with all longsuffering and teaching.*” One only has to preach for a few years to fully understand the need for longsuffering. Being a gospel preacher is aggravating, frustrating work! Listeners do not often “**get**” the message the first time around. So you must patiently preach it again. Then when some listeners do “**get it,**” they reject it! The patient preacher will continue to give positive, Scriptural reasons for **why** his message is the truth and should be obeyed. One cannot **compel** others to believe the truth, or to obey it. But one **CAN persuade** others to believe the truth and obey it! This takes time and lots of patient endurance.

In spite of all this, the apostle Paul warned young Timothy that the time would come when “*they*” (brethren) would “*not endure sound doctrine.*” There is nothing more heartbreaking, heart-rending than to see brethren turn away from the truth in search for a more personally-pleasing message. It has happened before, and it is happening now. Visit enough churches of Christ in America, and you will eventually see what I mean. The sound gospel preacher is “*watchful ..., endures...,*” and works!

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