

The Need for Distinctive Preaching

by Wayne Goff

The world and the Lord's church have **ever** been in need of distinctive preaching. It is the kind that saves men's souls. Jesus highly commended John the Baptist as a distinctive preacher, Matthew 11:6-9. He did not preach what was favorable to men, but what was pleasing to God. Jesus pointed this out when he asked His audience: "*Did you go out into the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind?*" The true gospel preacher does **not** speak according to the standards of the day. But it takes courage like John possessed to preach the truth when it is unpopular.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy that the day would come when brethren would not endure "*sound doctrine!*" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). We only need to look around us and see the tremendous religious division all around us as evidence of religious apostasy from the New Testament! It has always amazed me to think of Paul's warning — brethren would grow tired of hearing the truth! How sad, but how true.

What do we mean by "**distinctive**" preaching? Simply the kind of preaching that is "evident, and obvious." It is **not** ambiguous, but distinct. When I began preaching, I had to decide what **kind** of preaching I would do — that which impressed men with my education and erudition, or preaching in such a way that men could clearly understand the message. It was said of Jesus' preaching, "*And the common people heard Him gladly*" (Mark 12:37). Distinctive preaching may not suit the intellectual, but it will save the soul!

Distinctive Preaching Is Not:

- Mean-spirited preaching, but that which humbly rebukes false teachers and their teaching, 2 Timothy 2:24-26.
- Preaching what is popular because it is popular, Matthew 11:6-9.
- Preaching with ulterior motives, 1 Thessalonians 2:3.
- Preaching with the sole intention of pleasing your audience, 1 Thessalonians 2:5-6.
- Preaching for financial gain, or to keep one's job, 1 Thessalonians 2:5.

Distinctive Preaching Is:

- Preaching the truth at all times, plainly, to the needs of your audience because you love God and the souls of men, Acts 20:26-27; Ephesians 4:15.
- Preaching the truth because Jesus is the King of Truth, John 18:37. Those who are "truth-seekers" will listen and follow.
- Preaching the message "*with all authority*" (Titus 2:15) because Jesus has commissioned all of His messengers to speak the whole counsel of God.

Examples Of Distinctive Preaching

Jesus taught the multitudes who were following Him for the "loaves and the fishes" the importance of seeking after spiritual food over material things. They were offended and turned away from Him, John 6:60-63. Jesus did not want followers at any cost, but humble, obedient disciples!

The twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) were distinctive preachers. Their message pricked the hearts of those who were guilty of murdering Jesus Christ! Can you imagine how uncomfortable that message was to these Jews? Yet, the honest among them believed, repented and were baptized for the remission of sins (vv. 36-38).

The apostle Paul preached to the learned Greek philosophers on Mars' Hill in Athens, Greece, Acts 17:22-31. He taught them of the one true God, in contrast to their multitude of idolatrous beliefs — but they mocked him when he spoke of the *resurrection* of Jesus. It was distinctive preaching that led to their rejection. They clearly understand what Paul was saying, but they did not believe it. Still, God was pleased.

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