Purposeful Preaching

by Robert F. Turner

Nathan's subject was adultery, murder, and kindred lusts; but he spoke of a little ewe lamb which a rich man took from the bosom of its owner. (2 Sam. 12:) The problem was that of *application* — getting the audience to apply to **self** the standard by which others were readily condemned.

Nathan's audience deplored **"sin,"** and could list many sins. Nathan's courage as a preacher was little tested by a rip-snorting sermon on, "Adultery;" but when he told the King *"You are the man"* — aye, here was his moment of truth.

John (the Immerser) could decry the awful sins of the times, and call upon people to **"REPENT!"** — out there in the wilderness — and King Herod be unmoved. But John said unto Herod, *"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife"* (Mk. 6:18).

Several years ago one of "our" ultra-liberal preachers criticized John's direct "approach" — suggesting John need not have "lost his head." In a sense he was right about that. John could have spoken in generalities, kept his head, and perhaps his "job'" — but he would have failed his appointed purpose, lost his soul.

Nathan and John used different ways of reaching their targets; and different means of presenting truth are needed today. But both presented and applied the truth. When they were finished the audience knew what was wrong, and felt the sting of rebuke.

Today preachers speak of "sectarianism" without explaining that this spirit lives in the "party" concept of the church. They cry for "unity" but refuse open discussion of issues that divide, with God's word the final authority. This is hypocrisy.

Tell the people they must **Do Bible Things In Bible Ways** — and they will love you. Tell them a church-sponsored skating party is not a Bible Thing; and church-support of human institutions is not a Bible Way; and you may lose your "job," but you will have served your purpose as a preacher.

Oh, John!! Nathan!! Your kind are sorely needed in this generation!!

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