

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

If An Evangelist Is Not Grammatically Correct?

By Brian A. Yeager

I was talking with a fellow preacher a number of years ago. He told me about a woman in the congregation he had labored with in his past. He said this woman was a former school teacher. She taught English classes. He said this woman would read his monthly articles. By the next time the congregation met she would go through the article and correct all of the grammar. She then gave him the corrections. I didn't think very much of this story. However, it did not end there. This former teacher would then tell this preacher that he needed to stop writing until he learned to write properly. She then, on more than one occasion, also told him that his speaking skills were lacking and told him to either stop preaching or take public speaking classes.

I have experienced similar things as this other evangelist. When I preached in Pennsylvania, there was a school teacher in the congregation that did similar, though not nearly critical, things with my writing. Personally, I did not mind the corrections. I did not suspect any impure motives behind those corrections. I made (make) plenty of grammar errors in speech and writing. Yet, to what degree should that matter?

When congregations are in need of faithful evangelists to work with them, there always needs to be much to consider. Is the evangelist doing his work (2 Tim. 4:1-5), living what he preaches (1 Tim. 4:12-16), preaching the truth (Titus 2:1; 2:7-8), and on the list goes.... What if he is not a skilled orator or writer? Does that mean he is not a capable evangelist? What if he has a great knowledge of the word of God, but just does not properly pronounce words? Does an evangelist have to be proficient in speech and writing to do the work that God has said an evangelist is to do? Frankly, we need to consider if it is the message or the grammar skills that makes an evangelist effective as a teacher.

Is The Message More Important Than Proper Grammar?

Before I use the Scriptures to answer this question, I want to address something about the context I am going to use. What I am going to use in answering this question was written by men whom were directly moved to speak by the Holy Spirit (i.e. Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Gal. 1:10-12, etc.). Men, such as the Apostles we read about in the New Testament, did not study to prepare to write or preach messages. God, through the Holy Spirit, gave them the words to speak and write (Matt. 10:16-20; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). God no longer speaks to men through the Holy Spirit today as He did prior to His word being fully revealed (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Thus, the Scriptures we are about to examine in answering this question apply in the sense of speaking the word of God, but they do not apply in the direct manner in which they did in the first century. With that clarification, what you are about to read is clear evidence that the content of the message matters much more than the perfection of that message.

Notice how the message is what matters, not whether or not it is presented with perfect grammar: ***“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. Ad my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into***


the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1Cor. 2:1-13).

Being an eloquent speaker doesn't make the message right (Acts 18:24-28). Fair speeches are actually used by false teachers to draw people AWAY from the Lord (Rom. 16:17-18). False teachers are often pleasant to hear. They are capable of speaking great swelling words to allure people (2 Pet. 2:18). Based upon these Scriptural truths, how could we think that the presentation of the message is of great importance? Yet, people will still flock towards "good speakers" and "good writers". Consider for a moment that this would mean you are much less likely to listen to the faithful with that thinking. Frankly, if the Apostle Paul were alive, the grammar police would have no respect for his teaching.

Consider The Faithful That Would Be Ignored

Paul said that he was "*rude*" [ignorant; unlearned] in speech (2 Cor. 11:6). His speaking ability was called "*contemptible*" (2 Cor. 10:10). Yet, the Lord made Paul a "*chosen vessel*" (Acts 9:11-15). Brethren, many so-called "*churches of Christ*" today would not be interested in Paul because He was not a skilled speaker. Think about that for a moment. Don't judge the message of God by the ability of the one delivering that message whether in writing or speech. The power of the Gospel is not found in the presentation of it (Rom. 1:16).


Conclusion

An evangelist must be able to teach in a way that is understandable and plain (Neh. 8:8; Acts 17:1-3; 2 Cor. 3:12). An evangelist must be able to explain and teach the Scriptures (Acts 8:26-39). Outside of that, a man whom is going to teach the word of God is not required by God to use proper grammar! No Scripture requires such of preachers of the word. If we were to require such of evangelists, we'd be teaching a doctrine of men (Col. 2:18-23). — *Words of Truth*, November 27, 2016. 

Would Your Boss Believe It?

Suppose you decided not to go to work because you didn't feel good, so you called your boss and told him that you were too sick to come in. Suddenly, around 4:30 p.m. you start to feel a lot better so you decide you will go and pick up a few needed items at the local Wal-Mart, and who do you run into at the store, but your boss! When he asks you how you are feeling, you tell him how much better you began to feel around 4:30 p.m., explaining that you thought it would be good to get out of the house for a while. How convenient! Do you think your boss would really believe your story?

Yet, many "*Christians*" (so-called) follow a similar pattern regarding their attendance. They often don't call anyone when they are "sick" and miss services. Many times they don't attend for several consecutive services. When it comes time to go to work or go somewhere they want to go, they suddenly start feeling better. When another member calls to inquire why they were absent for services, they usually respond by telling how sick they were and how their condition improved, all of a sudden! Oh, how they make a habit of being "sick" conveniently and recovering "miraculously."

Doesn't the Bible teach somewhere that miracles have ceased in this age (1 Cor. 13:8-10)? Think on these things. — *tgmc* 

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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