

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Which Itch?

The apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy saying, *“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”* (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Have you ever had an itch in your ear? I have, and I am sure you have. But, an itch in the ear is often hard to get at or reach. I have seen some use an object such as a paperclip, to get to the itch (which is not advisable or safe). But, when you have an itch, oh how good it feels to scratch it. The scratching soothes the itch. We have all experienced this. But Paul here discusses *“itching ears,”* of those who through lusts and the desire to satisfy their lusts, desire something other than the Truth of God (cf. Jer. 5:30, 31; 6:15, 16). Notice Paul’s charge to Timothy regarding preaching:

First, Paul *charged* (to make a solemn affirmation) young Timothy by what authority he was to preach, that being, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who is the judge of the quick and the dead. What a stirring charge! What Divine authority and heavenly credentials we see declared by this statement. He was not to speak according to men, but by the authority of God, the words of God (Isa. 8:20; 55:8, 9; Col. 3:16; 1 Pet. 4:11; Titus 2:1).

Second, Paul commanded Timothy what he was to preach. He said, preach the word (doctrine). Notice that Timothy was not told to preach twenty-minute “sermonettes.” But he was to preach the word! What word? As Paul put it in Acts 20:28, *“the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”* This word is the *“word of truth,”* the words of eternal life (Eph. 1:13; 2 Tim 2:15; Jas. 1:18; Jn. 6:68; Acts 13:48, 49; Titus 1:2, 5, 7; 1 Jn. 5:11; 13, 20). Throughout the books of Timothy, adherence to the *“scriptures,”* the *“word,”* the *“doctrine,”* the *“truth”* is repeatedly emphasized by Paul (1 Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:5, 6, 12, 13, 16, 17; 2: 4, 7; 3:15, 4:3; 5:17; 6:1, 3, 5; 2 Tim. 2:9, 15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8, 15, 16; 4:2; 3, 4). Adherence to the doctrines and commandments of men will yield only vain worship and rotten fruit (cf. Matt. 15:9; 7:15-20).

Third, Paul instructed Timothy about when he was to preach. He said, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season”* (2 Tim. 4:2). In other words, he was to preach the word at every opportunity he had and any opportunity he could make. He was to preach at opportune and inopportune times. He was to preach the gospel of Christ when they liked it and preach it when they don’t like it, that is, to be always ready to preach the gospel at any given opportunity! And, he was never to compromise on any point and at any time.

Fourth, Paul instructed Timothy about how he was to preach. Paul uses three distinct words that describe how he was to preach: **(1)** He was to *“reprove”* or to convict or expose the sinner. The word reprove means, *“to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, to call to account, show one his fault, to convict”* (Thayer, pp. 202, 203). The sinner was to be made to feel the guilt and be convicted of his sins. The proof of guilt was to be clearly established. The sinner’s heart must be smitten with the guilt of his sins as the case was when Peter and the apostles pricked the hearts of the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2; cf. 8:18-24). **(2)** He was to *“rebuke”* or to sharply reprimand the guilty. The word rebuke means, *“To tax with fault...chide...censure severely, to restrain, to admonish or charge sharply”* (Thayer, p. 245). This type of preaching is sometimes needed to produce repentance or the proper response on the part of this sinner. The preaching of Stephen in Acts 7 is a great example of a lesson of stern rebuke although the proper response was not shown by those whom Stephen rebuked. **(3)** He was to *“exhort”* or urge. The word *“exhort”* means, *“To call to one’s side, call for, summon...to beg, to entreat, to strive to appease by entreaty, to comfort...”* (Thayer, pp. 482-483). Notice that two of the three ways Paul in-

structs Timothy to preach are emphatically negative. So, down goes the arguments of those who rail on and criticize preachers who have the spiritual backbone to mark sin and error and make scriptural application, charging them with being negative. The preaching that Paul commands of Timothy, and which is applicable to all gospel preachers today, is to be mixed with gentleness and severity. These three words outline the character of scriptural gospel preaching.

Conclusion

Just what kind of preaching do you desire? Or to put it bluntly, what kind of preaching are you *“itching”* for? Is it the preaching of Bible Truth that *“reproves, rebukes, and exhorts with all longsuffering and doctrine,”* and clearly and pointedly defines sin, error and teachers of error? Or are you *“itching”* for smooth words of lies and deceit which will soothe and satisfy ears and hearts that are tuned to the lusts of the flesh and doctrines and commandments of men and the compromising spirit of evil men (Isa. 30:10; Jer. 6:14, 16)? **What kind of preaching are you *“itching”* for? – tgm c ■**

“Do All in the Name of the Lord”

By Billy Moore

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

“In the name of” means by the authority of, thus all that we do is to be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus. The need for authority is emphasized in both Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament such classic examples as Cain, who offered a sacrifice that was not authorized (Gen. 4; Heb. 11:4); Nadab and Abihu acted without authority when they offered strange fire (Lev. 10:1-2); and Uzza, without divine authority in wanting to burn incense to the Lord (2 Chron. 26:16-21). Remember, all these things *“were written for our learning”* (Rom. 15:4). From these examples we should learn the need for authority from God for the things we do. The New Testament teaches this lesson in many ways: do not add to or take from God’s word (Rev. 22:18-19); not to think of men above that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6); if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11); abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-10); and *“do all things in the name of the Lord.”*

All that we teach and practice must be authorized by the Lord. When a practice is begun it is the responsibility of those who start it to show that such is authorized in the New Testament. The burden of proof is upon them, i.e. prove that it is done *“in the name of the Lord,”* not upon those who may oppose it to show what is wrong with it. Example: when the practice of “pouring” or “sprinkling” for baptism was begun, those who started it were obligated to show that it was baptism (of course this would not be possible since baptize means to dip, plunge, immerse, submerge or overwhelm), those who oppose such were not obliged to prove that it was not baptism.

When the instrument of music was introduced into the worship, those who brought it in were responsible to prove that it was being done *“in the name of the Lord”* by citing the book, chapter and verse for the command, example or necessary inference that authorizes it. That’s the one thing that has not been done by those who want the instrument of music in worship. Instead of proving that their practice is *“in the name of the Lord,”* they ask, “What is wrong with it?” or cite an example from the Old Testament where the instrument was used. The fact remains that the burden of proof rests upon those who are now crying for a change. Don’t you know that if there were a passage that authorized instruments of music in worship such would have been cited long ago? The failure to prove that it is being done *“in the name of the Lord”* is evidence that those who favor it realize there is no such scripture.

How great it would be if all of us who claim to “speak where the Bible speaks” would again stand united upon this plea and reject any and all things for which there is no authority from the Lord Jesus. – *For A Better Understanding*, November -December 2014. ■

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

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