

God's Messengers

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Ezekiel 33:30-32 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Isaiah 6:10-12 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

- I. God sends his messengers to proclaim his truth to the people.
 - A. God calls these messengers and prepares them for this great work and then burns into their soul the message He has for the people at that time.
 - B. The men God sends with a message for the people of their generation are anointed with the Spirit of God and so is their message.
 - C. The preaching is with power, spiritual power, and the Word of God preached in the power of God cuts completely through the hearers.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- D. However, the effects are not all the same.
 - 1. The preaching of the Word of God in the power of the Spirit will cause one person to repent in tears and another to hate God more and harden his resolve to continue in his sin.
- E. This is not God's doing, but the rebellion of a darkened heart and mind that has believed lies about God, about himself, and about the people of God.
- F. You will hear from time to time someone say things like, "God's mercy just ran out for him." Or, "God just had no more patience with him."
 - 1. This is not truth, but a lie about God.
 - 2. The truth about the matter is that God's mercy never runs out:

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalm 103:17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

- 3. God's patience never ends:

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Psalm 86:15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

4. God never gives one over, or gives one up, until that person has shut God out of his mind and heart so tightly that there is no more hope of shining a light into his soul.
5. God saves sinners by the preaching of his Word, not by some supernatural experience that is custom designed for each individual.

Romans 10:13-17 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

6. This is the only means by which God deals with and saves sinful men and women.
 - a) Not by science, not by knowledge, not by supernatural or spiritual experiences.
 - G. So the issue is, what happens when we hear a man who is sent from God with a message from God for us and the Spirit of God bears witness that it is from God?
 - H. The answer is very simple...we either hear, perceive, understand, and obey the message, or we refuse to listen, to consider, to try to understand, or to obey the words we have heard.
- II. This is the burden of every man who is sent by God with a message for the people of his day.
- A. Many preachers get discouraged because it seems that the truths they are preaching seem to do no good.
 - B. There is precious little evidence in the people they are preaching to that they are receiving and heeding anything that God has given him for them.
 - C. Even more discouraging is to see people going farther away from God and becoming more worldly and sinful and wicked while smiling and saying "Amen" at his preaching.
 1. This was Ezekiel's lot, Isaiah's lot, and Jeremiah's lot, as well as the rest of the prophets.

Zechariah 7:8-12 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

- D. The fact is that if the preaching of the Word of God does not make you better it will make you worse.

- E. If you do not hear, seek to understand, perceive, and obey you will rebel more and more.
 - F. This is exactly why we see children of good families living so wickedly.
 - G. This is why we see people make a profession of faith, or start coming to church, and then after a while cut a trail to the world to be more wicked than they ever were before.
 - H. This is the answer to what I have always wondered about people who sit in church for years and then start drifting away and taking back up with their old worldly ways and companionships.
 - I. The spirit-filled preaching of the word of God is not a guarantee that those who hear it will be saved.
 - 1. Many people will become worse than they were before they heard it.
 - J. It is water to the soul thirsting after righteousness, but bitterness and gall for the soul that is self-seeking, self-pitying, and self absorbed.
 - K. It is bread from heaven for the hungry soul, but a reproach and an offense to that soul that is not submitted to God and still in love with sin and the world.
- III. Beware how you respond to the preaching of the Word of God, as well as what you read in the Word of God yourself.

Jeremiah 44:16-17 As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

- A. Believe what God says without regard for the circumstances.
- B. Do not be one of those like these in Israel long ago who made up their own minds about what was right and wrong.
- C. Be honest and recognize when God is speaking to hearts with his truth.
 - 1. There is a great difference between spiritual preaching and intellectual speech-making.
 - 2. There is a great difference between spiritual preaching of the Word of God and someone working to give you your weekly emotional high by telling you stories.
- D. Strive to LISTEN for what God has to say to YOU every time you come to church.
- E. Strive to understand what the preacher is trying to get across to you, even if you do not like what he is saying.
- F. Strive to perceive the message from God, that means to take hold of and to keep.
- G. Strive to obey and apply to your life what God shows you through the preaching of the Word of God.
- H. NEVER make light of, or shrug off what is preached as something that you do not agree with or do not like.
- I. Be wise enough and humble enough to understand that you, as well as all the rest of us, are still learning and in need of being taught of God.
- J. BE a part of that remnant that listens, believes, understands, loves, and obeys the Word of God.