**Christ Crucified**

Recently I viewed some videos of sermons that are indicative of the preaching that occupies many pulpits in this country. When I compare what I saw and heard to the gospel message presented in scripture, I have three concerns with the content of these sermons.

**Political Activism** – I am just as concerned as anyone about the immoral and ungodly policies of our federal, state and local governments, and we, as individuals, should do all in our power to influence public policy in a positive way. But there is not a shred of scriptural authority for church involvement in politics. The fact that churches have dabbled in government affairs for centuries is irrelevant. The only connection between the gospel and the government is that the righteousness God teaches influences individuals and individuals influence public policy. Period. If preachers spent more time teaching scripture and less time in politics, their listeners might have a true foundation for their faith.

**Personal Opinion** – Every preacher should be passionate about the message. If he is not, he should get out of the pulpit. On the other hand, if a man develops a following based on his charisma and his passion for his own personal opinions, he is not making disciples of Jesus Christ, he is creating his own disciples. When a person is truly converted to Christ, the individuals don’t really matter. When someone is a disciple of a charismatic preacher, their “faith” falls apart when they become disillusioned with the man. Besides, *there has never been a person in all of human history who was saved by human opinions.* Which brings me to concern number three:

**Devoid of Scripture** – Inspired scripture is profitable for “doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). That is exactly what each of us needs, to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; not someone rambling for thirty minutes based on a phrase pulled out of context. Considering many who claim to be Christians have received nothing but a steady diet of human interest stories, it is no wonder that they are ill equipped to handle the serious issues of life.

**So, what did real gospel preaching look like?** – Paul told the Corinthians, “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Of course Paul taught the Corinthians a lot of things. He warned them about sectarianism, carnality, immorality, covetousness and unbelief. He taught them about proper attitudes in the marriage relationship. He rebuked them for their abuses of the Lord’s Supper. But in all of this, the connection between their manner of life and the sacrifice Christ has made for them was clear. “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:1-4)

When a man gets in the pulpit, I want to hear Christ and Him crucified. I want to hear what the scriptures teach about the implications of His sacrifice for my life. Anything else is only so much bluster and hot air.

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