

PREACHING WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

By: Shirley Worden

Two mourners recently returned from separate funeral services remarking how they had been strangely reassured about death. The words of the preachers obviously soothing their fears. One recalled how the preacher spoke favourably about entry into heaven. The other spoke of heart shaped beds and earthly comforts which were available to all.

My righteous anger was very much kindled. The people being buried were clearly not saved and far from experiencing the delights of heaven were rather enduring the torments of Hell. The funeral service traditionally a precious moment to warn the congregation of the reality of future punishment for the unrepentant, has been turned into a service of hypocrisy and lies in the sight of God.

Tragically many blind and ignorant souls are heading to Hell because so called servants of God who are called to warn them - Simply couldn't care less. They show their lack of concern by making promises that God Himself has never made and will not uphold. They are vain jangling designed to comfort the fearful which in practice sends the lost sinner further away from the grace of God.

God does not promise to save those who are baptised at birth or who join any one particular religious denomination. God "Commands All men Everywhere to repent because he has appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness" Acts 17:30. We are to trust in Jesus and in him alone for our salvation "For there is no other name given among men, whereby we must be saved" Acts 4:12.

A family member of mine was recently buried with the approval of being "A servant of the most High." The only serving I ever remember him doing was behind the local bar in which he worked! He was not born-again and as Jesus said "Unless a man be born-again he cannot see inside the Kingdom of God" John 3:3.

Ezekiel was warned by God "When I say to the wicked, O wicked man you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand." (33:8)

Jesus told us to beware of false preachers who would come in the name of Christianity, dressed up to look like sheep but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Matthew 7:15 "Many will say in that day Lord, Lord did we not preach in your name? And then I will say I never knew you: depart from me." Verses 22-23. He spoke of those who have "An outward appearance of righteousness but inwardly are full of iniquity" Matt 23:28.

God warns us not to "Hearken to the words of the false spokesmen of God, they speak to you in vain" 23:16. Gods charge against them was the message they preached. "They say, be still and be at peace no bad thing shall come upon you, to them that despise me." Jeremiah 23:17. "I have not sent these spokesman. If they were from me they would have caused the people to hear my words so they could repent and be saved" 23:21-22. (Paraphrased) "For you have perverted the words of the living God." 23:36

Paul warned us of perilous times in which some shall "Depart from the faith, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared" 1Timothy 4:1-2. "They shall turn away their ears from the truth, not enduring sound doctrine" 2Timothy 4:3-4 (Paraphrased). These are those who "Profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." Their mind and conscience is defiled." Titus 1:15-16

Jesus issued a woe to the Religious leaders of his time who were teaching on tithing and neglecting to teach coming judgment and the love of God. They preferred worldly recognition, they were people pleasers, ear ticklers. They had taken away the knowledge of how to be saved. They were themselves un-saved and those that were entering into salvation, they hindered. Luke 11:42-43;52. Charles Spurgeon said "He who has no wish to see souls saved is not saved himself, make no mistake."

The Lord promises that the "Fearful and unbelieving, and murderers and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire" Revelation 21:8. Gods charge to Ezekiel is clear, failure to warn sinners of God's coming judgment, failure to preach the whole counsel of God because of fear of man, by lying to the congregation shall face the eternal fire of Gods wrath. "I say to you, every idle (useless) word a man shall speak, he shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" Matthew 12:36.

For those who overcome and are faithful to God and his word they are promised praise from the lips of the Master "Well done good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things, enter into the joy of the Lord" Matthew 25:23.

The next time you walk out of a funeral service, before you shake the preachers hand, think about what you have heard! If you are unable to shake his hand, feel free to print this off and send it to him.