

What Am I Doing Wrong? Absolutely Nothing, Scripturally



By Bradlee Dean

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“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” –Galatians 6:14

Most recently, I was speaking to one of my ministry friends and he had told me of someone that he knew in the ministry that he said was a great man, and had won awards and big prize money for his works. I thought out loud and said “Good for him”, and then I thought, “What am I doing wrong?” “Of course,” I said this knowing that it was an opportunity for me to preach the Biblical Christ to him.

I know that I am nothing and that I am not great (2 Corinthians 12:10). The One that I love and serve belongs all praise and honor (Revelation 19:16). In reflection of his statement, I said, “My accolades have been me being scoffed at by other people (especially within the American church), being persecuted, being mocked, being lied about, being hated and even having death threats (Matthew 10:22). Look at what Paul endured when bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (2 Corinthians 11:23-33).

This seems to be the recurring theme in the American church today. Men seeking the praise and approbation of man, and not

THE LORD LEST THEY SHOULD OFFEND (Galatians 1:10). I strongly believe that too many (More than not) in the pulpits today are enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18).

In Luke 16:15, Scripture tells us:

“For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”

And Luke 6:26, *“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”*

How do men today preach in such a fashion whereby they are loved and honored by other men? I mean to say that 11 out of the 12 apostles were martyred for their faith, including the Son of God and yet, men today are praised by others. As if to suggest that there is a diplomatic way of telling people to repent without offense (Matthew 3:2).

Reformer Martin Luther said:

“Always preach in such a way that if the people listening do not come to hate their sin, they will instead hate you.”

How does one reconcile this with the praise of man?

George Whitefield said, *“I was honored today with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of dead cat thrown at me.”*

I believe that Leonard Ravenhill had it right when he stated, *“If Jesus had preached the same message that ministers preach today, He would never have been crucified.”*

In this quote below, Charles Spurgeon describes the kind of man God uses to accomplish great things:

“All great movements need the entire self-sacrifice of some one man who, careless of consequences, will throw himself upon the spears of the enemy...”

He must be simple-minded, outspoken, bold and fearless of consequences... Ease, reputation, comfort, he must renounce, and be content so long as he lives to dwell without the world's camp.

Standing at the point of the wedge he must be ambitious to bury as many spears as possible in his own bosom that others may win the victory."

Conclusion: How can one (if that person is truly preaching the Gospel the way that Christ and the Apostles did) receive the praise and approbation of men? As I said, Christ was crucified for telling the truth. All but one of the Apostles were martyred. The Gospel, in its pure form, is not a pill one can sugarcoat to make it go down easier. It is the simple, honest and convicting truth that when preached, in accordance with the Word of God, will set men free. If we think we can make it less offensive to be liked by others or otherwise praised by men, we are deceiving ourselves and have no love for the truth. By its very nature, the truth will be offensive, divide the sheep from the goats, light from darkness, right from wrong, and Heaven from Hell. If we will by our own might to make it otherwise, we are not faithful servants or witnesses of Jesus Christ.

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