

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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The Kind of Preachers We Need and
The Kind of Preacher I Want To Be (Part 5)

Luke 1:13-17

Having considered that John was powered by the Spirit, we now turn our attention to the second part of the message. Because John was powered by the Spirit, he also **Pointed out Sin**. There is no mistake in prefacing John's pointing out sin with his being powered by the Spirit. I mentioned this earlier when beginning the message, but it bears repeating—the final two major points of this message are a result of the first major point. You take away the fact that John was powered by the Spirit, and you will not find him pointing out sin. A person who is not controlled by the Spirit will not be bothered by sin in their own lives or in the lives of others. Likewise, a preacher who is not controlled by the Spirit will not be bothered by sin in his own life or in the lives of other people. He will not care to preach against sin because he is not preaching under the power of the Holy Ghost. That is why many preachers never preach against sin—they are preaching in the flesh and not in the Spirit. One who is controlled by the Spirit will be just as offended by sin as the Holy Ghost is offended by sin. A preacher under the Holy Ghost's control will confront and point out sin.

I mention this because it is extremely important in our day. It seems as if no one is bothered by wrongdoing anymore. If one does take a strong stand against wickedness and perversion, they are marked, even in our Fundamental circles, as troublemakers and rouble rousers. Many preachers will pass over a chance to preach and stand against sin by saying "God did not call me to do that." Apparently, they have never read the Bible that they profess to preach because God repeatedly demands His people to be holy and tells His preachers to preach holiness. The preaching of right living will

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demand that one point out what is wrong. Some declare today that they want to be "positive" in their message and not so "negative" all the time. That sounds good to the carnal and wicked ear, until you realize that God used negative commands often. In fact, eight of the Ten Commandments are negative. It seems to me that if we are going to be like God, we will have to preach what people cannot do.

People will often pass off preaching against sin by saying, "That is his opinion." There may be the rare occasion when a man in the pulpit is preaching his opinion, but it more often occurs that a preacher is preaching the Bible, and the people simply do not want to obey the Bible. They will make up some other excuse, and blame it on the preacher's "misinterpretation," or "meddling," when the problem is that they enjoy their sin too much to listen to what God says in His Word and through His preacher.

In our day, many things that most every Bible believer and preacher used to believe were wrong, are now being questioned as if they are really wrong. Playing with gambling cards, going to movies, women wearing men's attire, working on Sunday, working at places that sell alcohol, and other things were considered wrong, preached against, and even listed in our church Constitutions and Covenants as things that Bible believers and good church members would not do. Now we are apparently more advanced than those preachers and believers of yesteryear. We no longer think those things are wrong and have even removed some of them from our Constitutions. The question I have is this—Why did believers in the past think they were wrong? Has God's standard of holiness changed? Were the preachers and Christians back then just ignorant buffoons making it hard on other church members? Why are we changing? I doubt we know more than they did. It is probably that we do not care about holy living any more. We now are debating if drinking alcohol is wrong. Before long, we will probably be admitting men with earrings, and men and women with body piercings, into our church membership. Besides, many will say, we do not have any Scripture to forbid it. After that, we will come to the conclusion that

homosexuality is not really wrong. Some will conclude that it is some remote, minute, verse forbidding homosexuality that really does not forbid it, and besides, it does not really matter. Does that sound farfetched? That is what they are doing now to other verses that were used in the past to condemn the selling of alcohol, working on Sunday, and even the drinking of alcohol.

But how did we get to the point that we are at today when seemingly no one wants to say that anything is wrong? We stopped being filled with the Holy Ghost, which stopped preachers from preaching against sin, and believers from living holy lives. That is simply stated, but is the absolute truth! But how should preachers preach, and how should preachers expect believers to live? I mentioned what I did earlier to show the level where we have advanced (really declined). Now we must return to the way of the past. We must return to preaching like it was done in the past. A good example is John the Baptist.

The first aspect of John's pointing out sin was His Direction. In Matthew 14, we find the account where Herod thinks that Jesus is John the Baptist. Here we are given the details of John's death. Matthew 14:3 says that Herod had laid hold on John and put him in prison. Why was John put in prison? Was it because he preached rebellion against Herod? Was it because he preached rebellion against the Roman empire? Was it because he said that Herod did not have the right to be tetrarch? No, it was none of these. It was because he preached against Herod's sin. We will discuss the sin that Herod committed in a little bit, but now we want to focus on the direction of that preaching.

John preached directly against Herod. He was not concerned that Herod was tetrarch (called king in Mark). He was not concerned that Herod was probably like his father (the Herod mentioned in Matthew 2) and had a violent temper. John was filled with the Holy Ghost. All that mattered to him was doing right and preaching right regardless of the consequences. Herod was the tetrarch of Galilee

(Luke 3:1). He was put in power by the Roman caesar. It could be considered similar to our positions of governor in our states. Herod was not the ultimate, absolute authority like the caesar, but he did have great power as evidenced by what he did to John. But John was not concerned with Herod or Herod's power. He was concerned with what God had said. Herod had committed wrong, and it was John's responsibility as God's preacher to let Herod and everyone else know it.

Many in John's day probably thought that John was meddling in something that was not his business. Perhaps they thought that it was a personal issue to be dealt with in private or maybe even excused because of the position that Herod occupied. (Why would I say this? It is because the people in John's day were no different than the people in our day. If they say it today, and they do, there were probably many saying it then.) The problem with the thinking by these people is that it was man's reasoning and not God's.

But John did not reason with man's reasoning. He was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he could not simply dismiss what Herod was doing. It was wrong, and John must confront it. The key issue is, again, being filled with the Holy Ghost. One lacking the filling will not be concerned with sin in their own lives or the lives of others. They will dismiss it and will say that it really does not matter. But one who is filled with the Holy Ghost will be sensitive to sin. The Holy Ghost will let them know what is right and what is wrong. Sin will matter to one who is Spirit-filled.

It cannot be dismissed—John preached against Herod. A lesser man would have passed it over, but John did not and could not. Remember, this is the king. It is not some unknown person that no one knows and no one cares about. It is the king. I emphasize the position of Herod because I do not want us to forget who it was that John confronted. It is easier to confront a nobody. But John confronted the king. Some preachers may confront the sin of a member that is not faithful, but will let it go when it is the head

deacon, usher, treasurer, etc. Men may play favorites, but God does not.

Brethren, sin must be preached against regardless of whom it may concern. Someone may not be involved in sin, but they may be offended and say, “We do not need to preach about that here.” Is it in the Bible? Did God say that it was wrong? Then it needs to be preached against.

A true Spirit-filled preacher will not be intimidated by anyone. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit, and he confronted the sin of the king. Whether it be the deacon, treasurer, usher, or even the one that gives the most money, may God help us to be more concerned about doing right than being accepted. If condoning wrong makes us accepted, then we need to be rejected. Someone may say, “It might cost me something. They may kick us out of the church.” It cost John his head, but he was willing to do what was right. I doubt that John knew his preaching would cost him his life, but I do not think it mattered. He was more concerned about doing right. We must also be concerned with doing right!