

CAN'T WE JUST PREACH THE GOSPEL AND LEAVE OTHERS ALONE?

I have only one priority in the work and preaching I do—to please God! If I please God in my preaching and teaching, it matters not how men may view or regard that teaching. God is pleased, he is the judge. The only guide I have to follow is the Bible. What did Jesus say about truth and error? Read Matthew 23:13-39. In no less than 13 verses, Jesus rebukes, in very strong language, those who do not obey his will. Didn't he know people would be offended? Yes, he did (Matt. 15:10-14; John 6:59-61)!

How did God's prophets and preachers through the centuries deal with error? When I do as they did, then I will be acceptable with God. Notice these scriptures: "*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and...their sins*" (Isa. 58:1). What kind of preaching did Jonah and Jeremiah do (Jonah 3:4; Jer. 7)? Pay careful attention to the preaching in the book of Acts. We are to "*earnestly contend for the faith*" (Jude 3). How do you "contend for the faith" without opposing and exposing error? When Paul entered a city and preached, trouble followed. The Truth disturbs people who love darkness (1 Thess. 5:4-5). TRUTH and ERROR are mortal enemies. They cannot and will not exist together without conflict and controversy! Satan will go to any length to

keep error from being exposed! He hates the truth!

Ephesians 5:11 says, "*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*" It's impossible to "preach the truth and leave others alone." We are commanded to "reprove" all that is error. Reprove means to "convict, rebuke, expose." How can I be faithful to God if I refuse to "rebuke" and "expose" evil?

Some say it's "unloving" to expose error. Is a father "unloving" when he rebukes his child for playing in the street? Not at all! It's LOVE that motivates him to expose and correct the child's wrong. Was John the Baptist wrong for calling the Scribes and Pharisees "vipers" in Matthew 3:7-10? If so, then Jesus was wrong too (Matt. 12:34)!

The problem is that we fail to see sin and error as God does. Somehow we tend to smooth it over and make it not seem as bad as it is. People tend to think that God will find a way to accept evil and those who practice it. Beloved, if this is your idea, you need to do more serious study of the Bible.

Where has God EVER condemned anyone for exposing, rebuking, reprov-ing and admonishing error? Let's see the passage! There are none.

— Garland M. Robinson