

Have I Become Your Enemy?

Sometimes the preaching of God's word creates enemies. Galatians was written by Paul to the churches in Galatia to root out erroneous doctrines and fortify them in the true faith in which they had previously been instructed (cf. Galatians 5:1-6). There are four good lessons to learn about rebuke from Paul.

First, Paul teaches me that sin should be rebuked clearly (Ephesians 5:11). That is precisely what John the Baptist did toward Herod when he told him he had no right to his brother's wife (cf. Matthew 14:4). John exposed the truth and it eventually led to his decapitation. He spoke the truth and made an enemy. Second, Paul teaches me that the preaching of truth will sometimes produce enemies. Paul's question in Galatians 4:16 implies the possibility of such happening (cf. Exodus 10:28-29; 1 Kings 18:17-19:3).

Third, Paul teaches me that people fight truth from two different perspectives. Some are unconscious enemies of truth (1 Timothy 1:13), while some knowingly fight against truth (John 3:19). Fourth, Paul teaches me that the truth must be preached clearly, despite the results. There are some attitudes today, which, if universally accepted, would weaken and destroy the church (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Some say that we should preach the Bible, but leave everybody alone, while others say that we should never preach a negative message.

In the 21st century, sin still needs to be rebuked -- even if we acquire some enemies in so doing. May we always be willing to preach the truth in patient humility, regardless of what others may think or how they might respond.

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