

They Will Do It Every Time

The preacher had just concluded a hot and scathing sermon on the sin of swearing. He had stated several times that he knew one of his hearers was guilty.

When the sermon was over, the people filed out the door. First was a lady who was never suspected of using foul language. With a red and angry face she exclaimed, "I will never darken this door again."

Before the astonished preacher could recover from this blast another said, "Brother, if I had known you were near this past week, I would have been more careful of my speech." A third said, "I think you might at least have come to me privately about it rather than telling it to the whole church."

Then came the real culprit — the one at whom the preacher really directed his remarks. With a bland and innocent smile he grasped the hand of the preacher and said, "Brother, that's what I call real preaching. You certainly did pour it on them today."

Why is it that we are so unwilling to see faults and sins in ourselves? Paul wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4). A gospel preacher is there to teach and preach. A person's soul depends upon being pricked in the heart with God's word. Any gospel preacher who will not preach on sin and error does not need to be a preacher.

When Nathan came to David and told him the story of the little ewe lamb, David recognized the sin but did not realize his guilt until the prophet handed him a stunning rebuke in 2 Samuel 12:7: "Thou art the man." It was then that David said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (v. 13). But often, no matter how the preacher addresses a subject, some just do not see that the Bible is convicting them of sin. Paul spoke of those in 1 Timothy 4:2 who had their "conscience seared with a hot iron." It may be that some of us need to realize our position before God and repent of sins that we have heard preaching on all our lives but have stubbornly continued to commit. Do not be among the stiffnecked that God resists (Acts 7:51), but among the humble that He exalts (1 Peter 5:6).

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