

Who Will Turn Over The Tables?

Introduction. Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover, and when He arrived at the temple, He saw the tables of the money changers, and drove them out with a whip, and overturned their tables. His actions added force to His words (John 2:15-16). More than that, turning over the tables was a visible manifestation of His zeal (v. 17). And, when Jesus turned over the tables, He was purging sin and error from the temple.

Some today suggest that Jesus could overturn the tables because He was Jesus. That He is the Son of God means that He is perfect in knowledge and in righteousness. He alone was suited for the job. We, however, are not perfect in knowledge and righteousness, so some suggest that we must be cautious in our table turning. Is this a valid argument?

I. Where Is Sinless Perfection Required Of Preachers?

- A. On its surface, this seems ridiculous, does it not? If it were necessary for one to be sinlessly perfect, who could preach anything?
- B. David, a vocal preacher of the Old Testament and a prolific writer of the psalms, was a man of many sins (Psalm 38:1-4).
 - 1. He acknowledged His sins against God (Psalm 51:1-4).
 - 2. He figuratively said he "was shapen in iniquity" and "conceived in sin" (v. 5).
 - 3. He begged God for forgiveness, showing his wonderful heart (vv. 12-13).
- C. Peter, who preached the first gospel sermon, and in fact, preached through the first 13 chapters of Acts, played the hypocrite (Galatians 2:13-14).
- D. Paul said there were hypocrites who preached, but he rejoiced because the truth could still be preached (Philippians 1:15-18).

II. Should We "Be Careful"?

- A. Some want us to "be careful" in turning over tables in our teaching because we are not the perfect Jesus. If that is the case, should we not be careful in everything that Jesus did?
- B. Should we be careful about "going about doing good" (Acts 10:38)?
 - 1. He healed the sick (Matthew 4:24).
 - 2. He fed the hungry (Matthew 14:16-21).
 - 3. He raised the dead (John 11:43-44).
 - 4. He comforted the downtrodden (John 8:10-11).
 - 5. He told men about God (John 14:6).
 - 6. Are we unqualified to help the sick, feed the hungry, comfort the downtrodden, or to preach to men about the Father in Heaven simply because we are not divine?

- C. Should we be careful how we express compassion (Matthew 9:36)?
 - 1. Jesus wept for Mary and Martha when they lost their brother (John 11:35).
 - 2. Jesus had compassion on two blind men by the roadside (Matthew 20:29-34).
 - 3. Would anyone suggest that because we are not the Son of God, we cannot express compassion for those who are in pain or who are suffering?
- D. Should we be careful when loving others (John 11:36)?
 - 1. What hinders you and me from loving others just like Jesus did?
 - 2. He commanded us to love our neighbors (Matthew 19:19).
 - 3. We are also to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44).
 - 4. Does it require a divine nature to love as commanded in the Bible?
- E. Should we be careful being about our Father's business (Luke 2:49)?
- F. Should we be careful about having contact with publicans and sinners (Matthew 9:10-11)?

III.If Jesus Is Our Example, He Is Our Example In Preaching

- A. I mean by this question, should I not preach in just exactly the same way that He did (cp. 1 Peter 2:21)?
- B. When Jesus preached, people knew He was addressing them (Matthew 21:45).
 - 1. He was not ambiguous nor unclear.
 - 2. He did not hedge around the truth, but stated it.
 - 3. When He saw sin and error, He exposed it.
- C. Jesus rebuked His closest friends for their unbelief (Mark 16:14).
 - 1. He was not worried about making them feel good.
 - 2. He did not worry that He might offend them or run them off.
 - 3. He simply told them the truth and let the word of God have its effect.
- D. Jesus rebuked foolish words and behavior (Luke 9:54-56).
 - 1. James and John wanted to call fire from heaven to consume a village of the Samaritans because they did not receive Jesus.
 - 2. Jesus did not tolerate their belligerence: "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of."
- E. Jesus used the strongest language when He spoke to people (Mark 8:33).
 - 1. The caricature that people have painted of Jesus is inaccurate.
 - 2. He is pictured as a smiling, long-haired hippy.
 - 3. But the truth is, Jesus was as strong as steel. He knew that in some cases only the strongest of words were sufficient.
- F. Jesus called sin what it was — SIN (Matthew 23:13-33).
 - 1. Too many brethren today are scared to call sin, sin.

2. They worry that too strong and direct a rebuke will make people mad.
3. But, Jesus did not have any such worries. He knew that the only way to get people to turn away from sin is to make sure they know what it is.

Conclusion. If you and I refuse, who will turn over the tables of the doctrines of the wolves (Matthew 7:15) and men (Matthew 15:7-9)? I do not delight in turning over tables, but this is what my Master wants me to do (1 Timothy 4:1-3). There will always be a hunger in the good heart for plain truth. We are not to shy away from it, but proclaim it with all boldness (Acts 4:13, 29, 31).

I am deeply indebted to David Weaks for the use of his material.