

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

Ezekiel 3:17-21

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. “Again, when a righteous *man* turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous *man* that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul” (Ezekiel 3:17-21).

WARNINGS!!!

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber” (2 Peter 2:1-3).

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

◆ The Challenge Of Worship

The Challenge Of Worship

1) Four types of worship identified in the Bible.

(a) Ignorant worship.

“for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without

(c) Will worship.

“These things indeed have an appearance of

(d) True or acceptable worship.

“God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

The Challenge Of Worship

- 2) The sovereignty of God has been displaced by the sovereignty of the worshipper.
 - (a) “The Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein will offer six sessions of “Fun, Fellowship and Faith-building” for anyone interested in becoming new members at Salem Lutheran Church, 4715 Hermantown Road.”
 - (b) “Blessing of the Animals, 2 p.m., St Mark’s Episcopal Church...”
 - (c) St Philip’s Episcopal Church- Sunday Holy Eucharist 8am & 10:45am- Coffee & Fellowship 9am.

The Challenge Of Worship

3) “User friendly” or God centered?

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.” Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan” (1 Kings 12:26-30).

The Challenge Of Worship

4) A wonderful example.

“So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God” (Acts 10:33).

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

- ◆ **The Challenge Of Worship**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of Preaching**

The Challenge Of Preaching

1) Must declare God's word.

“I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

“The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their *own* power: And My people love to

“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

The Challenge Of Preaching

2) Not much Bible preaching done today.

- (a) "We're all about building people up. We're all about helping people reach their full potential. We don't push some kind of religion....all we push is joy and peace and victory through Jesus Christ. ...Our message every single week -is through faith in God you can live an overcoming life of victory ... I believe that's the message this generation needs to hear. We've heard a lot about the judgment of God and what we can't do and what's going to keep us out of heaven. But it's time people start hearing about the goodness of God, about a God that loves them. A God that believes in them. A God that wants to help them. That's our message here at Lakewood" (Joel Osteen).

The Challenge Of Preaching

- 3) Even in churches of our Lord, little some times is said about the Bible.
 - (a) I went to a funeral where only one verse was read.
 - (b) “We're struggling to deal with some tough questions. We don't know quite how to respond to some hard social questions, like abortion. We don't know whether to be militant against a homosexual or work side by side with homosexuals. We don't know if it helps to boycott this need or if we should pray for this need. We have identified the enemy, but we don't know how to respond” (Max Lucado).

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

- ◆ **The Challenge Of Worship**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of Preaching**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of The Woman's Role**

The Challenge Of The Woman's Role

1) Think of all the women that are preaching on the T.V. today.

- (a) Joyce Meyers**
- (b) Marilyn Hickey**
- (c) Paula White**
- (d) Gloria Copeland**
- (e) Anne Graham Lotz**
- (f) Tammy Baker**
- (g) Jan Crouch, etc.**

The Challenge Of The Woman's Role

- 2) Even in the Lord's church this subject has divided.**
 - (a) A church just south of Nashville split over the women having a greater role in church service.**
 - (b) A lady caused problems in Arkansas wanting to go to the business meeting with the men.**
 - (c) Some say that the women have just as much ability to preach, be an elder, etc. as a man- it is not a matter of ability but one of authorization.**

The Challenge Of The Woman's Role

3) What does the Bible say.

“Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says” (1 Corinthians 14:34).

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

- ◆ **The Challenge Of Worship**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of Preaching**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of The Woman's Role**
- ◆ **The Challenge Of Denominationalism**

The Challenge Of Denominationalism

- 1) Some want to be like the religious world around them.**
 - (a) In growth**
 - (b) In classes offered**
 - (c) In facilities**
 - (d) In activities**
 - (e) In fund raising**
 - (f) In doing the Lord's work**
 - (g) In our speech**

The Challenge Of Denominationalism

2) The need for exactness.

“Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense” (1 Kings 12:32-33).

The Challenge Of Denominationalism

3) Must always remember.

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling” (Ephesians 4:4).

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

“Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

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- ◆ **The Challenge Of God's Plan To Save**

The Challenge Of God's Plan To Save

1) Religious world has denied for years that baptism saves.

“Baptism - As indicated by their name a primary Baptist distinction is their practice of believer's baptism and their rejection of infant baptism. Baptists consider Christian baptism to be an ordinance for believers only, by immersion only, and as a symbolic act, not having any power in itself. The act of baptism pictures what Christ has done for the believer in His death, burial, and resurrection. It pictures what Christ has done for the believer through the new birth, enabling death to the old life and newness of life to walk in. Baptism gives testimony to a salvation already received; it is not a requisite for salvation. It is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ” (Taken from the Southern Baptist web page).

The Challenge Of God's Plan To Save

2) Even some members are now teaching that baptism is not necessary.

"We teach that you are saved by grace through faith," Lucado said. "Baptism is a response to that grace, not an act that saves you. It's necessary for obedience, not salvation."

"There are things we do to obey and please God. We do Bible studies to please God. We worship to please God. We're baptized to please God. But none of these acts save you. If they did, we wouldn't need the cross."

The Challenge Of God's Plan To Save

3) What does the Bible teach?

“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

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