

## The Message Bearer's Task

Among the many privileges given by God to Christians is that of being bearers of His divine message to mankind. The great commission of Christ instructs, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20). The apostle Paul added, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:2). Not only are we to take the Gospel to those who have never become Christians, we are to warn those among us who behave themselves in an ungodly manner (II Thessalonians 3:6-15) and do what we can to guide the fallen back to the path of righteousness (Galatians 6:1), lest they too lose their souls (II Peter 2:20-22). Our task in bearing God's message carries with it three important responsibilities.

As bearers of God's message, we must first be sure that the message we are taking to the world is indeed God's and not ours. That responsibility is inherent in Christ's commission cited in the previous paragraph. We are to teach all that He commanded. Teaching anything more or less than God's Word will result in eternal disaster, not only for those who hear, but also for those who so teach (Galatians 1:6-9). Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26-27).

As bearers of God's message, we must be sure that we deliver His Word in a loving manner. In Ephesians 4:15 we find the phrase, "speaking the truth in love." Our main motivation in taking God's Word to those who are lost should be an unquenchable love for souls. On one occasion Jesus looked upon a multitude of people who were, as Matthew wrote, "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36). The same verse tells us that the Master was "moved with compassion on them." The magnificent love of our Lord is what led Him to dwell upon earth in the flesh and give His life for our sins (Romans 5:6-8). Certainly we cannot afford to shut out this love from our hearts when it comes to carrying the message of the one whose love opened the door of salvation.

As bearers of God's message, we must be sure that we deliver that message without fear or favor. Unfortunately, the truth is not popular. People get set in their ways and mired in their traditions and, as a result, don't want to hear anything that is contrary to that to which they have become accustomed. Sometimes it's difficult to approach people with God's message. Fear of their response is a major hindrance to Christians taking that message forth. Still, since it is God's message that leads to salvation and since Christians are bearers of that message, we must at all times teach, preach and write that which God authorizes. Paul asked, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10). He wrote to the Thessalonians, "...we were bold to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (I Thessalonians 2:2-4). Harking back to the Old Testament, we recall what the Lord told the prophet, Ezekiel. "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." (Ezekiel 2:3-5). Ezekiel couldn't make the people of his day obey God. He could speak God's Word though, warning and exhorting them to humble themselves before the Lord. In so doing, he would be fulfilling the responsibility placed on him as one of God's message bearers (also see Ezekiel 3:16-21; 33:7-9).

The privilege of all Christians is to let the world know of the eternal salvation that is available through Christ. Our responsibility is to take only the Lord's message and teach it in love without fear or favor.

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