



- Up Words # 35

Woeful Shepherds



Last week I had the opportunity to attend an "Advancing the Church" pastors conference hosted by Calvary Baptist Seminary in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. It was a great conference focused on preaching. Dr. D. A. Carson was the keynote speaker who shared many insightful comments especially with regard to preaching the gospel from the Old Testament. The conference opened with a message from Dr. Tim Jordan who is Senior Pastor of the host church. He spoke with passion from Jeremiah 23 and the danger of poor preaching.

Now of course I realize that most who read this newsletter are not pastors, however you are listeners to those who preach in our church as well as on the radio, television and internet. We often know what we appreciate about various speakers but we also must recognize what should be rejected in poor preaching. Jeremiah begins his charge, "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:1)

Note some characteristics of woeful preachers or shepherds.

1. They enjoy being clever (v.16b)

"They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord."

2. They refuse to speak out against sin and encourage rebellion (v.17)

"They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You will have peace"; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.'"

3. They neglect God's Word (v.18)

"But who has stood in the council of the Lord, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?"

4. They are uncommissioned messengers (v.21)

"I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied."

Indeed Jeremiah points out the tragic missed opportunity that resulted from such preaching. "But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds." (v.22) If they had been faithful and not faulty preachers the people would have repented and God's punishment and exile might have been avoided.

What I and others preach really is important! Your spiritual health and wellbeing are dependent on solid biblical preaching. Let each of us carefully consider what we read and hear. May God give us the grace to discern the good from the bad.

Looking Up!

Pastor Chuck Circle