

What Kind of Sermon Did You Want To Hear?

by Wayne Goff

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,...”

Some people do not like preaching. Period. It is a weariness to them. It is a burden. They are not interested. The apostle Paul warned that the church would one day *apostatize* from the truth because many in it would no longer **endure** sound doctrine, 2 Timothy 4:3.

Endure? Really? **ENDURE?** In our English language, “endure” means to “*suffer (something painful or difficult) patiently.*” What a harsh word to use regarding the teaching of God’s Word. And it tells you something about the person. If you have to endure sound doctrine, then your heart is not with the truth.

The word translated “endure” in 2 Timothy 4:3 is the Greek word *ανεχω*, which means “to hold up.” It is always in the middle voice in the New Testament and is so translated “endure.” Well, that didn’t help much. The word is also used of persecutions and tribulations! Does the preaching and teaching of sound doctrine become that burdensome to us? Yes -- if we do not love the truth.

You can’t fool God! Those who do not love the truth wind up perishing because they have given in to “all unrighteous deception” (2 Thess. 2:10). Instead, those same people will wind up believing a lie. Paul told Timothy that such people would “heap up for themselves teachers” who would promote such lies. Now you can see how we wound up with so many denominations today. There are many lies to be promoted to those who do not love the truth.

But can such happen to God’s people? Absolutely. To whom do you think Paul referred in 2 Timothy 4? In the nation of Judah in the Old Testament, shortly before their destruction and Babylonian captivity, God spoke to them through Jeremiah the prophet and warned them of their impending doom. Eleven times God used the phrase that He sent prophets to them “*rising up early*” and “*sending them*” -- but they would not listen (7:13, 25; 11:7; 25:3-4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4).

“For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, “Obey My voice” Jeremiah 11:7. God knows the danger of delay. So quickly He sent His prophets to forewarn the people. If they did not listen, it was not because God was delinquent!

You only have to read the accompanying history in 2 Chronicles to see why God destroyed Judah and sent the survivors away to Babylon. Here is what the Divine Record says:

“But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:16). God did not leave any stone unturned in trying to get His people to repent. But they would not!

Today, *local congregations* live and die by the same principle. When they hear God’s Word, believe it and obey it, then they are **alive and well**. But when they stubbornly reject God and His Word, then they **die**. The beauty of God’s plan is this: since local congregations have no physical or organizational ties to other churches, they rise or fall on their own. Yes, it is **tragic** when churches die! But it would be even worse if they took other churches with them.

THE LESSON IS THIS: LEARN TO LOVE THE TRUTH! Not only does your soul depend upon it, but the existence of this local church depends upon it! Do not rebel against it. Do not ignore it. Do not soft peddle it. Hear it, believe it, obey it and be well-pleasing to God.

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