

SPEAK GOD'S WORD FAITHFULLY AND FULLY

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Many are those who handle God's word deceitfully. Among them are those whose intentions are good, but the result is the same. The apostles of Christ were not among that unfortunate number. Paul commented, "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Cor. 4:2). The point of this discussion is to recommend Paul's attitude toward the word of God to those who speak it.

Speak It Faithfully

Jeremiah said, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:28). Others among the prophets weigh in on this point. Jonah was told, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jon. 3:2). Haggai said, "Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD" (Hag. 1:13).

New Testament writers made certain their readers understood it. Paul told brethren from the church at Ephesus, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Those familiar with the ASV are aware that it translates the word "all" by the word "whole," "the whole counsel of God." As a solemn charge Paul commanded, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). Seeing the completed revelation from God to man at long last delivered, Jude wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Jesus himself commented on the discretion required to speak God's word faithfully, "Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

Speak It Fully

In Paul's concluding remarks from his treatise on "the obedience of faith" he said, "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19). Paul made certain that his preaching and teaching contained what God wanted people to hear. He said, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). The apostle to the Gentiles commended the brethren at Thessalonica for the manner in which they received his teaching. He wrote to them, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13).

The Bible teacher and preacher must remain impartial in his presentation of God's truth. James' statement in this connection is sobering, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).