THE PARABLE OF THE SHOVEL AND BROKEN-DOWN CAR

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." —***Jeremiah 23:21-22***



In this hour of wholesale spiritual compromise, when *"preachers"* are often too afraid to address the moral issues that challenge the church, let us consider the dynamics of some of the more subtle methods used by pulpiteers to cloak their cowardice. We must remember, a distinction should be made between *"Biblical facts"* and *"the Word of the Lord"*. The God-called preacher is obligated to give people not just *facts* from the Scriptures, but the *Living Word*. By the *Living Word*, we mean, the Scriptural truth God desires to apply to that particular people at that given moment *(Prov 15:23; Isa 50:4)*. When a preacher merely gives men *"Bible facts"*, rather than, *"the Word of the Lord"*, then he is not fulfilling his moral obligation to *"speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet 4:11)*. *Biblical facts* are general, while the *Word of the Lord* is specific (and often offensive). Moreover, Scriptural truths are always *"Biblical facts"*, but Scriptural truths are not always *"the Word of the Lord"*.

As an *illustration*, consider the following analogy:

Suppose as I am traveling along the highway, I see a gentleman who is pulled over on the curb-side with his car's hood up, with a busted radiator hose. As I pull up behind him and approach his vehicle to offer assistance, I reach in the back of my pick-up truck and pull out a prized shovel. After greeting the man, I began to thoroughly expound on the virtues and multiple uses of my shovel, all while his immediate problem is ignored. Now, no matter how thorough and how accurate my discourse on the shovel has been, *I have not addressed the problem at hand.* Indeed, I have given the man *truth* but I did not give him the *truth he needed right now.* You may say, *"but you did not lie."* No, of course not. Again, you may ask, *"isn't what you said factual?"* Yes, but the help I offered did not confront the very issue that has side-lined this stranded traveler. I have given this unfortunate man *some facts* but refused to give him *the truth* that will address and remedy his current condition.

Likewise, all over *America*, men stand in pulpits and spew *"Biblical facts"* but refuse to give the people what they need, which is the *"Word of the Lord"*. So often this is the case with false teachers. It is not so much *what they say*, but *what they refuse to say* that defines their error. True, they may not be propagating flagrant and outright lies, but they are not allowing God, for various reasons, to speak directly to the issues at hand.

Compromising preachers often attempt to sooth their inflamed conscience on this ground: *even though they avoid the controversy and persecution that accompanies confronting sin head-long, they still preach or teach orthodox doctrine.* I have sobering warning for you *Mr. Snake-oil*, you may fool men, but you will never fool God. He called you as a mouthpiece so He could declare the sin-exposing and life-giving truth to His people. Will you continue to get in His way? If you were truly sent by God you would offer men the truth that makes free *(Jn 8:32)*.

–B.W.

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