

Style or Substance— 06/21/20

TEXT- Luke 7:31-35 *And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. 33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! 35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

You might call this generation brats. And if we need synonyms to help us with the definition, the synonyms would be things like objectionable, obstreperous, refractory, recalcitrant, incorrigible, obstinate, and intractable. But they were brats.

2 Ti 3:4-5 *Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

1 Co 2:1-5 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

INTRO – Substance over Style

What draws us to the Christian faith? For too many people it is more about style than substance.

We can make the form of the preaching, the type of music, the architecture, the economic status of the congregation, etc. as the central issue of our faith.

A. The church is under attack by the change agents, and one of their targets is unquestionably the worship services

- 1. One striking changes that has occurred over the last 30 years is a new style of preaching**
- 2. Scripture used to be the sum and substance of our sermon material**
- 3. We used to literally drench our preaching with Bible**
- 4. Our preaching was easily identifiable for its sober logic and good sense**
- 5. Like Paul's, Acts 26:25**

B. But this is no longer the case in many places

- 1. Much of the preaching now is dominated by psychology man's fallible perceptions of his own needs**
- 2. Now our preaching focuses more on the preacher than the message**
- 3. This need breed of preachers are masters at endearing themselves to the congregation rather than endearing the congregation to Jesus and the word of God**
 - a. Biblical substance has been replaced by emotional stimulation**
 - b. Many are selling out to the denominations and opting for their approach**
- 4. The old style of preaching was appealing for its good sense, Scripture and logic. The new style of preaching entails showmanship, entertainment, and filled with anecdotes rather than a thus saith the Lord.**

Powerful styles can bring superficial “results.”

It is an effective way to draw and crowd. But to what?

It can make us feel comfortable. But with what?

It can make us feel secure. But about what?

It can generate enthusiasm. But for what?

1 Co 2:4 . . . *my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”*

When “words” and “reason” with a strong preference for “action” become the focus, the style becomes the issue.

When marketing style replaces the substance of the message, we may win people to us but it will be hard to convince them to follow a Jesus who intends to mock the world's values.

Paul's teaching about power in I Corinthians 1 makes it clear that while others looked for “signs” he was preaching the “Word of the Cross” as the “power of God.”

1 Co 4:6 *And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*

Act 18:24-25 *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.*

1 Co 1:11-12 *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Pistol Pete Maravich

I. What if you are successful in this world and spend eternity in hell?

Mat 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

The Bible must be preached in our pulpits

II. What did you accomplish in this life?

Ecc 12:13-14 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Jas 4:14-17 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. 17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Bible ignorance destroys soul

III. What will you hear from God when you stand before Him?

Mat 25:21-23 *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

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