

I Will Keep Preaching this Even if it is Unpopular to do so

Every pastor should want his teaching to be in harmony with the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. If a pastor is not concerned about this, he ought not be in the ministry. Because this is so important, many pastors have rightly committed to the practice of expository teaching through entire books of the Bible rather than preaching merely on topics. This is one method a good pastor might employ to insure that he will preach the whole counsel of God rather than gravitate to his pet topics. But even if he employs this method of preaching through entire books of the Bible, he is still prone to talk about some things more than other things.

For the past several years, I have had the responsibility and privilege of shepherding a small assembly of believers. Often, I have wondered whether my teaching is properly balanced. What would Peter or Paul say about my preaching and teaching ministry if they observed it over several months? I have noticed that there is one particular subject that seems to come to the surface often in my teaching ministry. Evidently, I must think it is important. Otherwise I wouldn't harp on it so much. But if I teach about this one particular subject so often (as I go through entire books of the Bible), are the members getting an unbalanced dose?

The subject that keeps coming up has to do with the assurance of salvation. When I teach about this, I challenge Christians to examine their lives in order to verify if they truly possess saving faith. Examples of my teaching on this subject can be observed in some of the articles I recently posted on the Stones Cry Out Ministries web site. Links to four of these articles appear below in case the reader is curious.

[The Assurance of Salvation](#)

[We Aren't Saved Yet!](#)

[Salvation is Conditional!](#)

[Faith is Not a Philosophy!](#)

I have been engaged in the ministry of teaching Christians fairly consistently for almost twenty years. During this time, some have objected when I challenge them to examine their lives. On one occasion, I pushed very hard in my preaching. I asked the congregation, "Based upon our tepid spiritual condition, why should any of us have assurance that we truly have saving faith?" Afterwards, a good Christian brother took me aside and rebuked me sharply. Because I held him in such high esteem, I wondered to myself whether I had gone too far. To this day, I am still concerned about how these things are taught because I don't want believers to become overwhelmed with discouragement that might result from too much inward reflection. In fact, I wrote and posted another article recently to encourage believers to have strong hope of salvation. ([Reason to Have Strong Hope](#))

Nevertheless, I remain very concerned that my teaching ministry is in harmony with that of people like Paul and Peter. I do not take this matter lightly. As a result, I occasionally wonder if I bring this subject up too often. I suspect that many pastors never bring it up. Judging from the response I sometimes receive from my articles, it appears that many Christians have never been challenged to examine their lives for the purpose of verifying whether or not they truly possess saving faith.

I now have strong reason to believe I am on the right track.

I am currently teaching through Peter's second epistle. In so doing, I now realize that Peter also talked about this OFTEN and he believed that his responsibility for doing so would never cease. Being of foremost importance in Peter's mind, he STARTS the letter talking about it. Let me attempt to summarize chapter 1:3-11:

To those who have obtained faith...God's power has been given to you that you may be partakers of the divine nature (by faith through His precious promises). Now diligently add to your faith: excellence, knowledge, self-

control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and divine love. **If** these qualities are being increasingly formed in you, then your entrance into Jesus' Kingdom will be abundantly supplied to you. **If these qualities are not being formed in you, then you should not expect to be a part of Jesus' kingdom.** (In other words, you will end up in hell.) So, diligently make your call and election sure!

What Peter teaches here is the same thing I teach. But how often should I teach about it? Do I teach it too often? Apparently not. According to Peter, he continually taught this:

¹² "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴ knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵ Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease" (II Peter 1:12-14).

Peter said that it was his responsibility to remind them of these things ALWAYS. It did not matter that these particular Christians were already "established in the present truth." They were probably more mature in their faith than most Christians living today. So, if they needed to be reminded of these things ALWAYS, then we need to be reminded of them ALWAYS. Peter said that his responsibility to do so would never cease. He would remind them of these things ALWAYS until he dies. And even that was not sufficient. He would take steps while he remained alive to make sure they would continue to be reminded of these things ALWAYS even after he is dead! Truly, Peter believed this was super important.

So, what do I conclude from all this?

First, I am encouraged to know that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing. I will not be ashamed to do so until the day I die. I know that all who object to my teaching on this subject are wrong for doing so. I am merely doing what Peter did.

Second, I can confidently say that if a pastor does not discuss these things, he is failing to do his job. Those under his care will not receive the continual reminding that Peter said was so important. As a result, many will live under the false assumption that things like, praying a sinner's prayer, holding to creeds and church attendance guarantee their ultimate salvation. Many may end up hearing, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Concerning the false prophets of his day, Jeremiah said, "*They have lied about the LORD; they said, "He will do nothing! No harm will come to us; we will never see sword or famine"* (Jeremiah 5:12). If a pastor avoids talking about the things Peter said were so important, the church members will be made to think that everything is okay and there is nothing to be troubled about. Peter believed it was important to "always remind them of these things" as a means to "stir them up." They may indeed have something to be troubled about.