

A VERY LOVELY SONG

The preaching of the Gospel should be attractive to God's people. Although there are certainly those who will plug their ears and run the other way, there are yet many people who appreciate good, sound Gospel preaching. Unfortunately, even among those who appreciate the faithful proclamation of the Gospel, there are many who do not heed the things that are said.

1. "I sure enjoyed that sermon on seeking first the kingdom of God," one will say, and then miss evening worship because the late football game went into overtime.
2. "Boy, it sure is shameful the way some Christians act," another will say following a sermon on the Christian's example; and the following day he will regale his fellow employees with dirty jokes and foul-mouthed tirades against the boss and customers.
3. "That was a great sermon on prayer," another will exclaim, and fail to utter one private prayer the following week.

Such was the problem in Ezekiel's day. Ezekiel did not have to face the same persecution other prophets did. He prophesied to Israelites who were in captivity, who could readily observe that God's warnings were being fulfilled against them. The people, including the elders of the people, would often come to Ezekiel to receive counsel. And they often enjoyed hearing him, even though he offered stern rebuke against their practices.

Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee ["of thee," ASV] by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not (Eze. 33:30-32).

To the people, Ezekiel was a good entertainer. He was probably a very eloquent speaker with a lustrous voice, able to hold the people in rapt attention as he prophesied to them the Word of God. Nevertheless, as they heard his words, they had no intent of doing them. It is a sad thing that many today hear the preaching of the Gospel and hear it as nothing more than "a very lovely song."

However, as we are "called by the Gospel," we are urged and commanded to act upon its teachings: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 The. 2:14-15). It is only when we heed and obey the proclamation of the Gospel that we can truly appreciate it for the very lovely song it is.

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