

A PREACHER CAN LIE

Have you ever had a religious discussion with someone and they tried to prove their point by saying, "that's what my preacher said." Some people will use their preacher as the final authority in religious matters.

It is believed by some that if the preacher states it, it has to be right and cannot be wrong. Some think that their-preacher or any other preacher would never lie nor deceive them. So, they go through life blindly accepting and doing whatever the preacher says.

Does not the Bible teach that we are to put to the test those who teach (1 John 4:1)? Let us be like the Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Yes, some believe it is wrong to question the teachings of any preacher. But, we must examine what is being taught no matter who the proclaimer may be. It doesn't matter the popularity, prestige, power or personality of the preacher, **put him to the test**. Examine what he proclaims & practices in light of what is taught in the Bible.

This examination must be done because (1) God commands it (1 John 4:1); (2) Hearers can be led astray (2 Peter 2:1-3) and (3) the preacher must "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2) to please God.

It is certainly possible for a preacher to teach false doctrine (Matthew 7:15). If he does, then out of love, he must be corrected. Apollos, a preacher, had to be corrected for some of the things he was teaching (Acts 18:26). The belief by some that the preacher is "hands-off" concerning his belief, teaching and practice is not in the Bible.

When one preaches something contrary to the truth is he truthful? Is he not lying? Let's notice some ways that a preacher can lie in his teaching:

(1) By teaching "**corrupt**" doctrine one is lying. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). To teach that which is opposed to the truth is teaching a lie.

(2) When a person will not declare the "**complete**" truth he is not being truthful. Paul kept back nothing that was profitable (Acts 20:20) nor had he shunned to declare all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

(3) A person who proclaims a "**compromising**" gospel is lying. God doesn't want something watered-down proclaimed, but the Truth (2 Timothy 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9).

(4) When a person will only teach that which is "**comforting**" to hear and not what is needed, is he being truthful (2 Timothy 4:2-4)? We must be concern about speaking right things and not smooth things (Isaiah 30:10).

(5) It is a lie when one says that it is "**callous**" to oppose things being taught & practice without New Testament authority. In fact, such matters must be opposed & exposed no matter the individuals involved (Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16:17). It is the kind and loving thing to do. To fail to do so is "uncalled for" and is unkind and unloving.

Let us realize it is God's Word (John 12:48) that is our standard of authority and not the words of man.

- - Jerry Joseph