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PRESENTS

Frankly Speaking Notes . . .

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Ed Smithson, Editor

FROM GOD'S LIPS TO OUR EARS

It is no secret that I love the prophets. I also love all the other books of the Bible. Perhaps I identify in some ways more with the prophets than others because I find the language interestingly direct. I might also say that about the rest of the Scriptures as well.

In the book of Ezekiel, several times he says, “and he said to me...” While God was speaking to Ezekiel in some direct way. He still speaks to us through His word, the Scriptures. I believe it would be a serious mistake to think that because God spoke to Ezekiel and the other prophets in a more direct way, His instructions to them had more force than his instructions to us.

“For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

“For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10-11)

These passages should be enough to convince us.

God said to Ezekiel, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore **hear the word of my mouth**, and give them warning from me.” (Ezekiel 3:17 My Emphasis)

To paraphrase, God told him He had a warning for the people and if he warned them, his soul would be delivered, but if he failed to warn them, they would suffer and so would he, because he failed to warn them. He was also to tell them that if a righteous man turned from his righteousness and did iniquity, all the righteousness that he had done was worthless, it would not be mentioned. He further stated that if those who had turned away would repent and return he would heal them.

Preachers and other church leaders have a serious obligation. They are to warn the righteous that they call fall and be destroyed. It appears few are prone to do that today. Preachers get so close to people and so emotionally involved, they do not want to tell them something they do not want to hear, or will upset them. The motto today is, "Let's get along at any cost."

I have known for years that this was true but I guess, because I was the preacher in most places I did not realize it. For a period of time I was in private business and not doing full time local work. In visiting around and listening to other preachers, it began to sink in. Sometimes the longer a man stayed the less he preached "warning sermons."

Today we admire and praise preachers who are able to stay in one place for a long time. I admired brother Gus Nichols, the first person I knew that had preached for one church over 30 years at the time. Perhaps he was an exception. I did not hear him in his local work. Today we have many preachers that stay years and years. I do not know the record of each of these men, but there is reason to wonder.

One more thing is to be considered in thinking about "from God's lips to our ears." That is the fact that there should be nothing in between, no foreign matter to corrupt the message, no commentary to weaken or make useless, but the message should be clear, precise, sincere. So many take God's word and change and twist it to change its meaning. No so in this case.

This business of life is serious business and we must realize when we stand in judgment we will receive the reward due us. God help us to give a good account.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Smithson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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