

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 10 (March 3-9)

Many pastors in our country feel the pressure of political correctness in presenting the gospel. This week's study will teach why we must not yield to that pressure, no matter what the personal cost may be.

Sunday -- March 3 (Jeremiah 5:30-31)

Jeremiah was called to prophesy the coming captivity of Judah because of the sins of her people. The other teachers of his day were predicting prosperity. You can imagine which message the citizens wanted to listen to. Today's verses challenge every sermon I preach as well as these devotions I write. We are living in a politically correct society that has labeled parts of the Bible as "hate speech." Many denominations have yielded to this pressure because the "people love it this way" (v. 31), just as they did in Jeremiah's day. The quickest way to build an enormous church with huge incomes for the staff is to pander to the desires of the people, but the question at the conclusion of this text motivates me to stay true to His Word, regardless of what people may demand. The eternal consequences of disobedience to my calling far outweigh the temporary persecutions of our society.

Monday -- March 4 (Jeremiah 6:10-17)

Ministers are chosen by God to deliver His Word even though many listeners will ignore it (v. 10). These people have chosen to believe the politically correct messages that make them feel good. All segments of our society have been influenced by this trend (v. 11). Verse 12 accurately predicts today's high divorce rate as well as the current housing crisis caused by greed. What is the problem? Preachers have yielded to the expectations of their listeners by telling them what they want to hear. They refuse to confront their sinful lifestyles with God's unchanging Word. Their hunger for wealth, prestige and acceptance drives this decision (v. 13-15). Just like the hearers of Jeremiah's message, we stand at a crossroads in America (v. 16). Will His **modern** watchmen declare His **ancient** message? Will the people listen and repent? Will believers find the rest that He offers? The people of Jeremiah's time refused to listen (v. 17). I pray that we will make better decisions!

Tuesday -- March 5 (Ezekiel 3:16-19)

These verses should literally "scare the **hell**" out of those who have yielded to the politically correct demands of our society. Many people go into the ministry without a clear call from God. Perhaps they do not understand the seriousness of the privilege given to them. This passage needs very little explanation. If we are chosen to present God's Word to any group of people, we must prove faithful to the task, or else eternal consequences will occur (v. 17-18). We are responsible only for the accurate presentation; **He** is responsible for the results (v. 19). Pray that I, and many others, will stay true to His message, even if it means persecution, rejection or imprisonment in the future. God is serious about His Word!

Wednesday -- March 6 (Ezekiel 3:20-21)

This second warning given to Ezekiel (and Roger) by God applies to professing Christians. True salvation can never be forfeited, but many people who join the church and are baptized have not surrendered the control of their lives to Jesus. Real “born again” believers will accept God’s mercy and grace for all their sins (past, present and future) and will begin to live for Him and to grow in their knowledge of Him. Mere church members may clean up their lives for a while (self righteousness), but because they do not have the Holy Spirit to guide them, they soon return to their folly. Ministers are called to confront this latter group with the truth of the gospel, “that those who **live like this** will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). Their good works and their generous giving in the past will not open the gate to heaven (see Matthew 7:21-23). The eternal souls of many depend on our faithfulness to His Truth (v. 21)!

Thursday -- March 7 (Isaiah 30:1; 8-11)

This passage amplifies yesterday’s warning. Isaiah predicts that many will form an alliance (church membership) without repenting of their sins, “heaping sin upon sin” (v. 1). The Holy Spirit cannot enter them because they don’t involve Him in their decision. The new unsaved church members try to dictate the message that is taught by insisting on “positive only” preaching (v. 8-11). They have no desire to hear prophecy (visions) or righteous living (what is right). They demand “feel good” sermons that do not confront their sins. Many of the largest TV ministries come from “positive only” churches. Their members and listeners enjoy many luxuries, but the eternal question from Jeremiah 5:31 comes to mind: “What will they do in the end?” Salvation is found only through Jesus, “the Holy One of Israel” (v. 11).

Friday -- March 8 (Isaiah 30:15-18)

In this passage, God continues His warning from yesterday’s text. He reminds us that true salvation begins with **repentance** and results in **eternal rest**. Real believers will **trust** totally in God’s gift of salvation and be **quiet** about their own accomplishments (v. 15). Instead, many preachers have discovered that the quickest path to financially and numerically successful ministries is through “positive only” messages (v. 16). Our Lord is still calling to us in **mercy** and **grace**. His lowly birth, His humble life, His sacrificial death and His glorious resurrection should teach us that He is a God of compassion (v. 18). Yet the same verse declares Him to be a God of justice to those who insist on the fast track to success rather than the slow but sure road to spiritual growth through teaching His infallible Word.

Saturday -- March 9 (Ezekiel 33:30-33)

This is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible. God warns of a day when people will come to church and listen to the sermon without changing the way they live. Once again, we see church membership that is void of repentance (v. 30-31). These folks will even invite others to “Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.” What is the reason for their excitement? They love the **music** and the talented singers in their church. Messages on repentance are not heard because the people are still in a trance from the “beautiful love songs” (v. 33). I love music as well as anyone, but it should never overshadow the preaching of God’s Word. Our generation has seen the fulfillment of these events. Can His coming be far away?