**YOU ARE LOST!**

Some preachers are so diplomatic and tactful that they never make a lost person realize that he is lost. Their ability to preach around God’s pronouncement of man’s condition is an oratorical marvel matched only by a con-artist. However, before a man can be saved, he must come to the shocking realization that he is lost! And the person who does not preach God’s word plainly enough that a lost person may see that he is lost may well be the Devil’s messenger.

Cutting a man to the heart is not a task to be relished, and no teacher of God’s word delights in hurting people. It is the end result of freedom, salvation and joy for which we labor. But between sin and salvation is the painful experience of self-examination. Indeed, Gods truth can prick the heart.

A message of offered salvation will not move one who does not believe he is lost. Jesus said, I come to seek and save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). He offered the lost sheep of the House of Israel freedom from sin: “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). But the Jews responded, “We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” Whether they intentionally or ignorantly missed his point, they did not believe they needed what Jesus offered.

When Jesus offered them salvation, they became defensive and tried to kill him, Christ plainly pointed out that they were children of the Devil **(YOU ARE LOST!).** That smarted. Stephen spoke to Jews about their ancestor’s actions and said, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). Their fathers had slain the prophets who spoke of the coming of the Just One and they had killed Him when he came. Such true words cut them to the heart and they took their anger out on Stephen with teeth and stones.

Ahab called Elijah the troubler of Israel and Jezebel vowed that Elijah would die as he had killed the prophets of Baal. Elijah’s words had laid bare their festered souls. What else need I say? Many people cannot tolerate self-examination and are never able to admit that they are lost.

If you have never obeyed the Gospel, ***you are not in fellowship with God*** – regardless of how you may judge that God answers your prayers. If you have never believed in Jesus Christ and repented of your sins, ***you are yet in your sins*** – regardless of how good you may be. If you have never been baptized for the remission of sins, ***you are lost –*** regardless of the good feelings in your heart.

Now, if God says you are a sinner, don’t get mad at me; ***and if God says you are lost, YOU ARE LOST!*** But sometimes people see that you love their souls and are trying to help in saving them. As a result, they see themselves as God sees them. The danger of your enmity is worth it, if you will submit to Christ and be saved. I hope your reaction will be, “Thanks, I needed that!”

--Jim Everett

***Lanny’s comments on the above:*** Over the years, I have heard many say, “We should preach grace and salvation, not condemnation.” While that may sound good on the surface, it shows a woeful ignorance of the big picture. For instance, ***WHY*** do we need grace? And ***FROM WHAT*** are we being saved? The answer is obvious, is it not? If people do not realize they are lost in sin, then they will never accept the wonderful grace and salvation God offers. This is precisely what “pricked in their hearts” (Ac.2:37) means! Indeed, I would argue that preaching on the horrors of sin ***IS*** preaching grace and salvation, because it deals with our deep ***NEED*** for it! Further, the depth of our sin, and our need for grace requires some kind of response – it is how we ***ACCEPT*** His salvation (Ac.2:38-41). In other words, preaching about sin and what we must do to be saved, is exactly what God wants us to do!