

A Time To Be Hardheaded

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The call and commission of Ezekiel to be the prophet of God among the exiled Jews in Babylon is interesting. God said to the prophet:

Behold, I have made thy face hard against their faces, and thy forehead hard against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house (Eze. 3:8-9).

Just prior to this charge, God had explained that Israel would not listen to Him although they were His own people, because they were “of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart.”

God knew that Ezekiel might reason that since the people were not going to listen, there was no point in preaching to them, so He told the prophet, “...speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear” (v. 11). In verses 17-21 is the famous “watchman” charge to Ezekiel in which God told him to warn the wicked, thus delivering his soul, whether or not the warning was heeded.

Just as it was time for Ezekiel to be hardheaded in his proclamation of Truth to God’s people when these orders were given to him, we face a similar situation among God’s people today. Paul warned and prophesied that the time would come when men would not endure the sound doctrine but would gather teachers around them who will tell them what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:3). This attitude characterizes many members of the church. They do not want to hear what is needful for them to be pleasing to God, but what is pleasing to their carnally controlled ears. It is not their desire to know what the will of the Lord is, but to be entertained, humored, praised, made to feel good, and most of all, not be made to feel guilty about any false doctrine or corrupt practice.

The temptation to some is great to say,

What good will it do to preach on repentance, generosity, the distinctiveness of the Church, drinking, dancing, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, worship attendance, etc.? The people have hard heads and stiff hearts and will run me off if they can or run off themselves if they can’t.

Thus, there are many pulpits today that once rang with the bold proclamation of God’s Truth on every subject, but that no longer do. Elders and preachers have become intimidated by members who threaten to take their dollars to another congregation if the message in classroom,

pulpit, and bulletin is not sweet enough to suit them. As in Ezekiel's day, the more hardheaded the listeners, the more hardheaded God's preachers must be.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, February 27, 1986, of which I was editor.]

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