

A “Sermon Seen” Is Not a Sermon Heard

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Perhaps you have heard someone say, “*I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day!*” While the intention behind the statement may be good, one must be careful that he does not over-emphasize morality while minimizing the power of God’s Word. Yes, God condemns hypocrisy and commands His children to do good works and live holy lives (Matthew 7:1-5, 21; Romans 2:1, 21-23; 12:1, 2; Galatians 6:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16). However, Christ did not simply command His disciples to go forth and live good moral lives before the lost to save them—He commanded them to go preach the Gospel and baptize people! (Mark 16:15, 16). Romans 1:16 does **not** say, “*For I am not ashamed of a good moral life, because it is the power of God unto salvation...*” It seems that some members of the Lord’s church have convinced themselves that as long as they refrain from immorality and are kind to others, they have done their duty to God.

The Truth is that any religious person (or even an atheist) can generally live a moral lifestyle; therefore, simply doing this does not really set us apart from the lost (cf. John 17:17). The Lord’s church has the most precious Message man has ever heard, but if we are not spreading that unique Message, we have failed! (Matthew 13:44-46). Living a morally pure lifestyle may get someone’s attention in a positive way, but that alone is not enough. They will never be converted from lost to saved without being exposed to the rightly divided Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15-18; cf. Romans 6:17, 18; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22).

Perhaps some Christians who live morally are not as evangelistic as they should be, because they know how controversial the Truth is. Among other things, the lost need to hear that the divine Son of God really did die on the cross for all people, and that He was raised from the dead (Hebrews 2:9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). That is controversial to people like atheists, Jews, and Muslims. The lost need to hear that baptism really is necessary for salvation, which is controversial to those in denominations (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21, etc.). They need to hear that there is only one church purchased by and authorized by Christ, which is also very controversial (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; 5:23). They need to know about the New Testament pattern for worship, that God hates sins like homosexuality and abortion, and many other Truths that will very likely upset them because of their current beliefs or lifestyles.

Teaching people such things is much more difficult than simply living a moral lifestyle. Most people will not get upset with you for living a good moral life, but many will get upset when they realize that what you are teaching implies that their beliefs and practices are wrong. This controversy and threat to personal relationships is a risk Christians must be willing to take, even if it leads to their deaths! (Matthew 10:32-39; Mark 8:38; John 8:40; Revelation 2:10). However, it seems many have convinced themselves that this is not a part of their responsibility as Christians (cf. Ezekiel 33:8; Colossians 1:28).

Brothers and sisters, the Lord’s church needs to come to life and be evangelistic! Simply living morally and being kind to others is not being evangelistic. The word “evangelism” has the word “angel” in the middle of it. An angel is a messenger, and if children of God are not spreading the Message of God’s Word, they are not **evangelizing!** Christians must both live pure lives and teach people how to be faithful Christians. May we never consider ourselves faithful by simply

living in moral (or even doctrinal) purity. We must teach the lost the Truth that will make them free!

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