

Great Plainness - cont.

clergy who are sexually active. On Thursday, a Lutheran task force on human sexuality recommended that local churches and synods — the Lutheran version of a diocese — decide the issue for themselves. If their idea is approved at this summer's Church-wide Assembly, the denomination would become the largest in the U.S. to allow non-celibate gay clergy. Lutheran leaders hope the new proposal, which would let churches hire gay pastors involved in lifelong, monogamous relationships, can avoid the bitter conflicts that have plagued other denominations, like the Episcopal Church. Church spokesman John Brooks said Lutherans, like many Christians, are divided over homosexuality. **The new proposal allows them to agree to disagree.** (emphasis - CHR).

Great Plainness of Speech

Did you see that? Read that again! Lutherans proposed a plan to “agree to disagree”. Rather than being plain about sin, many today are just “agreeing to disagree” over sin. We need to be plain. That is how we help people to be saved (Acts 2:37,41). Friends, let us never change plain preaching. Let us change hearts to obey the gospel! - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- We will often do a lot more when we are not concerned about who gets the credit for doing it.
- To have a happy marriage, you must marry the right person and you must be the right person.
- Don't just believe and obey the gospel; defend it also.
- Set your sails in the right direction and God will provide the wind.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Great Plainness of Speech

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech
- 2 Corinthians 3:12 -

When we talk with others about the gospel, whether formal preaching, or casual conversation, what kind of speech are we supposed to use with them? If they are living in sin and lost, what kind of language should we use? Some would say that we need to be nice to them and not bring up their sin. But, what does God want?

God Desires Plain Preaching

The fact is, when we speak to others we need to be nice, but we also need to be plain with them. The law of Moses was to be written plainly for the people to read (Deuteronomy 27:8; Habakkuk 2:2). When Paul preached, he used “great plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12), meaning speech that is “open, blunt, and frank”.

We must remember the seriousness of sin (Ezekiel 16:2). Such a serious topic as sin demands plain speech. Preaching is not about eloquent words, but about plain words that convict (Exodus 4:10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

Why Many Are Not Plain Today

Why are many people today not plain when it comes to the gospel of Christ. Well, consider the case of Paul and the Galatians in the book of Galatians. Some people are not plain because they are trying to be popular. Popularity is lost with plainness (Galatians 1:10). Other people are trying to avoid making enemies. Enemies are made with plainness (Galatians 2:16). Still other people are trying to broaden their fellowship to include sin. Fellowship is reduced with plainness (Galatians 2:4; 4:20; 5:12; 6:12-13).

Some Who Told It Plainly

Rather than trying to be popular, friendly, or broaden fellowship, we just need to tell people the gospel plainly. We need to be like those plain preachers in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Moses (Deuteronomy 11:26-28), Samuel (1 Samuel 15:22-23), Nathan (2 Samuel 12:5-7), Elijah (1 Kings 18:21,39), and Ezra (Ezra 10:10-11) were all plain preachers.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7-8; Mark 6:18), Jesus (Luke 13:3,5; John 4:18,22; 7:26; 11:14; 18:20), Peter (Acts 2:29,36,38), Stephen (Acts 7:51-53), and Paul (Acts 13:10; Galatians 2:11-14) were all plain preachers.

Plain Preaching Is Needed Today

We need plain preaching today. There is so much ignorance and sin in society that we need to be plain. We need to be plain about the plan of salvation and the judgment day. We need to be plain about sexual immorality and worldliness. We need to be plain about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We need to be plain about the work and worship of the church. We need to be plain about Jesus being the only way to heaven.

Consider the following news article that shows how many people do not want to be plain about sin:

Lutherans propose allowing gay pastors in committed relationships. Plan would let local churches decide on non-celibate pastors.
By Bob Smietana • THE TENNESSEAN • February 20, 2009.

One of the nation's largest Protestant denominations would allow gay clergy in committed relationships to pastor local churches, under a new proposal from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Officially, all unmarried clergy in the 4.9 million-member denomination must remain celibate. But since 2007, Lutheran bishops have agreed not to discipline gay