PLAYING TO THE CROWD

Politics has been in the news a lot lately. It seems it is a never ending flow of news items about those who are running for President of the United States. I want to say, “People, election is more than a year away. What is going on?” But they didn’t ask me and I guess we will put up with it.

But in politics, many of those running are “playing to the crowd.” A news item this morning in the paper told of one of the candidates who is speaking somewhere tomorrow and he is going to call for a withdrawal of all troops from Iraq next year. Just a few weeks ago he was singing a different story. What is going on? He is going to a place where he thinks withdrawal of troops would be a crowd pleaser, so he is “playing to the crowd.”

I remember some years ago a long time popular singer in one style of music, began losing his audience. It was less and less each time he performed. He got to thinking about it and decided the majority of people no longer were “tuned in” to that kind of music. He changed his style and guess what? The crowds picked up.

I love gospel preachers. I told a young preacher one time (and I have told others since) “I will be your best friend or your worst enemy. I will be your best friend if you are doing your best in following the Bible and stepping up to the plate. I will be your worst enemy if you do not do that.”


I have also been thrilled to hear young preachers of today who have talent and are using it to glorify God, His word, His church and striving to bring others to the truth and maintain faithfulness to the true cause.
But we have some preachers, whom I will not mention, that are crowd pleasers, in other words, they are playing to the crowd. That is exactly what is done when you give people “what they want” instead of what they need.

I know first hand how good it is to be commended for a job well done in preaching a sermon. I know well enough what it is to please people and get the slaps on the back and hear their expressions of approval.

I also know that what a lot of people want is not what they need. What people want will seldom do them much good. It will just salve their conscience and keep them looking for a less strict way “to serve.” We would not dare give our children ice cream and that only for their three meals a day just because they “want it.” Why should we give the Lord’s people a steady dose of spiritual food on which they will starve?

I realize this is quite a charge to make but I know of nothing else to call it. If a preacher does not speak against the sins of the world, and the sins committed by the congregation, what else could it be?

I knew a preacher one time that preached less and less against the sins he found in the congregation. In fact, it got to the point where he would hardly speak against anything.

Preachers of the New Testament seldom, if ever, preached to the crowd. Remember Peter’s sermon on Pentecost? “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it… Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.” (Acts 2:22-24, 36 ASV Emphasis mine)

Or what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11ASV Emphasis mine)
These days, we are not persecuted as were the prophets and the apostles. We are not thrown into prisons and burned at the stake the way first century Christians were. There are a lot of things we can “get by with” on this earth but we must remember that “judgment cometh.” While we may please the crowd here and now, it may be getting us into trouble in with the Lord later,

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