

## VAIN PREACHING

Text: 1 Cor. 15:14

INTRO: The word vain is one with which we should be familiar. Useless; void; empty; fruitless. There are several things which may make our preaching vain. Let us note a few of them.

### I. PREACHER'S FAULT.

#### A. Preaching opinions, philosophies & theories of men.

1 Tim 1:3-8, As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables & endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, & from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,

Col 2:8, Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

1 Tim 6:20, O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge--

2 Tim 2:14-18, Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane & idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus & Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the

resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

B. Preaching part of the truth.

1. The apostles were guided into ALL truth, JN 14:26; JN 16:13
2. They were required to teach all the truth, MT 28:18-20; Acts 20:20, 26-27.
3. No less is required of us today, 2 Tim 3:16-17

C. Not practicing what we preach.

1 Cor 9:27, But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

NOTE Peter's example, Acts 10:34-35; Gal. 2:11-12

1 Tim 4:12-13, Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

II. WHEN PREACHING FAILS TO PRODUCE TANGIBLE RESULTS, IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE PREACHER'S FAULT.

A. Sometimes good sermons fall on unbelieving ears.

Heb 4:2, For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Rom 10:13-16, For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

- B. Sometimes congregations apologize for the truth. The only thing that is as bad as a preacher who won't preach the truth is a congregation that is ashamed when he does preach the truth.

Rom. 1:16

Mark 8:38, For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

1 Peter 4:16

- C. Some hearers are too self-willed to obey the truth. Acts 24:25, Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

NOTE: Paul had preached the truth, & lived in harmony with what he preached. Felix evidently believed what Paul preached, but he was too self-willed to obey.

James 2:19-20, You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--& tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

CONCLUSION: We must believe & obey the truth--& we must teach others to do so as well.

Jonestown, TX, October 1970  
Springhill, LA, April 4, 1971  
La Porte, TX, October 16, 1977  
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 2, 2005