

CONVINCING THE GAINSAYERS

OLD UNION BAPTIST MINISTERS SCHOOL

THURSDAY, MARCH 27TH

ELDER JERRY R. MILLER

Scripture Text: Titus 1: 1-16

Verse 9: *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

Definition of terms from Webster's 1828, American Dictionary Of The English Language:

Exhort: The primary sense seems to be to excite or to give strength, spirit, or courage.

Also, To incite by words or advice; to animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action.

Gainsayer: One who contradicts, opposes in words, or denies the truth. To controvert, to dispute.

In Titus 1:5 we find that when Paul wrote this epistle to Titus he said; ***For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*** Paul goes on to instruct Titus as to the qualifications of these men he was to ordain. In this 1st chapter of Titus, we find that these qualifications are basically the same as those that Paul gave to Timothy as recorded in 1st Timothy chapter 3. However, we find something recorded in Paul's writing to Titus that is not expressed in his writing to Timothy, that is, that these men whom he would ordain to be elders should be men who hold fast to the truth that they have been taught, and should be able by sound doctrine to both exhort and convince those who oppose that truth.

Paul went on to explain why this would be necessary: (verse 10) For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.

As Baptists, we believe that the scriptural guidelines given at the time of this writing for ordaining elders still apply in our day. So, if we believe and practice that an elder is to be blameless, the husband of one wife, not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, etc., should we not also still believe that he should be able by sound doctrine to convince the gainsayers? Would that not be at least as necessary in our day as it was in the days of Titus? Today, there are many of these whom Paul referred to as "Gainsayers." If I compare what I read about in the past to the day in which we are living, I am forced to the conclusion that we are facing more false teachings than they were in the day this

epistle was written.

We need to focus on the importance of this. Paul said (verse 12) that the mouths of these vain talkers and deceivers, these gainsayers, must be stopped. Why? Because they subvert (Overthrow, or Overturn) whole households. and they teach things that ought not be taught. Again, I want to emphasize, and I'm sure you have already seen in this an attempt to make the point that these things that were written to Titus are very much applicable to us. As far as I'm concerned, there are many, many, things that are being taught in the day were living that ought not to be taught. Whole families are being subverted by these heretical teachings, and there are many mouths that need to be stopped. I suppose with that statement someone could question whether or not I believe in Freedom of Religion. I do, and I'm thankful for it. But when Paul wrote to Titus, he didn't instruct him to have those he ordained as elders to oppress the gainsayers, or to attempt to silence them through civil power. He told him to ordain elders who could take the good, sound, doctrine that is found in the word of God and make such a convincing exhortation that it would shut their deceiving mouths.

We should notice here that Paul did not write and say, Titus, when you ordain these elders, instruct them that they are to run away from the gainsayers. Neither did he say, instruct them to do whatever is necessary to avoid them. The truth does not have to run, and it doesn't have to hide.

2nd Timothy 2:15- *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

1. To show ourselves approved unto God.
2. To rightly divide the word of truth, so that we will be able to preach the truth.
3. To rightly the word of truth so that we will able to defend the truth. We must be willing to stand in defense of the truth, by taking a stand against those things that are not according to truth. Paul obviously felt a responsibility to both preach and defend the gospel. In Romans 1:14-15 he wrote: ***I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*** In Philippians 1:15-17 he wrote: ***Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.***
4. We need to study to learn what we can about the truth, and to learn what we can about the things being taught that are not true. 1st John 4:1- ***Beloved, Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*** If we are going to be successful in convincing the gainsayers we need to learn all that we can about the false doctrines they are teaching. What it is, where it came from, how the error got started. If we are going to tell someone that the things they believe and are teaching are not scriptural, then we have the responsibility to tell them why they aren't. When the Apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans, he did this very

well when he confronted the false beliefs concerning circumcision. (Romans 2:25-29)
When the Judaizers corrupted the churches throughout Galatia by preaching what Paul called, "Another Gospel", he wrote an epistle to them and told them it was wrong, and gave them very sound teaching as to why it was wrong. (Study closely Paul's epistle to the Galatians.)

We need to be sure that we handle the word of God with the right attitude of heart. Everything we preach or teach needs to be done in love. When we find ourselves in situations that make it necessary to stand in defense of the truth, we need to do so with love. It should always be done with a desire to turn people to the Lord. But that doesn't mean we need to tiptoe around with the truth, so that we make sure we don't hurt anyone's feelings. If you really think your right about something, and the truth of God's word shows you you're not, it doesn't necessarily feel good. It is not our responsibility as ministers of the gospel to make sure no one gets offended by what we preach. It is our responsibility to preach, protect, and defend the truth.

When we read about the Lord's church being persecuted, either in the scriptures or in later history, persecution came because they angered people with the truth. That is what brought about the stoning of Stephen. In Acts 6, as we read about those of the synagogue who disputed with Stephen, Acts 6:10 tells us, *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.* Consider the boldness of this man as we find recorded in Acts 7: 51-54: *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just one; of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was very bold with the truth when facing the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Matthew 3:7-10- *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them. O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

The imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist happened because he took a bold stand for the truth. He stood before Herod and told him that it was not lawful for him to have his brothers wife. (Matthew 14:3-4)

When Jesus would encounter the Pharisees and Sadducees, he too was often very bold to speak the truth. And he was very blunt with them about what they believed. In Matthew chapters 22&23, we have some great examples of this. In Matthew 22: 23-33, we read about the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, coming to Jesus and saying, *Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there was with us seven brethren, and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise, the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven for they all had her.* I can just imagine these men standing there before Jesus thinking to themselves, We've really got him on this one! *Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*** To begin with, you are wrong, because you don't know the word of God and you don't know the power of God!!! One thing I learned when I was trying to do mission work in Virginia was that those whom I encountered, who were deceiving people about what it meant to be truly saved, I could get up before them and preach, and my preaching would be greatly accepted. If you did not come right out and tell them that with what they believed and taught they were in error, they didn't seem to discern the difference between what I preached and what they preached. Jesus told the Sadducees, you are in error, and he used sound doctrine, and by the time he finished teaching them the truth about the resurrection, their mouths were stopped. Look at these next verses.

As we continue on in Matthew 22:34-46, it says : *But when the Pharisees had heard that **he had put the Sadducees to silence,** they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* So when the Pharisees heard what Jesus had done with the Sadducees, they got together and said, Well I guess we'll take him on. Their never seems to be a shortage of gainsayers, people who want to dispute the truth will always be here. Jesus answered their question by saying: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Now notice this. When Jesus had answered their tempting question, he didn't let them off the hook. He took advantage of the situation. Matthew 22:41-46 tells us that While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Whose son do you think Christ Is? Their answer was, he is the son of David. Jesus said, well then, how is it that David in spirit called him Lord when he said, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word. **Jesus stopped their mouths.***

Conclusion: Why should these things concern us? Why should we worry about taking the time to exhort and convince those who oppose truth? We are currently blessed with Freedom of Religion, so why shouldn't we as Missionary Baptists just hold our church services, preach and teach what we believe, and not worry about all the false teachings

that are going on all around us?

1. Precious souls hang in the balance? Jesus gave the following commission to his church. (Matthew 28:19-20) *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The Lord's commission makes us responsible for the spread of the true gospel. In Mark 16:15 it is recorded: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* Every creature includes the gainsayers. We can have a righteous indignation towards their false teachings just like Jesus did towards the moneychangers, but we cannot despise their souls, they need to be saved like everyone needs to be saved. We could adopt the attitude that these people are never going to listen to the truth. Don't ever under estimate the **POWER OF THE TRUTH.** The Lord once took a very zealous gainsayer known as Saul of Tarsus, brought him down under the power of the truth, saved his soul, and turned him into the man that wrote to Titus concerning the need to exhort and convince these gainsayers. Listen to these words from Jesus. (Matthew 7:23&23) *Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, Have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

2. Many are following their pernicious ways. There are so many people being deceived that think what they are being taught is right. We need to have a great concern for their souls. We can go back to the scripture lesson and recall what Paul wrote about the gainsayers, that they subvert whole households. Whole families are deceived, living from day to day thinking everything is well between them and God, when it is not.

3. False teachings do damage to the cause of Christ because those teachings do at times creep in and effect sound churches. The Judaizers really created a mess among those churches there in Galatia. We all know that there have been many churches that were once good sound churches and now they aren't, because the people were influenced by things that were just not according to sound doctrine.

THE GAINSAYERS ARE VERY MUCH AMONG US, TEACHING THINGS THAT OUGHT NOT BE TAUGHT. IT IS TIME FOR BOLD PREACHING BY BOLD PREACHERS.