

Incomplete Work

When I was a child, any job had to be completed or we would be in trouble. Leaving tools in the yard when the work was done was counted as “incomplete” and was seriously corrected. As I began raising my children and hiring boys from around the church to do different jobs, I explained that they would be paid when the job was complete, no sooner. If the job was not finished, they would receive nothing for half-way work. An incomplete job was a pain to me, for I often was not sure where to begin and was not sure what had been done or what had not been done. In regards to tools, I did not want to go hunting for my tools and perhaps find them wet and rusted from rain or sprinklers — that was costly. Incomplete work bothers me, and I believe it bothers God as well.

The trend today in pulpits is to **teach**. Men are being told to simply **teach** the Bible and to not get into a fuss over any issue. As I read the Bible, I find that **teaching** is only one part of the pastor’s duty. We find in the Old Testament the exhortation to “show my people their sin.”
Isaiah 58:1 “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

Leviticus 10:10 “And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;”
Ezekiel 22:26 “Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.”

For those of you who cannot imagine the Old Testament having anything that applies to you, or would never use words like *prophet* or *preacher* to apply to yourself, observe that Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus to rebuke them.

2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke**, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
Titus 2:15 “These things speak, **and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.**”

So you see, there is an outline of the pastor's work: reprove, rebuke, and exhort. Three things, two of which are corrective.

The work of warning and correcting is all through the New Testament.

Colossians 1:28 "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"

Paul said to TEACH and to WARN. Where are the warnings in the pulpit today? Pastors have become so suave, cool, and socially acceptable that they only teach lessons of peace and ease.

Jeremiah 8:11 "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."

Ezekiel 13:10 "Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace..."

Just what did Jonah preach to bring about the great revival in Nineveh? Was it a Bible lesson on child rearing? How about a lesson on handling grief or developing a better self-image?

Jonah 3:4 "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown..."

vs. 10 "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

What was it that got Paul and the Apostles beaten, jailed, and killed? Was it lessons on "finding peace in a troubled world" or "helping your child deal with bullies in the school?" It was not a message of love that made the hearers "gnash with their teeth" at the preaching of Stephen.

Acts 7:54 "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

The sermon was clear rebuke and correction.

vs. 51 “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Our Bible colleges are telling young men to teach the Bible and let the Holy Spirit work on the hearts and lives. But what they are really saying is, do a half way job, do not offend anyone, and teach the Bible without making anyone mad.

Pastor, ask yourself this question: “When am I going to preach on liquor, inappropriate television shows, dirty movies, neglect of the home, submission of wives to their husbands, or laziness as Titus was commanded to preach?”

Titus 1:12 “One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.”

vs. 13 “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;”

Rebuke them sharply. Hmmm, that sounds very inappropriate to this world of soft pastors with no convictions.

When are pastors and youth pastors going to preach on the shameful morals among teens? Who is going to set up standards to protect our youth?

Again, when Titus was told to preach on grace, how do we do it today?

Titus 2:11 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”

vs. 12 “Teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts**, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

Denying ungodliness and lust is to be a part of our preaching. It might help if we were man enough to say what we think “ungodliness” is. How about preaching on lust? That is probably not a subject in most pulpits of today.

Most of the time, socially acceptable pastors **teach** on subjects with which the congregation already agrees, only they do it in a flowery manner, with

Bible verses to back up their lessons; the lessons are only words of peace and comfort. To reprove and rebuke is almost anathema today.

I am in favor of teaching. Anyone who has heard me preach, has heard lessons on how to rear children, how to date your wife, how to stay close and affectionate, and how to run a home. I preach on dealing with guilt, forgiveness, breaking the habits of sin, and how to communicate the love of Christ to a lost world. Any faithful member of my church understands eschatology and realizes that, one day, he will be rewarded for his faithful service on earth. A great deal of Bible teaching is done in our pulpit, but one will also find a great deal of rebuke and correction because that is my job. I want to complete the job God has given me.

Pastor, if all you do is **teach** without any application to life, and **teach** without any correction of that which is wrong, then you have done an **incomplete job**.