

Preachers of the Truth

by Charles Fuller

The sermon highlights the importance of being valiant for the truth, just like the preachers of the past, and encourages listeners to stand firm in their faith, even in the face of adversity.

Scripture: John 1:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 6:13, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1, 1 Peter 3:15, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Christian Apologetics", "Faithfulness"

Description

Charles O. Fuller reflects on the powerful messages of early Christian preachers like Athanasius, Ambrose, and Anselm, who boldly proclaimed truths about Christ's incarnation, deity, and death. Despite facing persecution and challenges, these preachers stood firm in their faith, emphasizing the absolute nature of truth and the importance of upholding fundamental Christian beliefs. Fuller challenges believers in the present age to follow in the footsteps of these valiant preachers, remaining steadfast in their commitment to God and His Word.

Transcript

Additional comments by Bob Gessner

Preachers of the truth! God has always had them down through the centuries. Did you ever wish you could hear some of these great servants preaching from the Word of God? We cannot hear them, but some of their messages have been preserved. Let's go way back to the early centuries of Christianity and look at three brief messages concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Here's a brief message from Athanasius concerning Christ's incarnation. He lived from 293 to 373 A.D., over 1600 years ago. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory....(Jn. 1:14). " For He did not simply will to become embodied, or will merely to appear. For if He willed merely to appear, He was able to affect His divine appearance by some other and higher means as well. But He takes a body of our kind, and not merely so, but from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and pure from intercourse of men. For being Himself mighty, and Artificer of everything, He prepares the body in the virgin as a temple unto Himself, and makes it His very own as an instrument, in it manifested, and in it dwelling. He took pity on our race, and had mercy on our infirmity, and unable to bear that death should have the mastery, lest the creature should perish, and His Father's handiwork in men be spent for nought, He takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours." Because he preached Christ, in his old age, Athanasius was forced to flee to a cemetery and take refuge for nearly half

a year in a sepulcher.

2. Now let's again go back 1600 years and listen to the words of Ambrose, who lived from 340-397 A.D. He holds forth on the subject of Christ's deity. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn.1:1). "Seeing then that Christ is God, He is, by consequence, good and almighty and eternal and perfect and true; for these attributes belong to the essential nature of the Godhead. Further, that none may fall into error, let a man attend to those signs vouchsafed us by Holy Scripture, whereby we may know the Son. He is called the Word, the Son, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. Now these are not mere names, but signs of power manifesting itself in works, for while there is fulness of Godhead in the Father, there is also fulness of Godhead in the Son, not diverse, but one. The Godhead is nothing confused, for it is an unity; nothing manifold, for in it there is no difference." Faustina, the mother of the Roman emperor, sent a troop of soldiers to arrest Ambrose because of his stand on the Person of Christ. His bold spirit caused the soldiers to refuse to obey the orders of Faustina and they gave up on their mission. Aurelius Augustine (354-430), a great preacher in these early times, came to understand the Gospel of grace through the preaching of Ambrose.

3. Moving into the eleventh century of Christianity, still over eight hundred years ago, we hear the words of Anselm (1033-1109) regarding the death of Christ. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit (Jn.12:24). "No man besides Him ever gave to God, by dying, what he was not necessarily going to lose at some time, or paid what he did not owe. But this Man freely offered to the Father what he would never have lost by any necessity, and paid for sinners what He did not owe for Himself. Therefore He gave us a more striking example, to the effect that each man should not hesitate to surrender to God for himself, when reason demands it, what he is going to lose very soon. For although He did not need to do it for Himself, and was not compelled to do it for others, since He owed them nothing but punishment, He gave up such a precious life - yes, nothing less than Himself - surrendering so great a person with such willingness." This message was preached four centuries before the Protestant revolution. Compromise, political changes, ecclesiastical double-dealing put Anselm in difficult positions, but he stuck to his principles.

Of these great preachers of centuries ago, Charles O. Fuller, in his book, *Valiant for the Truth*, says of them, "Each man possessed the same fierce conviction, that all truth is absolute, never relative. For these men, truth was never a nose of wax to be twisted to suit their system of dialectics or deceptive casuistry. Two times two made four. In mathematics, their supreme authority was the multiplication table; in theology, their absolute authority was the Bible. They held verbal inspiration essential. To them it was as much a test of Christian fellowship as any other fundamental of their faith: the virgin birth, the sinless life of Christ; His substitutionary death; His bodily resurrection. These truths, absolute in their nature, formed a golden chain forged by the Holy Spirit. If one link was missing, the whole would be in jeopardy."

What about those of us who, in the will of God, may enter the twenty-first and probably the last century of Christianity? Will we be as valiant for the truth as these men were? They were vessels used mightily of God when Christianity had its beginning. God wants us to be vessels standing valiantly for him when Christianity has its ending.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

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