

AM I A RADICAL???

By Roelf L. Ruffner

Recently I read an article by a brother-in-Christ who maintained that Christians were coming out of “liberalism” and “radicalism”. Now I know I am not a liberal (“loosing what God has not loosed”) but I do disagree with this brother on certain issues. He might even maintain that I was a radical (“one who takes an extreme position”). It is a sad day in spiritual Israel when one is called a “radical” for striving to stay with the Scriptures and having a “thus saith the Lord” for what Christians and the Lord’s church do in this world!

Am I a radical because I preach what the Bible says about refusing to fellowship false teachers? Fellowship is turning out to be of prime importance among the churches of Christ in the first decade of the 21st Century. Many Christians (including preachers) base their fellowship of others upon past “friendships” and associations. They invite “marked” (Rom.16:17) false teachers to speak in Gospel Meetings, Seminars and Lectureships. **Their excuse:** “Well, he is my friend and he won’t teach anything like that here”. Brethren, “friends” can change, but the word of God does not change. They forget what the apostle John and the Holy Spirit decreed: *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds”* (2 John 10-11).

Some of my preaching brethren have no qualms about appearing on the same speaking program with a false teacher and remaining quiet as a **church mouse** about this brother’s false teaching. Have they not wondered what the Lord would do if He suddenly returned and found them there? Would Paul have been on the same lectureship with the Judaizers of Acts 15? Would John have allowed himself to be on the same **podium** with a Nicolaitane (Rev.2:5-6)?

A preacher should preach/teach what the Bible says about fellowship and false teachers. He should also **practice** what he preaches; always mindful of what the Lord sees and not what others think. *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”* (Heb.4:13).

Am I a radical because I preach that compromise and toleration of false doctrine is a great evil in the church today? Compromise and toleration of false doctrine is a great evil in the world today as it has always been. Speaking specifically of greed but I believe the principle applies here as well, Jesus said, *“No man can serve two masters”*(Matt.6:24). We cannot oppose a false doctrine such as Elder Re-evaluation/Reaffirmation, in which the office of elder becomes a political football, while holding hands with those who espouse it and practice it. Some brethren have this strange spiritual weakness called **compromise** which the Lord never had. For example, He did not hold hands with the Sadducees while opposing their materialistic doctrines. *“Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?”* (Matt.12:24).

The apostle Paul strongly opposed the Judaizers who tried to bring Gentile Christians under the yoke of the Law of Moses. Peter opposed them also (Acts 15:10), yet later **compromised** his position at Antioch by refusing to eat with Gentile brethren when certain of his Jewish brethren were present (Gal.2:11-15). Peter wanted it both ways. And Paul “resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned” (Verse 11, ASV). The Christian also stands condemned before the Lord when they **tolerate** false doctrine/teachers in the name of so called “harmony” and “brotherly love”.

Lord willing, I plan to continue to preach and teach against false doctrine and to refuse fellowship to purveyors of it. Though at times it may be a lonely position, I believe that I am in good company.

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