

# **“WOLF PROOF”**

## **Why We Should Preach The Whole Counsel Of God**

### **I. The New Testament Warns Us About Wolves**

#### **A. The Natural Enemy Of The Sheep**

**Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves.**

**Jesus in Luke 10:4**

1. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the false prophets who were really wolves in sheep's clothing.

**Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.**

**Matthew 7:15**

a. He said they would know them by their fruits.

2. But **in his parting words to the elders in the church of Ephesus in Acts 20**, the Apostle Paul offers counsel on how to "wolf-proof" God's church.

a. He warns them...

**"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.**

**Acts 20:29-30 NASB**

3. Paul had been at Ephesus 2 ½ years. Now he was leaving and was worrying about them. He wasn't worried about them *while he was there*. They had been in good hands; they were, in a sense, "wolf-proof"...

#### **SO HOW HAD PAUL KEPT THE CHURCH SAFE?**

a. The answer is here...

**"And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. **Therefore I testify to you this****

**day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.**

**Acts 20:25-27 NKJV**

a. Paul kept the sheep safe and kept the wolves away by preaching the “whole counsel of God”—but what did he mean?

**What he must mean is that he taught the burden of the whole of God’s revelation, the balance of things, leaving nothing out that was of primary importance, never ducking the hard parts, helping believers to grasp the whole counsel of God that they themselves would become better equipped to read their Bibles intelligently, comprehensively.**

**D.A. Carson, Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pulpit**

b. The temptation to Pastors and teachers throughout church history has been to get out of balance; to find selective Bible texts that avoid the more difficult passages.

c. The great American Pastor and Evangelist R.A. Torrey spoke to this issue over 100 years ago...

**“As we have opportunity, we must preach all the topics of the Word, and each in its scriptural proportion.”**

**R.A. Torrey, Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Evangelist**

4. In these perilous times we live in, there are still wolves about, and it has never been a more critical time to declare the whole counsel of God!

5. Let me share 3 things this means to me...Commitment, Caution and Courage.

**The Whole Counsel of God**

- **Commitment to preach all the Word of God**
- **Caution to avoid the dangers of specialization**
- **Courage to address any clear and present danger**

## **II. 3 Things It Takes To Declare The Whole Counsel Of God**

### **A. First: Commitment To Declare All The Word**

1. Critics say, “you can make the Bible say anything you want it to say.” And this is TRUE...IF you take truth out of context!

**“(Any) Individual truth always fits within a larger body of truth, just as a car part fits into the overall vehicle, taking on its meaning from the larger context.”**

### **Christian Educator David Kowalski**

2. Truth is organic; a living thing; wolves come in when someone takes any piece of the truth and makes it the whole truth.

- a. “God is love”-so the Christian Scientists say there is no hell
- b. “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”-so it’s OK to seek revenge
- c. “We are not under the law, we are under grace”-so some think they can live anyway they want

3. If we don’t consider the context of the whole counsel of God we open the door to the devil. Kowalski continues....

**Individual, biblical truths are not in their true, biblical form when isolated exclusively from the rest of the body of truth in the Bible. Justification is not biblical justification apart from the truth of sanctification. Love is not biblical love apart from the truth of wisdom. Unity is not biblical unity apart from the truth of “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3).**

a. The Pope of the Church of Rome recently told the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics that Jews, Muslims and Christians are all united because we all worship the same God!

4. Every one of us must make a commitment to studying the whole counsel of God, which means, secondly, we have to take caution of the danger of specialization.

### **Declaring The Whole Counsel of God**

- **Commit to all the Word of God**
- **Cautious to the danger of specialization**

### **B. Caution To Avoid The Temptation To Specialization**

1. Throughout church history, there has been a tendency to specialize on one particular topic of scripture which always leads to ignoring others.

**“We must preach the full-orbed message of the Word. We must not seek to specialize in any favorite aspect of Bible Truth.”**

**Harold Horton**

a. He goes on with a special warning to pastors...

**“There is a danger in being looked upon as a specialist preacher — as a ‘prophetical’ or ‘grace’ or ‘faith’ or ‘holiness’ or ‘church’ or ‘dispensational’ or ‘numerical’ — or any other sort of expert.”**

2. It is very common for a church or even an individual Christian to be known for one specialized emphasis instead of being known for declaring the whole counsel of God. And some are even proud of it!

**The street sign of one Christian ministry says:**

**“We proudly neglect all but a small portion of God’s Word”**

3. But history teaches us that if we fall into specialization on any particular topic or aspect of biblical truth we will always end up in wolf territory!

**“Indeed, there are times when the exclusive advocacy of certain important truths has the effect of error. In other words, the disproportionate presentation of certain truths makes for error.”**

**Charles Spurgeon**

4. Testimony: over the years, I’ve watched men I respected become trapped in errors that began when they went overboard in specializing on one biblical truth.

a. One brother had a large church and a great reputations. Then he began to specialize in the truth about how it’s the heart of God for all to be saved and be reconciled to Himself. He was obsessed with the subject and preached it every week. But he eventually ended up in the error of “ultimate reconciliation”, that teaches everyone will eventually be saved and end up in heaven!

b. You can go off the deep end with any single subject: faith, gifts of the spirit, holiness, end-time teaching...

5. You can begin with a biblical truth; then continue to expand it until it has lost context and connection with the whole counsel of God and ends up in divisions that divide the Body of Christ, called “heresies”.

a. 200 years ago, English theologian Charles Bridges said...

**Heresies are mostly based on partial or disjointed statements of truth. Truth separated from truth becomes error.”**

**Charles Bridges, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Theologian**

6. Even something as simple as “God is good”, taken out of context, can be confusing. For example...

a. **We say, “God is good...all the time”**; which is true, IF our definition of “good” is able to include ALL that God does.

- God flooded the world and all but 8 people drowned
- He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
- God sent an Angel that killed 185,000 men in one night

(But those were evil people)

- He gave Satan permission to afflict righteous Job
- He didn’t allow Moses into the Promised Land
- He sent His people into 70 years of captivity for their sins

(But that was Old Testament)

- He struck down Herod who was eaten by worms  
(But he was a heathen)
- OK. But He killed Ananias and Sapphira in the middle of a church service for lying about their tithes

b. Yes, God IS good! But we have to hold on to the whole counsel of God to even understand what “good” looks like.

7. The big argument you get when you witness to lost people is, “If God is good, why is there so much evil in the world?” or “Why does a good God allow bad things to happen to good people?” How can a good God send people to hell?

a. It is true that God is good all the time.

b. But if that is your central message, you're going to end up spending all your time explaining the Bible to lost people instead of showing them how they are sinners who need a Savior?

8. All truth is held in balance; church history tells us the pendulum tends to swing off center when we specialize in one important truth at the expense of another. For example take the great truths of "grace" and "holiness"...

**Preaching holiness without grace or grace without holiness is a form of error that leads to lopsided Christians.**

**David Kowalski**

a. Focusing on grace alone ends up producing a congregation that has no holiness; but preaching holiness without grace ends up with a church full of legalists.

b. Either extreme opens the church up to the wolves.

9. Which leads me to my 3<sup>rd</sup> point about wolf-proofing our lives with...

**The Whole Counsel of God**

- **Commitment to all the Word of God**
- **Caution to avoid the dangers of specialization**
- **Courage to confront any clear and present danger**

We need to be (1) committed to declare the whole counsel of God, and (2) cautious to avoid specialization, and finally, (3) we need the courage to confront any clear and present danger

What does it mean?

### **C. Courage To Confront Clear And Present Danger**

1. The wolves come looking like sheep, but they are false prophets and false teachers.

2. **In the early church, the wolves came in different ways to different churches:**

a. In the churches of Galatia, the clear and present danger was that some were teaching that simple faith in Christ was insufficient for salvation; that Gentiles needed to be circumcised. Paul had to confront it.

b. In the Church at Corinth, the danger was that the Leaders were allowing known sin in the congregation to go undealt with. Beyond that, they were proud of their tolerance of it. The danger was “a little leaven leavens the whole lump”; Paul had to confront it

c. By 79 A.D., the church was full of lost people professing to be Christians; so the Apostle John wrote his first epistle

3. In every case, the problem was a failure to proclaim the whole counsel of God; and the answer was to confront the wolf at the very place he was trying to enter in!

a. We can get up and preach about 1000 things; but if we fail to confront the enemy at the point he is attacking NOW!

### **Martin Luther**

**“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ.”**

**Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved...and it is his flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”**

b. Fast forward 500 years...

**“The disciple must be prepared to contend for the faith at any point at which it may be attacked.”**

### **David Kowalski**

#### **Review**

#### **The Whole Counsel of God**

- **Commitment to preach all the Word of God**
- **Caution to avoid the dangers of specialization**
- **Courage to address any clear and present danger**

### III. Conclusion: A Prophetic Word

#### A. God is Calling Forth the Sons Of Issachar

**“...the children of Issachar were men who understood the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”**

**1 Chronicles 12:32**

1. This presidential election is a prophetic sign to the church: our country was on the wrong track. But God is giving America a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to get it right; to return to our roots; to be faithful to the vision of the founding fathers.

2. And so it will be in the church. We have slipped away from the vision of the church fathers. But God is giving us a “window” to get it right and to get back to preaching the whole counsel of God!

a. To obey the Great Commission of Christ...

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe ALL that I commanded you”**

**(Matthew 28:19-20 NASB)**

b. To be able to say with Paul...

**“I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable”**

**Acts 20:20 NASB**

#### B. Season Preview

1. The Lord has shown me 3 places where the wolves have come into the sheepfold because of lack of teaching the whole counsel of God.

2. We will spend the next few months. My prayer is that you will make a fresh commitment to attend yourself to God’s word; to be here whenever you can and to study God’s word...to be on guard for yourself and also for all the church of God.



**“Be on guard for yourself and for all the flock...”**

**Acts 20:28**