

## Some Who Told It Plainly

*by John Isaac Edwards*

God has always demanded that His will be made plain. The Lord told Habakkuk, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Hab. 2:2). The book of God is full of examples where men of God made the message of God plain.

1) **Moses.** You don’t have to be eloquent to speak plainly. Moses, who said, “I am not eloquent...but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Ex. 4:10), told it plainly. Read the obedience exhortations of Moses to Israel in the book of Deuteronomy and see if this is not the case. The message is well summed up in the words of Deuteronomy 11:26-28: “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God...And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord...” The people often disobeyed the Lord, but they couldn’t say,

“Moses, you didn’t tell us plainly!”

2) **Samuel.** Listen to Samuel’s plain talk as King Saul disobeyed God. “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee from being king” (1 Sam. 15:22-23). Do you think Saul said, “I didn’t get that. Would you run that by me again, Samuel?”

3) **Nathan.** Some of the plainest talk in all of the Bible is when Nathan told David a story about two men and a traveller, following David’s adulterous affair with Bathsheba, as recorded in 2 Samuel 12:1-4. “David’s anger was greatly kindled” and Nathan plainly said, “Thou art

the man” (2 Sam. 12:5-7). This plain talk convicted David in such a way that he was made to confess, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Sam. 12:13). The trend today is to not say anything about sin or that might give people the impression that they are guilty of sin. I need to know “Thou art the man” when I am a sinner!

4) **Elijah.** At Mount Carmel, “Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him...” (1 Ki. 18:21). Through the courageous action and plain talk of the prophet of God, the people of God were made to know who God is. The people fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God” (1 Ki. 18:39).

5) **Ezra.** Ezra addressed the children out of captivity, “Ye have transgressed, and

have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives” (Ezra 10:10-11). Do you think they had any difficulty understanding that they had transgressed, what their transgression was, or what they needed to do about it?

6) **Ezekiel.** The Lord told Ezekiel, “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations” (Ezek. 16:2). That is, tell it plainly! With great plainness of speech, Ezekiel spoke of Israel’s history from the birth of that nation up to Ezekiel’s day. He spoke of her birth (vv. 1-7), her marriage and adornment (vv. 8-14), her infidelity (vv. 15-34), and her punishment (vv. 35-43). A reading of Ezekiel 16 finds the messenger of God telling it like it is!

7) **John The Baptist.** How many preachers do you know today who would have put the truth to Herod as plainly as John when he said, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s

wife” (Mk. 6:18)?

8) **The Lord.** Jews came to Jesus saying, “How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly” (Jn. 10:23-24). Read John 10:25-42 to see how plainly Jesus answered these Jews! The teachings of Christ are clear. Do you think the Pharisees got the point when Jesus said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...ye blind guides... Ye fools and blind... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt. 23:13-33). Luke 13:3 gets right to the point: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” John 14:6 is plain: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” And on and on that can go!

9) **Peter.** The first recorded gospel sermon, preached by Peter in Acts 2, is characterized by plainness. Peter plainly preached the death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ. Peter put it to them plainly when he said, “...let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made

that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Peter told them what they needed to do about that in language plain and simple: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). Preaching that tells it plainly is the kind of preaching that gets results as “they that gladly received his were were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

10) **Paul.** Read Paul’s statements in the book of Acts and letters written by him to observe his plain talk. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 gives the reason for Paul’s plainness of speech. He wrote, “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12).

Like these (and many others that could be mentioned), may we never get away from using “great plainness of speech” in our preaching and teaching. Sometimes it is not enough to just draw a picture of a pig. You have to say, “THIS IS A PIG.” And then you need also to say, “THIS IS NOT A DOG, etc.” You can’t be too plain!

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