**Preaching Like Paul**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday November 5th, 2017

Text: Ephesians 4:14-16

# **Intro**

1. Gospel preachers made headlines last year and again this year with the arrest, trial, and conviction of two “street preachers” in Bristol, England
   1. Four preachers: Michael Overd, Adrian Clark, Michael Stockwell and Don Karns, were arrested after preaching in a Bristol, England shopping area in July, 2016
   2. The Arrest: Arresting police officer approached Overd and told him that he was “causing a disturbance” and “not welcome,” and asked him to move along. The officer said that Overd and the other preachers had “gone over the top” and “wound up people.”
   3. Two men were let go but Michael Overd and Michael Stockwell were charged with “causing a disturbance” and engaging in “anti-social behavior” after some listeners became offended by their speech about issues such as Islam, Buddhism, homosexuality and divorce (All recorded on a GoPro, which was used as evidence).
      1. The crowd was stirred up after the preachers started saying that “Allah does not exist” and “all Muslims will burn in Hell,” a witness told The Bristol Post.
      2. Police stated that some became offended, as statements reportedly included remarks such as “Allah is the greatest deceiver—that’s in the Koran,” “David Cameron is no more a Christian than my dogs” and that false religion leads men to “the gates and the very depth of Hell” (especially mentioning Catholics)
      3. They also called shoppers, “Animals” and “Disgusting”
      4. When confronted by police one preacher refused to reveal his full name and also refused to leave when asked. When threatened he still refused so all four men were arrested to a cheering crowd chanting, ‘Go Home!”
   4. The Trial: Happened in February, 2017 where the court heard how they criticized Islam, Catholicism, Jehovah Witness and Mormonism, and quoted John 14:6 where Jesus says, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”
      1. During the four-day trial, prosecutor Ian Jackson, claimed: “To say to someone that Jesus is the only God is not a matter of truth. To the extent that they are saying that the only way to God is through Jesus, that cannot be a truth.”
      2. The prosecutor told the court, “Some of the statements made by the preachers may have been in the King James Bible, translated in 1611, but that did not mean they were acceptable in 2016” and then claimed that quoting parts of the King James Bible in the context of modern British society “must be considered to be abusive and is a criminal matter.”
      3. The prosecutor argued that free speech must yield to multicultural reality in modern Britain, and that there was a clear threat to violence due to the words of the preachers and the criticism of Islam.
   5. The Conviction: The two men were found guilty of “intentionally alarming” the public with open-air preaching, under *Section 31 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998,* for using “threatening or abusive words or behavior or disorderly behavior within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be, caused harassment, alarm or distress, thereby, and the offence was religiously aggravated.”
      1. “The court has determined that these men crossed that line and used their platform to comment on other religions and sexuality using disparaging and offensive language.”
      2. “They were fully aware of the impact their preaching was having on their audience and the resulting tension it was causing” and were there “to cause a fight.”
   6. The men were fined £300 each and faced up to six months in jail (Appealed in May 2017 & won – Convictions and Fines were overturned June 29, 2017)
2. Social Media was abuzz with the events all over again during the trial and aftermath.
3. Many saints have sought to defend the men with words like, “they were just preaching like Paul!”
   1. Many religious articles recorded the words of the prosecutor and say the men were only reading from the KJV Bible, but left out direct quotes!
   2. Reading the records of what they said indicated that their problems were the result of the attitude and methods and not the gospel message!
   3. Eph. 4:15 tells saints to “Speak(ing) the truth in love” (Paul to the Ephesians)
   4. While what they said was true on many topics, the way they said it and presented the gospel was belligerent to say the least. *(Doesn’t excuse the erroneous statements made by the prosecutor!)*
   5. Some also defend the men saying the truth is the truth and doesn’t matter how it is presented or stated! (They forget about Love – Eph. 4:15 & Gentleness – II Tim. 2:24)
4. *Were these men preaching like Paul?* **Let us look at the way Paul preached!**
5. **Preaching Like Paul**
6. Paul wrote to Timothy to instruct him how the “Lord's bond-servant” must behave
   1. II Timothy 2:24-26: “The Lord's bond-servant must ***not be quarrelsome***, but ***be kind to all***, able to teach, ***patient when wronged***, ***with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition***…” (II Tim. 4:2: “Preach the word… with great patience and instruction”)
7. Notice a few of Paul’s methods when teaching and presenting the gospel…
   1. Acts 17:2 (Paul to the Thessalonians – 17:1): “And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths ***reasoned with them from the Scriptures***”
   2. Acts 17:17 (Paul to the Athenians – 17:16): “So he was ***reasoning in the synagogue*** with the Jews and the God-fearing ***Gentiles***, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present” (vs. 18: Some of the philosophers were “***conversing*** with him”)
   3. Acts 18:4 (Paul to the Corinthians – 18:1): “And he was ***reasoning in the synagogue*** every Sabbath and trying to persuade ***Jews and Greeks***”
   4. Acts 18:19 (Paul to the Ephesians): “They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and ***reasoned with the Jews***”
   5. Acts 19:8-9 (Paul to the Ephesians – 19:1): “And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months***, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God***. But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, ***reasoning daily*** in the school of Tyrannus”
   6. Acts 24:25 (Paul to Felix): “But as he was ***discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come***, Felix became frightened and said, ‘Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you’”
8. In any such reasoning with people, there will be “argument,” and a give and take in explaining viewpoints – can even get heated or call for “speaking out boldly” (Acts 19:8-9)
   1. Paul “reasoned” & “discussed” without name-calling! (Col. 3:8: “Abusive Speech”)
   2. II Timothy 2:26: We teach gently so the lost may “escape from the snare of the devil”
9. The goal of our preaching and teaching is to save souls, not to start a fight just to be offensive!

#### Conclusion

1. Paul explained that “the goal of our instruction is ***love from a pure heart and a good conscience*** and a sincere faith” (I Timothy 1:5) – *Paul was concerned with how the gospel was presented!*
2. He also said, “Let your ***speech always be with grace***, ***as though seasoned with salt***, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:6) – **Not with salty speech!**
3. Offending people with the gospel is easy! (To the world and now even the court in Britain, the Bible isn’t for the modern world!) – When sneered at, Paul left the crowd (Acts 17:32-33)
4. Reasoning with people with grace, patience, and gentleness often proves more difficult!
5. Even following Paul’s example and instruction can end up in one being arrested (Acts 21:27-33), but we will have presented the gospel in a godly and reasonable manner (I Peter 4:14-16)
6. Is your manner of teaching like Paul, motivated out of love for the lost, or looking to start a fight?
7. If not a Christian, need to be! God’s word is timeless and can save your soul! Obey the gospel!
8. If a Christian in error, turn back to God! Repent and be renewed!

**Sources:**

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