**"That's Not A Problem Here"**

Heath Rogers – FB post

A number of years ago I was reprimanded for preaching a rather straightforward sermon on the sin of homosexuality. The language of the sermon had upset a couple in the church, as they did not want their young children exposed to this subject. When I discussed this matter with two older men of the congregation (one had served as an elder before, and the other would later be appointed as an elder), I was shocked when they advised me not to preach on the subject again. Their reasoning: *"It is not a problem here."*

*"Don't talk about that. It isn't a problem here."* When do we use this kind of logic? Generally speaking, we usually do just the opposite. Elementary schools do not wait until there is a fire to start having fire drills. They have such drills on a routine basis so teachers and students will be prepared for such an emergency. We are familiar with the phrase "Preventive Medicine." As a child, my dentist had a sign in his office that read, *"You don't have to floss all of your teeth, just the ones you want to keep."* We do not wait until our children get a few cavities before we buy them a toothbrush and insist they brush their teeth. As a general rule, we know it is foolish to wait until something becomes a problem to address it. The same principle holds true for the pulpit.

In **1 Timothy 4**, Paul says the Spirit has expressly said that in latter times some will depart from the faith. He goes on to describe the nature of this departure: ***giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies, forbidding to marry, and commanding abstinence from foods***. After identifying this apostasy, Paul says, ***"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ..."*** (**1 Timothy 4:6**). Timothy was not to wait until this was a problem where he was preaching. He was to forewarn the brethren so the church there would not depart from the faith.

In his second letter, Paul charged Timothy to, ***"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."*** Why? ***"Because the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..."*** (**2 Timothy 4:2-3**). Timothy was not to wait until this time came to address the problem of apostasy. The way for him to prevent a future departure was with the present instruction of sound doctrine.

There are a number of things every local church will likely have to address at some time, and wisdom demands that these subjects be covered before they become problems. Issues such as divorce and remarriage, the work of the church, the role of women in the church, instrumental music, church discipline, etc. Why does a church need to address these subjects prior to them becoming problems?

Prevention. One way to prevent problems is by addressing the issues beforehand. It pays to earnestly contend for the faith (**Jude 3**), and to forewarn a congregation of dangers lurking on the horizon. If your strategy is to wait until something becomes a problem to address it, then you are inviting problems into the local church.

Defeats Emotionalism. We all know that it is better to address problems when we are thinking clearly. If we wait until there is a fire to talk about escape procedures, no one will be of a mind to listen and follow instructions. However, if procedures are discussed and exercised beforehand, they will be followed in a real emergency. Church discipline and divorce and remarriage are very emotional issues. If we study these subjects in a calm setting, we can arrive at the truth and understand what ought to be done in such situations. However, if we wait until it is a real problem involving members of the church that we love and care about (perhaps even family members), then the plain teaching of Scripture can be misinterpreted or set aside in favor of our emotions.

Paul declared the whole counsel of God while he was in Ephesus (**Acts 20:27**). In doing so, he set the pattern for preachers and elders to follow today (**Philippians 3:17**). Let's not wait until a particular sin becomes a problem before we deal with it. Both the word of God, as well as common sense, instruct us to declare the whole counsel of God.