

**Devotional Thoughts :: A PIERCING MESSAGE by Jim Cymbala****A PIERCING MESSAGE by Jim Cymbala - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/11/10 7:50**

The apostles never tried to finesse people when they were presenting the gospel. Their communication was not supposed to be "cool" or soothing. They aimed for a piercing of the heart, for conviction of sin. They had not the faintest intention of asking, "What do people want to hear? How can we draw more people to church on Sunday?" That was the last thing on their minds. Such an approach would have been foreign to them.

Instead of trying to bring men and women to Christ in the biblical way, we are consumed with the unbiblical concept of "church growth." The Bible does not say we should aim at numbers but rather urges us to proclaim God's message in the boldness of the Holy Spirit. This will build God's church God's way.

Unfortunately, some churches now continually monitor how pleased people are with the services and ask what else they would like. We have no permission whatsoever to adjust the message of the gospel! Whether it seems popular or not, whether it is "hip" to the times, we must faithfully and boldly proclaim that sin is real but Jesus forgives those who confess.

Nowhere does God ask anyone to have a large church. He only calls us to do His work, proclaiming His Word to people He loves under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit to produce results that only He can bring about. The glory then goes to Him alone—not any denomination, local church, local pastor, or church growth consultant. This is God's only plan, and anything else is a deviation from the teaching of the New Testament.

Today we have an anti-authority spirit in America that says, "Nobody can tell me I need to change. Don't you dare."

Both in the pulpit and in pastoral counseling we have too often given in to this mentality and are afraid to speak the truth about sin. We keep appealing to Paul's line about becoming "all things to all men" (1 Corinthians 9:22), not noticing that in the very next paragraph he says, "Run in such a way as to get the prize" (verse 24). Adapting our style to get a hearing is one thing, but the message can never change without leaving us empty-handed before the Lord.