

"EWE LAMB" PREACHERS

After David had taken Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, for his own, and had arranged for the death of Uriah, God sent Nathan, the prophet, to David. Upon his arrival, Nathan spoke the following parable to David:

"There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him" (2 Samuel 12:1-4).

David had no problem in seeing that a man who would take this little "ewe lamb" was worthy of death (verse 5) and so stated. However, suppose Nathan had been like many preachers today. What would have happened to David? Nathan, up to this point, has taught the truth and has succeeded in getting the audience (David) to see how wrong it would be to act in the manner described, however it was not until Nathan declared to David, *"Thou art the man,"* (verse 7) that David made the application to himself.

There are preachers today who will boldly declare that we must follow the Bible, and the Bible only, in all we teach and practice and will receive a hearty "Amen" from their audience, but they will never point out to that same audience that the name they are wearing in religion is not found in the Bible, or the church they are members of is unknown to the word of God, or that some specific act they are practicing is not found in the Bible. As one man stated to me, "I preach principles, I don't make applications." These men soothe their conscience by saying, "I preached the truth." What they don't recognize, in many cases, is that the truth has been presented in such general terms that the audience can only see the application to someone else. They stop with telling the story of the "ewe lamb." For their teaching to be effective they need to do as Nathan did and say, "Thou art the man." They need to show their audience the need for application in their own lives. Brethren, we need to realize that we are not doing anyone a favor if we teach in such a way that the student is unable to see the need to apply that which is taught to his or her own life.

Why is it that some may be called "ewe lamb" preachers (i.e., fail to make application of the truth taught)? I am convinced that some simply do not want to risk upsetting those to whom they are speaking. If they can teach the "truth" and still not disturb or upset anyone they fool themselves into thinking they are "strong" teachers and are pleasing unto God.

It is OK to say that we must respect the teaching of God's word regarding marriage, but the time comes when you have to tell that one who has divorced his wife for some cause other than fornication and has married again that HE is guilty of adultery. It is fine to teach that we must put the Lord first in our lives but it may be necessary to point out to the one who allows anything and everything to hinder them from assembling with the saints that they are guilty of sin.

Yes, I think we have too many "ewe lamb" preachers. The need is for men who will teach the truth and are not afraid to make the application to those listening. I am sure David was thankful to God that Nathan was such a preacher and did not stop with just telling the story of the little "ewe lamb."

✍ James Hahn