

Lifestyle Evangelism is . . .

. . . To Speak Law & Gospel (Part 2).

It is unfortunate that we live in a society which has such a high disregard for intolerance of sin, so much so that we do not even like to use the term *sin*. Yet, unless we recognize and confess our sins, there can be no forgiveness and absolution.

We have a problem in that we confuse a recognition of sin with a condemnation or judgement. Such is the case when we suggest that what someone did was wrong, even a sin, and we hear a response such as, "You're not supposed to judge people," as if quoted from the Bible. Our response is that to recognize sin is not the same as judging and that if a person continues in his/her sin, not only has s/he judged her/himself, but we, as a Christian congregation, may judge her/him as well. Excommunication means, that a congregation has studied that situation on the basis of God's Word and determined that a person has sinned and refused to confess and repent that sin. The Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven are to be exercised in that way..

However, we must understand that the judgement of excommunication is not, in any way, to be a mean-spirited plot, but rather is a call to the one who remains in his/her sin to see the seriousness of his/her sin so that s/he may repent and be restored to the fold.

Accordingly, for us to practice true *Lifestyle Evangelism* means that we must be prepared to call sin what it is, *sin*. We must be prepared to have accusations brought against us (fair and unfair). And we must stand firm and thus, in love, explain the devastating results of unrepentant, sinful living versus the rewards of repentance, contrition and forgiveness, and absolution.

Again, how can one take seriously the need for a Savior unless one is shown his/her need? The Law must be proclaimed in its severity, especially to unrepentant sinners so that the Gospel may be taken seriously, may be proclaimed and may be believed. And once the Law has been taken seriously, then the Gospel must be proclaimed in all its sweetness, giving the assurance of forgiveness of sins and the certainty of eternal life in heaven. Such is God's Way as shown in His Word.