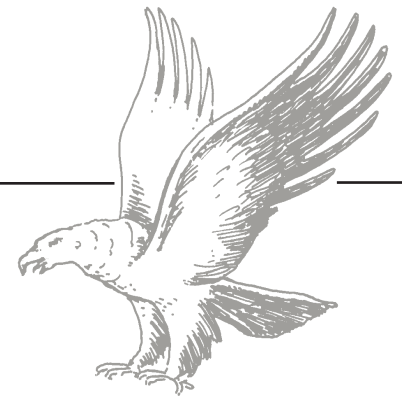


Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



May 24, 2015

Say vs. Do

Talk is cheap, and that is nowhere more evident than in professions of faith. Rather than talk about how much we love God, we should direct our energy toward showing it in how we live.

"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46).

"Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?" (Prov. 20:6)

". . . Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:18).



Every preacher can tell stories of encountering folks who try to ingratiate themselves with the man of God by profusive expressions of religion. Oh, how they love Jesus! Their great uncle was a deacon in the church! The Lord healed their bunion! And on and on.

The reason preachers remember these stories is because the lives of most of those who talk so loudly about their faith are such a horrid mess. This experience is so common that I'll give it a name: Dave's Law. "The volume with which people talk about their faith is inversely proportional to the legitimacy of their faith." Expressed more simply, people who are loudest in declaring their love for the Lord usually are doing the

poorest job of living it. Call me cynical, but when I encounter people who start carrying on about their love for God, red flags go up in my mind. They're probably trying to hide something.

I'm not the only one who is cynical. Solomon was surrounded by syncophants who "proclaimed each his own goodness" but ultimately proved untrustworthy. When Jesus walked upon this earth, He knew the frustration of hearing people call Him "Lord, Lord," yet ignore what He taught. This is not a modern phenomenon, but an endemic flaw of human nature. It's so much easier for people to *talk* about doing right, than to actually *do* it.

People of the world who make no pretense of religion also recognize this empty language for the hypocrisy it is. Far from currying favor with God, it does enormous damage to His cause, linking God's name to a lot of ungodly behavior. Don't think for a moment that God is indifferent to His name being cheapened in such a fashion.

To be sure, there is a time and place for declaring our faith with boldness and

courage. But in everyday life, those occasions are few and far between (and trying to impress the preacher is not one of them). The far more effective display of our faith is seen in how we live. James summarized the issue perfectly: If we want to show others our faith, the only legitimate way we can do it is by our works. People who are actually living the life God wants them to live have no need of broadcasting it. Their lives provide a quiet but unmistakable testimony to what they believe.

Of course, that's not easy. Doing what God asks us to do in our lives requires a great deal of self-discipline, sacrifice, and hard work. Sadly, most people are not willing to invest that level of commitment. They prefer to just skate by on words alone, and do pretty much what they please. In the end, they will find out that the only ones they were fooling were themselves.

The real issue, as always, is what is in the heart. A heart that is humble in the presence of God has no desire, or even a need, for talking a big game. It knows that actions speak louder than words.

– David King