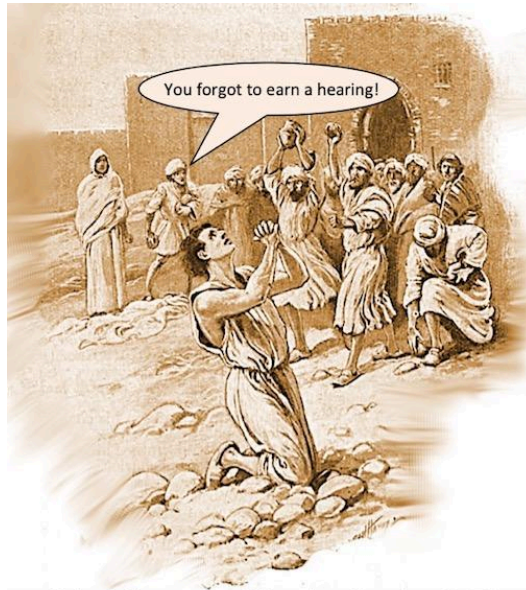


You Have To Earn A Hearing



“And they stoned Stephen” - Acts 7:59

This short message is about the idea in many Christian circles that you “have to earn a hearing” with a person or group of persons before you can share the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

There are some very important questions a Christian needs to know the answers to if they are going to subscribe to this “earn a hearing” philosophy, such as I am listing here:

1. How do you know when you have earned a hearing? Is it the point at which you have become as ungodly as your hearers and you then blend in with them? Because that is what many of them would want before they would accept you as a friend or as a person worthy of their time and attention.

2. Can you only witness to people who you have helped out in some material way? Did Jesus or his 12 disciples only preach to people whom they had “earned a hearing” with?

3. Is there any mention in the bible of this **requirement** of “earning a hearing”? Is this concept to be found in the book of Acts or some other part of the New Testament - as a practice of the early Church?

Some food for thought about the logic behind the “earn a hearing” concept:

If a man is deathly ill and he is referred to an oncologist (cancer doctor) and the doctor can see for sure that the man has terminal cancer, does that doctor have to “earn a hearing” with the patient before the doctor can tell the patient the bad news - that he is terminally ill?

Did the apostle Stephen forget to “earn a hearing” before he preached to the Jewish Sanhedrin the bad news about their rejection of their Messiah the day that they stoned Stephen to death? - because it is obvious from the reading,

that Stephen preached something they didn't want to hear.

Was the apostle Paul almost stoned to death in Acts chapter 14 (verses 6-19) because he preached without first having "earned a hearing"?

And what about the prophets of the Old Testament? Is our message to the modern world really any different than their message (i.e. repent of sin and turn to God)? Did God tell those prophets to be quiet until they had "earned a hearing" with their sinful rebellious audiences?

What is the REAL reason behind this "earn a hearing" idea?

Could it be that our sin nature wants an excuse for not witnessing?

Could it be that we fear men more than we fear God?

Could it be that we are lazy or selfish and rather spend our time on worldly pursuits, like our cars, homes, pets, hobbies, etc?

Could it be that we don't trust God to protect us and watch over us when we stick our necks out for Jesus' sake?

Could it be that we really are not a child of God - one who does not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, a Spirit that causes God's true children to love the praise of God more than the praise of men?

Those who are not truly saved (i.e. born again or "born from above") will not have a grateful spirit to serve God as His witnesses in thankful service for being granted a salvation that cost God Almighty the life of His most precious Son.

Now before you jump to conclusions about the author or his message, I am not in any way advocating that we ignore or neglect the material needs of those around us. Nor am I saying we should speak harshly or unkindly towards those we witness too. Preaching to people in poverty and those who are ill or homeless should often be done in conjunction with meeting any of their serious physical needs. However, we must really question our own motives for holding to this "earn a hearing" philosophy if it is doing more harm than good for the cause of Christ and the increase of His Kingdom. Is this philosophy only serving to keep us in our comfort zone and also severely limiting our opportunities to share the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world? — *RM Kane*
