

**WHEN YOU SAY THE RIGHT THING THE WRONG WAY**  
**Philippians 1:14-18**

Have you ever tried your best to preach Christ only to feel that because you didn't do it right you did more harm than good? That happens. Makes you want to hide, doesn't it? When you recall the sting of a conversation that became a confrontation, silence can become appealing. Then to excuse our silence we remember **Proverbs 18:6** *A fool's lips enter into contention.* But we can't stay silent for long because we recall **Jude 3** *Earnestly contend for the faith.*

Which is worse? Truth spoken at the wrong time with the wrong words in the wrong spirit, or truth not spoken at all?

Paul suffered much for Christ's name. Not only did his body feel the pain of whips, his heart felt the pain of false friends, fellow Christians who felt that with Paul in prison they could now enjoy an elevated status in the church.

***Philippians 1:14** And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident in my bonds are much more bold to speak the word without fear. **:15** Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will. **:16** The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.*

These were glory seeking Christians. They had the right message but the wrong motive. What a thing to be contentious about: "I can preach Christ better than you, Paul. So there." There certainly was a better way to go about this business of preaching Christ, and there others who went about it the right way.

***Philippians 1:17** But the other of love knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.*

There were two kinds of preachers: those who were wrongly motivated and those who were rightly motivated. The wrongly motivated looked for prestige, accolades, and compliments. Maybe they were looking for promotion, or maybe approval at Paul's expense. But the rightly motivated didn't care for any of that. They just wanted to get the word out.

Now, here's the question: Did those glory seeking Christians who were wrongly motivated help the cause of Christ or hinder it? Was their witness so hypocritical and offensive that the work of Christ would have been better off if they had just shut up and disappeared? You'd think they'd be an embarrassment — people to whom you might be tempted to say, "Go home." You or I might think that, but what did Paul say about them?

***Philippians 1:18** What then? [So what?] Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

Can false motive preach the true gospel? It seems so. Paul didn't care about their motives he cared about their message. Truth is powerful regardless of the messenger. Even if spoken by a donkey (**Numbers 22:28**) truth is still truth. The power lies in the message not the messenger.

So then, never feel bad that you spoke the truth, however bad a job you did and whatever the result. The words are your responsibility, but the result is God's. You speak to the ear as best you can, but be content to let God speak to the heart. And besides, with practice, you get better.