



A Publication of the Winnetka Ave. Church of Christ

- 7054 Winnetka Ave., Winnetka, CA 91306
- Mail To: P.O. Box 2711, Winnetka, CA 91396
- 818-795-5566 (minister's cell phone)
- W. Bruce Evans, Minister: e-mail to wbe@wolfenet.com

February 19, 2023

www.winnetkachurch.com

PLEASING TO THE EARS...

Sycophant, is a fancy word for a “yes man”. For the most part, people are more than likely, in fact twice as likely according to research, to seek out information and people who support their position. When one is ensconced in their thinking, avoidance of having anything challenge that thinking is paramount. In short, most of us want to hear only what we want to hear. In the second letter Paul wrote to Timothy, he noted, “..wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their desires” (4:3)

In the book of 2Chronicles, there is an excellent example of sycophants in action. Ahab was the king over Israel, while Jehoshaphat was king of Judah and circumstances arose wherein there was consideration of joining together to battle Ramoth-gilead. Ahab at the request of Jehoshaphat called four hundred prophets to inquire of them if they should go to battle. They told him what he wanted to hear, “Go up, for the God will give it into the hand of the kings.” (18:5). There was yet one prophet who had not been heard, notice the reason as to why as set forth by Ahab. “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla.” (18:7) When summoned, Micaiah did indeed come back with something that Ahab didn't want to hear; that being they wouldn't be victorious.

It may be painful to admit, but how many can relate to being like Ahab, as seen in the above noted example? Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, set forth, “The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (18:15) Jesus builds further along this line of thought, as seen recorded in Mark four, verses twenty-three and twenty-four. “If any

man has ears to hear, let him hear. And He was saying to them “Take care what you listen to...” It can be disastrous to want to listen to only those things that “tickle” our ears.



Clearly the admonition issued by Jesus as found in Matthew thirteen and verses fourteen and fifteen, is not one any would apply to them. “You keep on hearing, but you will not understand; and you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has

become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I should heal them.” Apparently the words of Christ were not hearkened to by the masses, and Stephen pointed out as he was giving his “defense” before the Council, as seen in Acts chapter seven. “You men are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.” (v 51)

Stephen told them what they needed to hear, but clearly they didn't accept it, even though it was the truth. It cost Stephen his life, for most of the others, it cost them much more. There was at least one who at some later point, opened his ears and responded to the Truth. That being Saul of Tarsus, later to be known as the apostle Paul. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20)

If only people would not seek to justify self, but be open and honest enough to hear the message of God's word, even though it may contradict what we would like to hear. “Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you...” (Isaiah 55:3)

(wbe)

THE BULWARK