

**TRIMMED PREACHING**  
By Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

We live in a time when preachers are tempted to trim their preaching, ignore difficult subjects, and strive to not make waves with their preaching. I love to read the sermons and study the wisdom of the great preaching champions of the past. Read carefully the advice that Charles G. Finney gave as he listed 10 rules for preaching that would offend none and convert nobody.

1. Let your supreme motive be popularity rather than salvation.
2. Study to please your congregation and to make a reputation rather than to please God.
3. Take up popular and seasonal themes, to draw the crowd, and avoid the essential doctrines of salvation.
4. Denounce sin in the abstract, but pass lightly over sins that prevail in your congregation.
5. If asked, "Is it wrong to dance, play cards, or attend the theater?" answer very pleasantly, "Oh, that is a matter of private judgment."
6. Preach on the loveliness of virtue and the glory of Heaven, but not on the sinfulness of sin and the terrors of Hell.
7. Reprove the sins of the absent, but make those that are present pleased with themselves, so that they will enjoy the sermon and not go away with their feelings hurt.
8. Make the impression on worldly church members that God is too good to send anyone to Hell, even if there is a Hell.

9. Preach the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man so as to show that no second birth is really needed.

10. Do not rebuke the worldliness of the church, but fall in with the amusement policy. Instead of meeting for prayer, let the people "sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play."

It is sad to see that many ministers have learned these rules very well and are following that spineless course of leadership. When the salt loses its savor, the leadership minces on warning and the true needs are soft-pedaled our churches lose ground quickly. The church used to hold great influence in the neighborhood, speak with authority on the evils of the day and labor to win the community to Christ. Some dear brethren soften their convictions and watch their church seem to grow as they coddle sin and tip toe through the congregational mine field. Others swing a ball bat of righteous destruction and in an attitude of harshness and rude accusations flail the sheep. We certainly need to seek out a middle ground. There must never be a departure from preaching all the counsel of the Word of God. We must preach the Word no matter what. Preachers must preach with impartiality, boldness, honesty, vision and love "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression" Isa 58:1. Stand tall, press the battle and be true to your calling.