

Preaching July 3, 2015

Preaching is the proclamation of the Word of God to men by men called by God. It is one way God communicates His word to people. Preaching is absolutely necessary for the health of the church. The absence of true Bible preaching results in a weak, ineffective church.

I. What is preaching?

1. The New Testament mentions preaching over sixty times. There are four New Testament Greek words for preaching.

A. Kerusso which means to herald or proclaim the message of a king. This means that the preacher does not speak his own message and he speaks with the authority of the sender. The preacher must feel called by God and he has his authority from God.

B. Evangelizo which means to evangelize or bring good news. The angel in Luke 2:10 is evangelizing as he brings good news. It means to preach the gospel.

i. Often both kerusso and evangelize are used in the same passage. Look at Luke 4:18-19. Jesus uses evangelizo in the first part of verse 18 while later in verse 18 and 19 He uses kerusso. Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because of this He anointed Me to proclaim (evangelizo) the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me" to heal the brokenhearted, "to proclaim (kerusso) remission to captives, and to the blind to see again," to send away the ones being crushed, in remission,

[Luke 4:19](#) "to preach (kerusso) an acceptable year of *the* Lord."

C. Martureo to bear witness to facts. The preacher reports facts from the Bible.

D. Didasko means to teach in everyday understandable words what the message mean to his listeners. In other words the preacher is to explain what the Bible teaches and how the listener should use the lesson in his life, changing his life where necessary to conform to the Bible.

2. When a preacher is preaching he uses more than one of these words in one message. For example, in Acts 15:35, we read that Paul and Barnabas spent time 'teaching and preaching' the word of the Lord. Another example of the preacher using more than one word in the message is found in Acts 28:31. Here Paul used his home for 'preaching.... and teaching' (kerusso and didasko) .

A. Preaching is teaching.

II. What is good Bible preaching?

1. Exegetical accuracy which means bringing out the intended meaning of words and sentences. The preacher must report accurately what the Bible says. The writer of the Bible intended one meaning for his words and the preacher must faithfully report these words.

There is nothing more important in preaching than accurately reporting the Bible.

A. Prayer is a very necessary part of preaching. The time you spend praying is the most important time you spend preparing for preaching.

B. Principles that govern good discovery of what the passage is actually saying. The most important time involved in a sermon is not the time spent preaching rather it is the time spent preparing the sermon such as praying.

i. God expects the preacher to be respectful of the Bible after all it is God's word. God expects the preacher to believe every word. He expects the preacher to remember that the Bible has meaning and the meaning is God's meaning; not the meaning that the preacher wants.

- ii. We must study every word and accept its meaning.
- iii. We must know the literary style of our reading such as history or poetry, etc.
- iv. We must know the context. An example is preaching 1 Corinthians 2:6-11. Most preachers speak about Heaven here but this is wrong because Heaven is not in the context of this passage. This passage is saying that the Lord's people can see and appreciate spiritual things which are hidden from the unsaved world.
- v. We must know the historical setting. An example is found in Acts 19:1-2 when Paul asks some religious men if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They said "no" which was an acceptable answer back in the time of Abraham. However, Acts 19 is after Pentecost which is after the church had been given The Holy Spirit. Their answer of no means they were not Christians so Paul talked to them as unconverted people which led to their conversion.
- vi. What does other Scripture tell us about a passage? We use Scripture to interpret Scripture. For example, you should not preach on Melchizedek using only Genesis 14:18-24. You also need Hebrews 5:5-10 and 7:1-28.
- vii. How does this passage point to Christ? The whole Bible points to Christ and every sermon must point to Christ. Sometimes it is hard to see this but careful examination; for example, of the book of Ecclesiastes, stirs up questions in our minds which make us hunger for God.
- viii. How can we be better exegetes which means how can we do a better job of explaining the meaning of the Bible? How can we do a better job of accurately reporting what the Bible teaches? We can do this by really reading and studying the Bible and praying for better understanding.

2. Doctrinal substance is very important.

- A. Preaching must be full of doctrine (teachings). By this we mean we must teach things such as creation, redemption, judgment, Heaven, Hell, and many other subjects.
- B. Our sermons must contribute to the understandings of the system of truths (doctrines) of the Bible. Romans 6:17
- C. What happens when Bible doctrine is not taught or preached?
 - i. God is not worshipped or loved as He should be because people do not understand Him. They do not know what a wonderful, powerful, and loving God they have. The people can't really appreciate God.
 - ii. People do not understand how wonderful our relationship with God is.
 - iii. Believers are unaware of their privileges as Christians.
 - a. People forget the blessings they have because they are justified which means that they are forgiven for their sins and we can look forward to heaven.
 - b. People don't realize that they are adopted by God which gives them certain rights such as being children of God.
 - c. People do not enjoy the full benefits of living as God's children. A society which has many Christians is a better society to live in than a society full of pagans.
 - iv. Believers are not sure how to live. We are supposed to obey God and to obey Him we need to know Him. It is the preacher's job to teach God's laws.
 - v. Personal witness suffers. Believers don't know what to say to cause people to turn to God. Preachers need to teach their listeners all about evangelizing people.
 - vi. People don't know how to live properly.
 - vii. People don't know how to properly pray.

3. Preaching must have clear and easily understood structure. Sermons must have unity with a central message. Sermons must have order in which the different parts follow each other in a logical manner. They must have proportion which means each part is given its proper place. Unimportant points are not built up and important points are not played down. In other words sermons must be well organized.

A. The introduction. This is the opening statements which tell the people what you will be talking about and one of its purposes is to get people interested. Often this is done by telling a story.

i. The introduction should not be overly long. It is not the main part of the sermon and is only to be long enough to introduce the main part of the sermon.

B. The discussion. After the introduction it is time to present the material that teaches the truth that you mean to teach.

i. You must have a plan. Your thoughts must be presented in a way that the audience sees movement to a conclusion. Your plan must be as simple as possible so that everyone can understand it. After all, your purpose in preaching is that every listener can know the message.

ii. The helpfulness of divisions. Keep the number of points to no more than four; three is a good number. If necessary, preach several weeks on a subject rather than preach too long in one sermon.

iii. Proportionate. Balance the sermon by dividing the three or four points into mostly equal time segments. In other words if you are speaking for forty minutes, don't spend the first thirty minutes on point one.

iv. Persuasive. Use good arguments presented properly. In Matthew 6:1-18 our Lord teaches us about charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting. He first tells them what not to do and then what they should do. Present negatives before you present positives.

v. Attractive. We can make our sermons more attractive by using simpler words. Work to make the sermon interesting.

C. The conclusion.

i. Definition of conclusion. Your concluding remarks should be designed to summarize your sermon and tie things together.

ii. Importance of the conclusion. A good conclusion needs to be short and challenging. A good conclusion summarizes the sermon and often issues a short challenge or reminder of the main point of the sermon. A good conclusion is often the only thing a person will remember of your sermon.

iii. Suggestions. Write down exactly what you want the listener to remember. Our conclusion should be in your mind before you finish the final version of your sermon. Your conclusion should be pointed and personal.

4. Vivid Illustration. By now everyone should know that preaching requires a lot of work.

A. An illustration is a word picture which helps us understand something better. There is a saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. A word picture is when words are presented in a way that causes the listener to draw a picture in his mind and better understand what the speaker is saying.

i. Often we form pictures in our mind from the words we hear from the radio when it is reporting a news story such as teargas being used to stop a riot.

B. Word pictures can help explain the truth. Mathew 13 is full of word pictures, see verses 23, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47. The apostle Paul uses them in Romans 6 and 7 when he is saying that we Christians should not live in sin because we are no longer slaves to sin. He uses a picture of a slave market where you can easily identify who a slave belongs to; We Christians should live in a way that shows that Christ is our master.

C. Word pictures help make your sermon more interesting so that people pay closer attention to the message. After listening to a speaker for a while, people's attention weakens and their minds turn to other thoughts. If you use a word illustration in the middle of a sermon you cause the person to again pay close attention.

D. Illustrations or word pictures help a person remember the main point of your message. If you help a person draw a mental picture, it will help him remember much more than words alone will. An example is the story from Luke 15 about the prodigal son who realizes that he needs to return to his father. Verse 23 talks about how happy the father is that his son was returning and how he planned a party to celebrate. Once again help people to draw a mental picture. You can do this by talking about a joyous celebration that your audience has experienced such as a wedding party. These wedding pictures can help the people remember the point; that Jesus rejoices when one of His lost children turns to Him.

5. Pointed application. Your sermons must be designed for your audience. They must meet the spiritual needs and be at the level of the people so that they can use what they are taught in their everyday life. Keep your sermons simple.

A. What is the definition of pointed application? Application is that part of the sermon which shows the listener how to apply the teaching from the Bible to his life; the application is pointed at the listener.

B. Application is necessary or the sermon will not accomplish a purpose. A sermon which has no application is just reporting facts and teaches no lesson. Remember you are supposed to be teaching

Some preachers want to show how smart they are, and they don't care if the listener can learn anything useful. Application is when the sermon becomes useful to a listener.

i. An example of pointed application is discussing the teaching of a Bible passage such as Genesis 12:1-9. The preacher could explain what happens as God directs Abram to leave his home and he makes promises to Abram. He could explain that this is a story about faith and obedience. His application would be to challenge his listeners to trust and obey God.

C. How do we make pointed application?

i. Be pointed or specific. Make sure the application of the sermon is presented so that the listener understands the point. An example is found in Matthew 19:21 where Jesus tells the rich young ruler exactly what he is to do. Jesus left no doubt about what the person was to do.

ii. Be persuasive. Don't just tell the people what to do, but also tell them how and why they should do what you are teaching them to do. A test of a great preacher is his heart; he must have a heart of love for the people he is preaching to. As you give an application, calling on the people to repent and believe in Jesus for their salvation, do it in a positive, convincing manner. Don't, during the application, talk about Hell, instead, tell the people how wonderful it is to belong to Jesus.

D. The final test of effective preaching is when you can witness a change in the people you preach to.

6. Helpful delivery. Preparation for a sermon is very important but it is not a sermon until it is delivered, and equal care for delivery is important as preparation.

A. Your spirit during delivery is important.

i. The preacher must be courageous. He must boldly speak the message of the Bible and not worry if the message displeases people. He must seek to please God first. Do not preach to make people feel good.

ii. We must be humble remembering that we preachers are sinners and our only ability is from God.

iii. We must be sincere. Your message must be truthful; you must believe it.

iv. We must be very familiar with our material.

v. We must be courteous even when we deliver hard messages.

vi. Often, and at the right time, we can use humor to better teach our lesson.

B. Our language. We must be careful in the words we use.

i. Our language must be simple and easily understood.

a. Make one point per sentence.

b. Keep your sentences short.

c. Use short words that are easily understood.

d. Use only words that your listeners can easily understand. Explain words that some of your audience may not understand.

i. Grammatical. Use the correct way of expressing yourself in the language you are using.

ii. Forceful. Pick the words that will best make the point that you are trying to get across.

C. Your voice. The best way to speak is to speak in your normal voice. You can occasionally change your pitch, your pace, your volume, your tone, your emphasis to make your talk more interesting. Occasionally pausing and not talking will keep your audience paying attention. Don't scream all the time.

D. Your non-verbal communication. We must be aware that we send messages without using words. Often we do this by the way we sit or stand; by our facial expressions, and how we use our hands.

i. Make eye contact. Look at the people. Don't look out the window or over the people's heads; make sure to make eye contact and let them know you are speaking to them.

E. Your appearance. You must dress in a manner that shows respect for the audience and God. Don't dress up so much that you draw attention to yourself and distract people from listening.

F. Your time. Don't speak so long that people quit paying attention. A good rule is to deliver your message and then quit. Start on time so you don't reward those who are late. People can only pay attention for a short time. Many good sermons are ruined because the preacher did not quit when he should have.

7. Supernatural authority means to speak with enthusiasm; with passion.

A. If your goal is to see the word of God move and change people then you need the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that moves men. 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

B. Spiritual urgency. You must believe that your message is important and needs to be delivered. 2 Corinthians 4:13 People are dying without Christ in their lives and they need to hear about Him before they die. You should believe so much in the urgency of your message that you can hardly wait till you can deliver it.

C. As I said above, your message must be very important to you, and it must cause you to deliver it with emotion.

III. A suggested message of sermon preparation.

1. Don't wait until the last minute. If you preach every week then your preparation should begin immediately after you finish your sermon. By this, I mean start organizing your thoughts.

A. Here are some steps to follow.

i. Spend some quiet time thinking and praying, and waiting on God. Prayer is the most important thing you can do to deliver a good sermon. There have been times when I have picked my scripture and my preparations went nowhere. I could not organize my thoughts. So I would stop and pray and listen. I would then feel guided to go to different scripture and change my subject. Then the message would come together.

ii. Meditate on your text. Really study the Bible.

iii. Start writing. At this time don't try to organize your material, just write down your thoughts.

iv. Organize your material, using the thoughts that you have previously written down.

v. Examine what you have done so far. Check it to see that it:

a. Accurately reports the meaning the author intended, Make sure the message points forward to Jesus.

b. Make sure your interpretation accurately reflects the doctrine that should be taught from this text.

c. Make sure your message is logical and makes the points in a logical method which everyone can follow.

d. Do you have illustrations which will teach and help keep the people's interest?

e. Do you have pointed application in which you summarize the message and send the people out ready to change and apply what they have learned?

vi. Write your final draft exactly as you intend to deliver the sermon.

vii. Pray over your message; ask God to have you change it if necessary. Ask Him to bless both the delivery of the sermon and the hearing. Ask that the message would change lives including your own life. Ask God to speak through you and be sure to give God the credit if it is a good sermon.

viii. Deliver the sermon as carefully and enthusiastically as possible.

ix. Prayerfully examine the whole experience after the sermon is delivered and you can be alone. Learn from each sermon.

IV Conclusion

1. Start sermon preparation as early as possible. As I write this, I am scheduled to preach in a little over a month and I am already preparing.

2. It takes much time to prepare properly. Experienced pastors need less time than beginners. Expect to spend at least six hours preparing. Do not rush your preparation just to get the job done.

3. Remember this is God's word you are sharing with your listener.