

# PREACHING.

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The highest calling that God has placed upon mankind is when God takes a regenerated man, empowers Him with the Word of God and Spirit-endowed courage, and calls, commissions, and consecrates him to impart God's truth to people. Preaching changes lives! God uses preaching as the ordinary means by which He quickens dead souls to new life. The Spirit uses the man of God as he delivers the Word of God in proclaiming the saving gospel of Jesus Christ so that all of God's elect will hear, repent, and trust in Christ.

**To preach** is to faithfully & powerfully deliver God's message to God's people and to show them how God's truth should change the way they live. This writing briefly summarizes biblical preaching. In a word, 'what is it that God demands that all His ministers do?'

## 1. Preach BIBLICALLY

All preaching must derive out of the Bible. Any message that does not come from the Bible cannot be a sermon. A true sermon is one that is sourced in the Bible, comes out of the Bible, is guided by the Bible, works through the larger theme of the Bible and glorifies the God of the Bible. Every minister must preach biblically. He must preach with one book always in hand and with a finger pointing to the text. He must have as his authority the Word of God. He must preach biblical sermons, not ethical sermonettes. He must preach powerful truths that arise from the Bible, not relevant talks that tickle the ears of the unconverted.

## 2. Preach PRAYERFULLY

One of the most important elements of preaching revolves around the prayerfulness of the preacher. The man of God must bathe himself, his message, his heart, his affections, and his congregation in prayer. He must beg for the Spirit's empowering as he opens his mouth to herald. He must spend a considerable amount of time meeting with God in prayer before he meets with people to preach. He must spend much time on his knees to be qualified to deliver the message to God's sheep. Many charlatans have to pray before they preach; true ministers of God long to pray before they preach. Many ear-tickling ministers might pray before they speak; God's men must meet with God before they proclaim the Word. Prayer must permeate the preacher's life, sermon preparation, spiritual walk, and family life.

## 3. Preach REVERENTLY

In preaching, the man of God speaks as God's mouthpiece. The herald takes the message of the Sovereign and imparts it to His subjects. As a faithful ambassador, the preacher (kerux) takes the message and faithfully delivers it to the appointed recipients without alteration, without apology, and with courage. Speaking for the heavenly King requires that the man of God revere the thrice-holy God supremely. A preacher who has little reverence for God should never step behind a pulpit. The thought of standing with God's Word in hand and speaking for God should overwhelm the minister every time he considers such a terrifying thought! Yet, God has ordained it and He has called for it. So every preacher should be awe-struck, reverential and serious as he preaches God's Word.

## 4. Preach EXEGETICALLY

God's men who open their mouths to speak God's Words must ensure they speak the meaning of the text. The exegetical skills needed include knowledge of the original languages, literary devices, and a proper understanding of how the structure of individual paragraphs fit into the whole chapter and book. The man should spend much time in the original languages poring over the words, conjunctions, prepositions, verbals so as to understand the meaning of the text by what the original author intended by what he wrote to the original hearers. The minister must bring the meaning *out of* the Scripture. This requires time, labor, rigorous effort, many notes, plenty of time, and an abundance of prayer.

## **5. Preach EXPOSITIONALLY**

When a man preaches *expositionally* it means that he preaches a message that *comes out of* the Word of God. Just as it is a biblical sermon, it follows the normal pattern of preaching consecutively through entire books of the Bible. God gave whole Bibles to make whole people. So preachers should preach entire books of the Bible. This ensures that the herald will preach the full counsel of God while omitting nothing. He must preach on every doctrine, every truth, every theme of the gospel, every blessing, and every curse. He must take the Word of God and preach *it* whenever he plants himself behind the pulpit. To preach *expositionally* ensures that the man has prepared his sermon from the Bible, and that he has already done his work in the original languages and come to the authorial meaning of the text. Every true minister preaches *expositionally*.

## **6. Preach ENGAGINGLY**

Preaching is never boring. What a contradictory statement to surmise that God's message to people could ever bore people! God's truth engages the heart and it instructs the mind and it woos the affections. The man of God who preaches must herald a sermon that engages the audience. Every good preacher of God has done this. Indeed, Jesus Himself engaged people as He preached. He related the text to the people. He brought them into the sermon. He captivated them and seized their attention as He taught. Preachers today must do the same. With the Bible in hand, proclaimers should endeavor to seize the attention of the hearers, keep their attention throughout the entirety of the sermon, and drive their will to a decision at the end of the sermon as to how they must respond to God's message that they have just heard. Preachers must engage with the hearers. Preaching is not a lecture or a discourse. It's a heart-engaging, mind-engaging, will-seizing activity that God has ordained.

## **7. Preach PASSIONATELY**

If a man stands to speak God's Word and preaches without passion, he ought to retire and never step foot into a pulpit ever again. If the man of God does not passionately believe his text he ought never to think that his hearers will be persuaded to believe the text he sets before them. If the minister does not have a heart set aflame with God's truth, then the hearers will not be set on fire by the message. But if the preacher is on fire with God's truth, standing with the authority of God who is Himself the consuming fire, then his hearers will be set on fire by the embers that proceed out of the truths imparted. Preaching is a man set on fire by God's glory and a man who earnestly desires that all men would know his God, and his text, and his gospel, and his Savior! May it never be that a man can speak of these truths heartlessly and impassionately. The preacher should soak himself with the gasoline of the Word in the study all week and then as he lights the fire as he preaches in the pulpit, people will come and be changed as they see him burn.

## **8. Preach EVANGELISTICALLY**

How will people hear without a preacher? People will perish everlastingly under the just wrath of God Almighty and the painful torments of His anger if they die in unbelief. Every preacher must preach with an eye toward the glorious splendor of heaven and with an eye toward the horrifying flames of hell. He must come to preach after he has heard the choral praises of heaven and after he has heard the horrifying shrieks of the damned. He must remember that he preaches for eternity. Every sermon is a battle for the souls of his hearers. The preacher must desire to convert the wayward, to convict the obstinate, and to confront the impenitent. He must evangelize them in every sermon and call them to repentance. Every sermon may not be an evangelistic, gospel message, but every sermon — regardless of the text from which he preaches — must include a clear gospel presentation. Preacher, win souls! He who wins souls is wise! Don't be a foolish preacher and refuse to present the gospel. Be a soul-winner and preach for conversions.

## **9. Preach URGENTLY**

Eternity hangs in the balances every time the man heralds divine truth. Every person listening has an eternal soul and will live on forever. Those who believe in Christ and receive Him as the Son of God will be saved and all who reject Jesus Christ call God a liar and will suffer God's judgment forevermore. Preachers stand up with a zeal to win souls for Christ! He stands as a surgeon urgently pleading with his patient to receive the balm that can heal the illness. The preacher functions as a fireman who lifts his voice and urgently calls for people in the burning home to exit immediately! He heralds with the same urgency as a lifeguard who calls out to those drowning in the deep waters. The preacher of the gospel must preach as a dying man to dying man as if he really believed that someone present may die before hearing a gospel message again. Men of God must believe they have received

God's truth that must immediately be preached, it must decisively be received, it must wholly be followed, and it must unreservedly be embraced!

### **10. Preach PERSUASIVELY**

Preaching is persuasion. To preach is the divine mandate to take God's Word and impart it to sinners while endeavoring to persuade sinners to see the gravity of their sin and their dire need of a Savior. While fully depending upon the sovereign working of the Spirit of God taking the Word and penetrating it deep into the souls of the hearers, the preacher still crafts the message in such a way that he wants to affect the will. He wants the will to be won and wooed to Christ. He says with the Apostle Paul that he persuades men to believe. He wants to preach such a glorious Christ and a magnificent gospel that sinners must instantly flee to this Christ! He wants to herald such an irresistible gospel and a horrible hell that the unrepentant turn from their sins to Christ at once! Preaching depends totally on the sovereign working of God for any and all effectiveness but the minister understands that his responsibility consists of preaching in such a way so that sinners see the weight of their sin, the crushing blow of God's coming fury, and the sufficient atonement that Christ accomplished at Calvary, and the necessity to repent, believe, count the cost, and follow Christ.

### **11. Preach BOLDLY**

It does not matter who sits in the audience when the man of God holds the Word of God, he preaches what God says in the Bible without shrinking back from hard texts and appropriate applications. The man of God unashamedly preaches the full purpose of God. He boldly calls sinners to repent or they will go to hell. He confidently affirms that the biblical Jesus will crush and conquer all of His enemies — not just all blasphemers but those who simply walk by Jesus indifferently or apathetically. He calls the rich and the poor to repentance. He calls all men to come to Christ and trust in Him. He could stand before the King, the President, the Emperor, or the most powerful human council that could assemble and he will herald the unadulterated gospel with power, clarity, passion, and fervor. All preachers must preach with lion-like boldness. Indeed, the righteous are as bold as a lion!

### **12. Preach AUTHORITATIVELY**

The Apostle tells his protege to preach with all authority. That means that God's preachers must command and demand a response! The source of this authority rests not from the preacher himself. He has no authority whatsoever — regardless of his position. The authority entirely comes from God Almighty and His message that He has entrusted to His slaves to preach. The men of God who take the gospel of God must preach the Word with all authority. They must call and command. They must instruct and apply. They must allow no one to disregard or despise or refute the message. Preachers cannot shy away from the ministerial calling to herald with a commanding presence. Again, this authority exists not in himself but solely in the God of the gospel and in the gospel of God! Just as an ambassador of old had authority because he delivered the King's edict, so the man of God has commanding authority because he delivers the Sovereign King's edicts. When Jesus preached, the peoples remarked that he taught with authority. May heralds of God learn from the Son of God to teach with authority and command sinners to repent!

### **13. Preach WORSHIPFULLY**

The minister should lead the entire flock of God as the worship leader. If he worships, the sheep will follow. If his soul is caught up to the heaven of heavens in heartfelt praise, then the people will do likewise. As he prepares, he must worship. As he preaches, he must worship. After he's through, he must worship. As he depends on the Spirit to take the Word and implant it deeply into the people's hearts, he must worship. The minister must worship God with joy *out* of the pulpit and *in* the pulpit. He is the worship leader. To worship is to respond to God's revelation of who He is and what He has done. If anyone ever has unending reasons to worship God, the minister of the gospel certainly does. He has studied all week. He has been alone with God. He has cried out to God for his own heart, for the souls of his people, for the benefit of the sermon, and for the unction of the Spirit. He has met with God and God has met with him. He has truly communed with God. His God knows him and he knows his God. Let every minister of the gospel preach the Word as an act of worship, fully reliant on God's power to make the Word effective. Let every herald preach as a man enamored with the stunning beauty of Christ, the awesome privilege of preaching His Word, and the atoning gospel that he has both experienced and that he has been commissioned to herald as God's ambassador. Man of God, worship!