

December In the Pulpit

preparing men to preach

A Christ Fellowship Bible Church *winter-course* on homiletics.
Five Saturdays in December

DATE	TOPIC OF DISCUSSION	FORMAT OF EACH SESSION
December 2	The MAN in the pulpit	7:00-7:45AM Lecture 7:45-8:00AM Questions & Break
December 9	The STUDY for the pulpit	8:00-8:20AM Sermon #1 [20 mins] 8:20-8:40AM Sermon #2 [20 mins]
December 16	The SERMON in the pulpit	8:40-9:00AM Evaluation/Sermon Feedback
December 23	The DELIVERY in the pulpit	<i>*Over the course of the 5 Saturdays together, with 2 sermons each time we gather, 10 men could preach a 20-min sermon (and some double up if so desired).</i>
December 30	The VARIETY in the pulpit	

The Purpose of This Intensive: to teach on the biblical importance of preaching and to provide men an opportunity to preach and receive helpful feedback.

“The work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called. If you want something in addition to that I would say without any hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world also” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

PREACHING INTRODUCTION

Words in the Bible for *Teaching*:

1. “Teach” -- *didasko* -- to teach, instruct, study, impart Truth (Acts 11:26; 13:35; 20:20)
2. “Open Up” -- *dianoigo* -- to open up the meaning; to unfold, to teach, to explain (Acts 17:3; Luke 24:31-32*)
3. “Teach” -- *paratithemi* -- to compare and teach and give evidence (Acts 17:3)
4. “to speak” or “teach” -- *ektithemi* -- to speak forth, to persuade (Acts 28:32)
5. “Instruct” *katecho* -- to instruct, to teach (Acts 14:19)

Words in the Bible for *Preaching*:

1. “Preach/Herald” -- *kerusso* -- to herald, to authoritatively speak as an ambassador/messenger; speak forth publicly, loudly, decisively (2 Tim 4:2)
2. “Give good news” -- *euangellizomai* -- to give good news (Luke 4:18)
3. “To declare” -- *katangello* -- to declare, speak forth, proclaim (Acts 17:23; 1 Cor 2:1; Col 1:28)
4. “to speak boldly” -- *parresiazomai* -- to speak openly and give the truth (Acts 14:3; 18:26; cf. 9:27)
5. “To reason with” -- *dialegomai* -- to preach, to reason with, to dispute, to speak forth (Acts 20:7; 17:2)

To Preach is to *Herald!*

R.L. Dabney writes this about “the herald”:

“The preacher is a **herald**; his work is heralding the King's message. . . . Now the herald does not invent his message; he merely transmits and explains it. It is not his to criticise its wisdom or fitness; this belongs to his sovereign alone. On the one hand, . . . he is an intelligent medium of communication with the king's enemies; he has brains as well as a tongue; and he is expected so to deliver and explain his master's mind, that the other party shall receive not only the mechanical sounds, but the true meaning of the message. On the other hand, it wholly transcends his office to presume to correct the tenour of the propositions he conveys, by either additions or change. These are the words of God's commission to an ancient preacher: "Arise, go unto Ninevah, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

The preacher's task may be correctly explained as that of (instrumentally) forming the image of Christ upon the souls of men. The plastic substance is the human heart. The die which is provided for the workman is the revealed Word; and the impression to be formed is the divine image of knowledge and true holiness. God, who made the soul, and therefore knows it, made the die. He obviously knew best how to shape it, in order to produce the imprint he desired. Now the workman's business is not to criticise, recarve, or erase anything in the die which was committed to him; but simply to press it down faithfully upon the substance to be impressed, observing the conditions of the work assigned him in his instructions. In this view, how plain is it, that preaching should be simply representative of Bible truths, and in Bible proportions! The preacher's business is to take what is given him in the Scriptures, as it is given to him, and to endeavour to imprint it on the souls of men. All else is God's work. The die is just such, so large, so sharp, so hard, and has just such an "image and superscription" on it, as God would have. Thus He judged, in giving it to us. With this, "the man of God is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim 3:17) This is enough for us!"

Some Basic Definitions of Preaching

Preaching is "the explication of Scripture, unfolding its natural and true meaning, while making application to the life of the congregation Preaching is the public exposition of Scripture by the man sent from God, in which God Himself is present in judgment and in grace." (**John Calvin**)

"The true idea of preaching is that the preacher should become a mouthpiece for the text, opening it up and applying it as a word from God to his hearers, talking only in order that the text itself may speak and be heard" (**J.I. Packer**).

Preaching is "the explanation of Scripture forms the dominant feature and the organizing principle of the message It sees as its fundamental task the explanation of the text in its context, the unfolding of its principles, and only then their application to the world of the hearers" (**Sinclair Ferguson**)

"Expository preaching is not merely an exposition of a verse of a passage, or a running commentary on it; what turns it into preaching is that it becomes a message and that it has a distinct form and pattern. Furthermore, it must always be applied and its relevance shown to the contemporary situation" (**Martyn Lloyd-Jones**)

"Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the presentation and application of the text of the Bible. All other issues and concerns are subordinated to the central task of presenting the biblical text. As the word of God, the text of Scripture has the right to establish both the substance and the structure of the sermon. Genuine exposition takes place when the preacher sets forth the meaning and message of the biblical text and makes clear how the word of God establishes the identity and worldview of the church as the people of God" (**Albert Mohler**)

“Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher applies it to the hearers” (**Haddon W. Robinson**)

1. The MAN in the Pulpit

Behind the content of his message is the *character* of the expositor. He must be set apart from mundane matters, lifted above worldly aims and ambitions, and devoted singularly to God’s service (John MacArthur).

“Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors It will much more hinder your work, if you contradict yourselves, and if your actions give your tongue the lie, and if you build up an hour or two with your mouths, and all the week after pull down with your hands! This is the way to make men think that the Word of God is but an idle tale, and to make preaching seem no better than prating. He that means as he speaks, will surely do as he speaks. One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all you have been doing Certainly brethren, we have very great cause to take heed what we do, as well as what we say: if we will be the servants of Christ indeed, we must not be tongue servants only, but must serve him with our deeds, and be ‘doers of the work, that we may be blessed in our deed.’ As our people must be “doers of the word, and not hearers only”; so we must be doers and not speakers only, lest we ‘deceive our own selves...’ We must study as hard how to live well, as how to preach well!” (Richard Baxter).

“It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God -- men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it.” (EM Bounds)

I. A man with a REGENERATED HEART

- A. Must be born again & be filled with the Spirit
- B. Must be enabled to follow God
- C. Must be illuminated to know Scripture & Christ
- D. Must be mortifying sin in himself and applying the text to himself.

1. John Flavel wrote: “Brethren, it is easier to declaim against a thousand sins of others, than to mortify one sin in ourselves.”

2. Flavel also wrote: “Let the minister take care that his personal character agrees in all respects with his ministry. We have all heard the story of the man who preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he ought never to enter it again. May we never be priests of God at the altar, and sons of Belial outside the tabernacle door; but on the contrary, may we “thunder in our doctrine, and lightning in our conversation. We do not trust those persons who have two faces, nor will men believe in those whose verbal and practical testimonies are contradictory True ministers *are always ministers.*”

II. A man with a GODWARD PURSUIT

David Brainerd, the 18th century missionary in New England wrote in his journal: September 19, 1747 (three weeks before his death at age 29): I viewed the infinite excellency of God, and my soul even broke with longings that God should be glorified. I thought of dignity in heaven, but instantly the thought returned, "I do not go to heaven to get honor, but to give all possible glory and praise." Oh, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also! Oh, I was made for eternity, if God might be glorified! Bodily pains I cared not for; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier. I felt willing to glorify God in that state of bodily distress, as long as He pleased I should continue in it. The grave appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it.

But oh, that God might be glorified! this was the burden of all my cry. Oh, I knew, I should be active, as an angel, in heaven; and that I should be stripped of my filthy garments, so that there was no objection. But, oh, to love and praise God more, to please Him forever! This my soul panted after and even now pants for while I write. Oh, that God might be glorified in the whole earth! "Lord, let thy kingdom come." I longed for a spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power. I saw God "had the residue of the Spirit," and my soul longed it should be "poured from on high." I could not but plead with God for my dear congregation that He would preserve it and not suffer His great name to lose its glory in that work, my soul still longing that God might be glorified.

- A. A man with a mission
- B. A man with a focus
- C. A man with a passion
- D. A man with convictions!

1. Luther said: “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point!”

2. Geoffrey Thomas wrote: We are asking why, if the Word of God is life and power, are we seeing such evident weakness in the professing church. And we are suggesting a simple answer -- because of a lack of discriminatory . . . preaching of that Word, preaching like that of Peter at Pentecost. He spoke directly to the consciences of men. He named their sin, held out the threat of God's punishment, and would not be silent until they began to ask what they had to do. Of course, he spoke lovingly; he loved his hearers. We must love men more than they love themselves. And yet there was a faithfulness in his witness to them of their real state. . . . Our preaching will never approach the power of Peter's at Pentecost unless we too put our heads through the gates of hell and tell the people that they are not ready to die -- that they are unprepared for the great judgment, that soon these gates will close upon them in death, and that then there will be no offers of grace -- because sinners do not know it.
3. Phillips Brooks said it this way: Nothing but fire kindles fire. To know in one's whole nature what it is to live by Christ; to be His, not our own; to be so occupied with gratitude for what He did for us and for what He continually is to us that His will and His glory shall be the sole desires of our life . . . that is the first necessity of the preacher.

III. A man with a CHRIST-EXALTING FOCUS

G. Campbell Morgan wrote to a fellow preacher in 1900: Nothing is more needed among preachers today than that we should have the courage to shake ourselves free from the thousand and one trivialities in which we are asked to waste our time and strength, and resolutely return to the apostolic ideal which made necessary the office of the diaconate. [We must resolve that] "we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the Word."

- A. A man who emulates Christ
- B. A man who exalts Christ
- C. A man who is enthralled with Christ
- D. A man who expounds Christ

1. Steve Lawson writes: "All pulpits must passionately declare Christ to be the eternal Son of the living God, the only Savior of sinners. All preaching must boldly announce Him as the reigning Lord of heaven and earth. He must be fearlessly announced as the One before whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. All preaching must assert that this Jesus is the final Judge of every human life. To fulfill this sacred duty, every preacher must proclaim the full counsel of God. Every doctrine in Scripture must be delivered. Every truth must be taught. Every sin must be exposed. Every warning must be issued. And every promise must be offered. If God is to bless our preaching, the supreme majesty of Jesus Christ Himself must be expounded in our sermons. All the lines of our preaching must intersect at this highest pinnacle—Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
2. Lawson continues: "There is a kind of preaching that God blesses, specifically the proclamation that exalts the crucified Christ by the power of the Spirit. Conversely,

there is a kind of preaching that God does not bless, a mere echoing of man's empty wisdom that is devoid of Christ."

IV. A man with a SPIRIT-FILLED LIFESTYLE

Take heed to yourselves lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonor him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach His laws, and willfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them?

Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves! 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage.' (Richard Baxter).

A. Must be BORN of the Spirit

B. Must be INDWELT by the Spirit

C. Must be WALKING in the Spirit

D. Must be PRAYING in the Spirit

1. John Owen said: To preach the word . . . and not to follow it with constant and fervent prayer for its success, is to disbelieve its use, neglect its end, and to cast away the seed of the gospel at random.
2. EM Bounds compellingly writes: "What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer."
3. EM Bounds continues "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men."

V. A man with an ETERNAL MINDSET

A. The nearness of eternity grips him

B. The endlessness of eternity compels him

C. The unstoppable nature of eternity drives him

D. The unchangeableness of the eternal destiny sobers him

E. The offer of eternal glory consumes him

1. John Piper says it well: Pray that the Lord would make you real. Pray that you would really feel the way one ought to feel about hell, and about heaven and about death and sin and forgiveness and resurrection and eternal life. This is THE GREAT battle: do we really feel and think in accord with the measure of the reality that we are speaking of. It will be very hard not to express authentic emotion if we HAVE authentic emotion. Fight the battle mainly at this point. Lord, sober me. Lord, delight me. Lord, satisfy me. Lord, frighten me. Lord, break me. Lord, make me tender. Lord, give me passion for

the perishing. Lord, fill me with exultation over your gospel. This is THE battle. And it has more to do with real tone and gesture and posture than anything else.

VI. A man with a SOBER-MINDED DISPOSITION

- A. Because of the enormity of the task
- B. Because of the longevity of the task
- C. Because of the impossibility of the task
- D. Because of the desperation of the task

1. Spurgeon writes: I scarcely ever come into this pulpit without bemoaning myself that ever I should be called to a task for which I seem more unfit than any other man that ever was born. Woe is me that I should have to preach a gospel which so overmasters me, and which I feel that I am so unfit to preach! Yet I could not give it up, for it were a far greater woe to me not to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unless the Holy Ghost blesses the Word, we who preach the gospel are of all men most miserable, for we have attempted a task that is impossible, we have entered upon a sphere where nothing but the supernatural will ever avail. If the Holy Spirit does not renew the hearts of our hearers, we cannot do it. If the Holy Ghost does not regenerate them we cannot. If he does not send the truth home into their souls, we might as well speak into the ear of a corpse. All that we have to do is quite beyond our unaided power; we must have our Master with us, or we can do nothing. We deeply feel our need of this great truth; we not merely say it, but we are driven every day, by our own deep sense of need, to rejoice that our Lord has declared, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," for we need all power. Every kind of power that there is in heaven and in earth we shall need before we can fully discharge this ministry. Before the nations shall all be brought to hear the gospel of Christ, before testimony to him shall be borne in every land, we shall need the whole omnipotence of God; we shall want every forge in heaven and earth ere this is done. Thank God that this power is all laid by ready for our use, the strength that is equal to such a stupendous task as this is already provided.

VII. A man with a WORD FROM GOD

Mark Dever says: We are called to preach the Word of God to the church of God and to everyone in His creation. This is how God brings life. Each person . . . is flawed and has faults and has sinned against God. And the terrible thing about our fallen natures is that we are greedy for ways to justify our sins against God. Every single one of us wants to know how we can defend ourselves from God's charges. Therefore we are in desperate need to hear God's Word brought honestly to us, so that we don't just hear what we want to hear but rather what God has actually said. All of this is important . . . because God's Holy Spirit creates His people by His Word.

- A. As the man called by God
- B. As the man commissioned by God
- C. As the man heralding for God
- D. As the man accountable to God

E. Remember this! Charles Bridges warns men of God: "If we study the Bible more as ministers than as Christians -- more to find matter for the instruction of our people, than food for the nourishment of our own souls, we neglect then to place ourselves at the feet of our Divine Teacher, our communion with Him is cut off, and we become mere formalists in our sacred profession. We cannot live by feeding others; or heal ourselves by the mere employment of healing our people; and therefore by this course of official service, our familiarity with the awful realities of death and eternity may be rather like that of the grave digger, the physician, and the soldier, *rather than the man of God*, viewing eternity with deep seriousness and deep concern and bringing to his people the profitable fruit of his contemplations."

F. J.I Packer wrote: "Puritan preachers were not afraid to bring the profoundest theology into the pulpit if it bore on their hearers' salvation, nor to demand that men and women apply themselves to mastering it, nor to diagnose unwillingness to do so as a sign of insincerity. Doctrinal preaching certainly bores the hypocrites; but it is only doctrinal preaching that will save Christ's sheep. The preacher's job is to proclaim the faith, not to provide entertainment for unbelievers -- in other words, to feed the sheep rather than amuse the goats."

G. John Stott concludes this so well: Here then is a fundamental conviction about the living, redeeming and self-revealing God. It is the foundation on which all Christian preaching rests. We should never presume to occupy a pulpit unless we believe in this God. How dare we speak, if God has not spoken? By ourselves we have nothing to say. To address a congregation without any assurance that we are bearers of a divine message would be the height of arrogance and folly. It is when we are convinced that God is light (and so wanting to be known), that God has acted (and thus made himself known), and that God has spoken (and thus explained his actions), that we must speak and cannot remain silent. As Amos expressed it, 'The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?' (3:8) . . . God has spoken. If we are not sure of this, it would be better to keep our mouth shut. Once we are persuaded that God has spoken, however, then we too must speak. A compulsion rests upon us. Nothing and nobody will be able to silence us.

Paul told Timothy, straight and clear, to "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). This is the great imperative. This is why the apostles earlier had determined that, even though there were problems with the equitable distribution of financial aid in Jerusalem, the church would just have to find others to solve their problems, because, "We . . . will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). Why this priority? Because this Word is "the word of life" (Phil. 2:16). That is the great task of the preacher: to "hold out the word of life" to people who need it for their souls. (Mark Dever)

There is no greater privilege than to be a man of God and preach His Word. But along with that privilege comes a fearful responsibility. Being a man of God includes a tremendous responsibility. May God help each of us by His grace to remain faithful to Him and to be that true man of God who is blessed and not punished! (John MacArthur)

