

2 Chronicles 17 — “Learning from King Jehoshaphat: 3 Proper Priorities of a Godly Leader”**Consider what God wants for His people...**

- In Old Testament Israel:
 - in OT Israel, he wanted His people to be protected (& God was their shield/defense!)
 - He wanted his people to know, be taught, and obey the Word (Lev 10.11 - teach!)
 - He wanted leaders to be holy, godly, teaching, faithful worshipers (Lev/Numbers)
 - He wanted Israel to be distinct from the nations >> set apart as His chosen people.
- *For us as New Testament believers: though we're not Old Testament Israel, there are similarities...*
 - God's people are to be protected theologically, spiritually from false teaching/error
 - He wants his people to receive the Word, to study the Word, to obey the Word, to be blessed
 - He wants leaders who shepherd, who guard, who serve, who teach/preach, who evangelize, who are faithful
 - he wants His Church to be distinct from the world // set apart as His elect people!

We'll study Jehoshaphat, a man who “sought the LORD with all his heart” (2 Chron 22.9)

- OVERVIEW OF THE SECTION ON KING JEHOSHAPHAT (2 Chronicles 17-20)

1. Powerful Kingdom (17)
2. Unholy Alliance (18)
3. Appointing Judges (19)
4. Sovereign Victory (20)

THESIS — What are proper priorities for a godly leader? Jehoshaphat models 3 for us:

What's the Chronicler doing???

- ➔ He reminding Israel that GOD is faithful [God is faithful to His covenants]
- ➔ God rewards faithfulness to Him [God honors/blesses those who obey Him]
- ➔ God blesses the public preaching/teaching of His Word

I. HE PRIORITIZED THE PROTECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE (1-2, 10-19)

II. HE PRIORITIZED THE PURSUIT OF GOD’S GLORY (3-6)**III. HE PRIORITIZED THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD (7-9)**

Teaching the Law of God is a major responsibility of the priesthood. The Levites are to teach God’s precepts to Israel (Deut 33:10; Mal 2:7; Jer 18:18; Hosea 4:6; Lev 10:11)

The priorities in the teaching:

1. Instruct the **MIND** — teach/instruct/impart/preach/proclaim
2. Engage the **PEOPLE** — all the cities, in Judah, of Judah
3. Know the **WORD** — had the Law WITH THEM**
4. Teach the **WORD** — they taught... they taught... they were teaching...
5. Keep the **MISSION** — they *went* throughout ALL the cities
6. Maintain the **PRIORITY** — they were teaching the people (didn’t get sidetracked or distracted)

The Priority has always been (both in the Old Testament and New Testament era and in the Church age) the TEACHING OF GOD’S WORD (Ezra 7:10; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 2:1, 15).

“The primary task of the Church and of the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God.”
(Martyn Lloyd Jones)

Pray for these priorities among us & for God to raise up more leaders who
(1) protect Christ’s people; (2) pursue Christ’s glory; (3) preach Christ’s Gospel!

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing
 My great Redeemer's praise,
 The glories of my God and King,
 The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
 Assist me to proclaim,
 To spread through all the earth abroad
 The honors of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
 That bids our sorrows cease;
 'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
 'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
 He sets the prisoner free;
 His blood can make the foulest clean,
 His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
 New life the dead receive,
 The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
 The humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
 Your loosened tongues employ;
 Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
 And leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look unto Him, ye nations, own
 Your God, ye fallen race;
 Look, and be saved through faith alone,
 Be justified by grace.

Glory to God, and praise and love
 Be ever, ever given,
 By saints below and saints above,
 The church in earth and heaven.

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
 Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
 Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
 Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
 I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
 Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
 Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
 Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
 Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
 Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
 Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
 Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
 High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
 May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
 Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
 Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

WHAT IS BIBLICAL PREACHING?

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Every minister of the gospel is called by God to an all-consuming task – to preach the Word (2 Tim 4.2). It’s not that churches today need *more* preaching in general; rather, churches need the right *kind* of preaching. So what is this *kind* of preaching that God requires? What must the man of God devote himself to? God blesses not just preaching but the right *kind* of preaching. So, in this essay, I will define biblical preaching with **four essential ingredients**.

1. GOD-FOCUSED

Biblical preaching is always God-focused. This means the source of the message is from God, the thrust of the message is about God, the end goal of the message is directly focused on God, and the spotlight all throughout the message rests only and always upon God. Contrary to many – if not most – pulpits and speakers today, the kind of preaching that God requires is one that is *God-focused* not man-focused. That is to say, the sermon is not driven by self-help formulas or entertaining messages that touch on trendy topics or self-improving pep-talks. God’s man must devote himself to the in-depth study of *God* in the *Word of God* so that He preaches *only* what the text says so that God is the source, the sum, and the spotlight of the entire sermon. All that the man says in the pulpit, as he points to the Word, and speaks for the Lord, is always pointing to God and His character, His gospel, His essence, His requirements, His holiness, His sovereignty, His grace, His mercy, and His preeminent glory. The driving goal behind this essential ingredient of preaching is this: all people should leave every sermon *not* thinking: ‘what a great preacher’ but rather ‘what a great, glorious God!’

2. SPIRIT-EMPOWERED

Biblical preaching is always Spirit-empowered. Preaching in man’s strength leaves men unchanged, unaffected or, at best, temporarily captivated. But the humanly engineered shock fades away quickly without lasting results. But the preaching that is attended by the power of the Spirit, driven by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and filled with Spirit-inspired Scripture is what brings change – true, lasting, heart change. Preaching in the power of the Spirit speaks to the kind of preaching that transcends mere human chatting and hip dialoguing. This kind of preaching reaches far beyond the human emotions because the Spirit of God takes His Word and faithful biblical proclamation and drives it deep into the hearer’s heart. Only the Spirit can convert the heart, convict a sinner of his iniquity, and change the believer more into Christlikeness. To preach in the power of the Spirit is to preach with unction. To have the unction of the Spirit in the preaching event speaks of the supernatural attending of the Holy Spirit Himself to the message that is from the Word, that is focused on Christ, that is faithfully exegeted, and that comes from the man who walks in holiness. To preach in the power of the Spirit comes with much prayer, biblical fidelity, holy zealotry, and a Christ-centered, Word-saturated sermon. Every minister must beg God to attend the preaching with power so as to produce God-exalting, heart-transforming results. Let every man of God entreat God for the anointing of the Spirit. For this is the only kind of preaching that can produce any kind of real, lasting effect. The weaker than man is, the stronger he is because the Spirit uses weak men who are faithful to the Word, who herald the biblical gospel, and who extol Jesus Christ so that the power of the preaching and the faith of God’s people would not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God.

3. CHRIST-CENTERED

Biblical preaching is always Christ-centered. To preach a sermon without Christ is to preach an irreligious message void of any supernatural power whatsoever. To preach a message with no Christ is to exalt man and his wisdom and to debase Christ and His gospel. To preach a sermon with no Christ has no power to save, has no Spirit-saturated anointing, and no hope of converting or sanctifying. If a man were to preach a sermon without Christ he must as well stop preaching and never enter the pulpit again since he has squandered and forfeited his right to even be called a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But, on the other hand, true, faithful, biblical preaching always centers on Christ just as the planets in a solar system revolve around the sun. Christ is the sun, the center, the apex of all biblical preaching. Every text leads to the cross. Christ is must be in every sermon. Every text of Scripture may not present Jesus Christ or speak about His saving work, but every text of Scripture (yes, every verse!) leads on to the

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cross of Jesus Christ and His atoning work. Christ is the sum, the substance, the subject, and the seeker of every sermon! Indeed, every sermon points to a glorious Christ because true biblical preaching is comes from the Word of God and the Word of God points to the Living Word who came from God. Thus, if God is to bless a man’s preaching, he must preach Christ and Him crucified. Preacher must herald the person of Christ, the offices of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the teachings of Christ, the miracles and works of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the deity of Christ, the demands of Christ, the claims of Christ, the Lordship of Christ, the sovereignty of Christ, the death of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the propitiation of Christ, the burial of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, the exaltation of Christ, the intercession of Christ, the coming advent of Christ, and the coming Kingdom of Christ. Preachers cannot forget that all of heaven sings to the Lamb of God who sits on the throne and heaven’s song is: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain’ (Rev 5.9). So then, every sermon, in so far as it is faithful to the Word of God, will preach Christ and Him crucified! If a man chooses not to preach Christ, he should step down, sit down, and, in repentance, fall down.

4. WORD-BASED

Biblical preaching is always Word-based. If a sermon is to exalt God, be empowered by the Spirit, and center on Christ, then biblical preaching *must* adhere to the Word of God. The Scriptures drive the sermon, they are the source of the sermon, they are the substance of the sermon, they support the sermon, they serve to illustrate key points, and they imprint the gospel onto the hearts of the hearers. The Bible drives the preacher and everything that he says. He does not craft his sermon and *then* open his Bible to find some supporting verses that enhance his message. The Bible drives the preacher. The Bible captivates the preacher. The Bible presents Jesus Christ. The Bible is the living and active Truth of God that pierces men to their very heart of hearts. Preaching devoid of the Word is not biblical preaching, it’s man-centered lectures. To receive the blessing of God in preaching, a minister of the gospel must have one hand pointing to the text of Scripture and another hand pointing to the audience so that the audience is directed to the text of Scripture repeatedly throughout every sermon. The herald preaches the Word because He believes that the Bible is inerrant and that it is infallible. He understands that it is inspired and authoritative. He knows that the Bible is living and it is active. He trusts that the Bible can convict even the hardest of obstinate sinners and melt even the stoniest of hearts. It is the Bible that exposes men’s sins and brings their faults to their conscience so they are stricken, guilty, and understand that they stand condemned before the Law of God. Because the Word has all power, the preacher always has his open Bible while preaching! Never does he forget his Bible or close his Bible or make light of the Bible. Rather, he honors the Word, he points to the Word, he constantly refers to the Word, he preaches the Word, and he centers everything that he says on the written, sufficient, clear Word of God.

This is why we uphold the “PRIMACY OF PREACHING”:

What about the role of the preacher of God’s Word? If you are looking for a good church, this is the most important thing to consider. I don’t care how friendly you think the church members are. I don’t care how good you think the music is. . . . The congregation’s commitment to the centrality of the Word coming from . . . the preacher, the one specially gifted by God and called to that ministry, is the most important thing you can look for in a church. . . .

Preachers are not called to preach what’s popular according to the polls. . . . People already know all that. What life does that bring? We’re not called to preach merely moral exhortations or history lessons or social commentaries. . . . 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.

This is why Paul told Timothy to “form a committee.” Right? Of course not! . . . “Take a survey”? No! . . . “Spend yourself in visiting”? No! . . . “Read a book”? No! Paul never told young Timothy to do any of those things.

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