

# How To Preach The Gospel

By E. A. Johnston

sermonaudio.com

**Preached On:** Saturday, September 13, 2014

## **Ambassadors For Christ Intl-USA**

1335 Terrell Mill Road  
Bldg 1462, Suite 100  
Marietta, GA 30067

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/9225](http://www.sermonaudio.com/9225)

The Apostle Paul exhorted his disciple Timothy with the following words which apply to us today. You may turn in your Bibles to 2 Timothy. We're going to be in chapter 4 and in verses 1-5. Paul is telling Timothy how to preach and reprove sinners and rebuke sin, to exhort his hearers with doctrine. Paul even describes our sad spiritual condition today where we pick for ourselves teachers who scratch our itch and nothing more. Here now is the word of God for us today.

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

I'm sorry to say, friends, that we don't have many preachers today who reprove or rebuke anything, much less preach the great doctrines of the Gospel. Sadly, we live in a day, friends, of a diluted Gospel that's been so watered down it no longer has any teeth or power. It grieves me how the American church has become seeker friendly, politically correct and a house of entertainment. Many preachers today do not even know what the Gospel is, much less know how to preach it to bring sinners to conviction of sin and salvation through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. A seminary does not teach you how to preach the Gospel, I know, I've graduated from two different seminaries. They taught me theology, church history, apologetics and biblical studies but not how to preach the Gospel of the Son of God. I had to learn that outside of a seminary classroom.

We live in a day of not only a diluted Gospel which is diluted of all its power but we live in the day of a perverted Gospel that damns its hearers and Gospel hardens them to the real Gospel. Listen friends, it's hard to visit churches and even hear the true Gospel preached today. The reason is that we have a nation of teachers today and not preachers. Most men in the pulpit like to lecture and impress you with their knowledge and win you over with their personality. Many resort to the popular method of fill-in-the-blank

program teaching where you hold your church bulletin in one hand and a pen in the other and fill in the next obvious word. All this does is occupy a congregation and give them some information but there is a vast difference between teaching and preaching. Teaching informs, preaching transforms. I can sum up the American church with the following observation. A Chinese pastor recently came to America to visit this country's churches and to hear what our preaching was like. Upon asking his impression of the American church, he replied, "First karaoke, then a lecture." That sums it up, friends, but he forgot to mention, "First warm up the crowd with a few jokes and funny stories." That's the sad condition of the American church today.

This morning, I'd like to spend some time on the important subject of what comprises Gospel preaching and the title of my message today is "How To Preach The Gospel." If you learn what I share with you today and do it, you will be preaching the full counsel of God and warning men of their great danger of dying in their sins and being cast into hell and its torments. As a revival historian, I have spent decades studying spiritual awakenings and revivals of religion. Often, there is a link between them and that is many revivals have begun when the doctrines of grace are preached with conviction and authority. When I visit countless churches and listen to what takes place behind most pulpits in this country, there is a good reason why we are not seeing revival break out among us. We refuse to return to the old paths and preach what our fathers preached who saw revival in their day. We must warn men about their danger of dying in their sins and being cast into hell.

The outline of my message today is as follows: we should preach the Gospel in its purity and proper order. We should not be afraid to preach the great doctrines of the Gospel which are: ruin, redemption, repentance and regeneration. And we should preach the Gospel in its proper order which is as follows: 1. First preach the law. 2. Then preach man's duty of repentance. 3. Preach man's necessity of regeneration. 4. Call men to Christ with the Gospel. I'm not talking about giving an invitation for someone to walk an aisle, I'm talking about calling lost sinners to Christ with the wooings of the Gospel. Did you know that the majority of church members in America today, friends, never have been told that they had a duty to repent of their sins and that they needed a work of grace upon their heart through regeneration. Most of them just made a decision to become a Christian and they joined a church. Ministers today fail to preach the full counsel of God by preaching the law to shut sinners up to God. They fail to warn men of their duty of repentance. They fail to inform sinners that they need a work of grace upon the heart through the new birth if they ever wish to get to heaven. Now we make it real easy for people to join the church today because we need their money to pay their big bills so we just give them enough of the Gospel to come forward and accept Jesus so they can join the church. And we have a lot of entertainers in our pulpits today who are mainly comedians.

But where, oh where, are the Jonathan Edwards and the Azahel Nettletons of our day? You see, friends, men of former days knew how to preach the Gospel effectively, to make room for the Holy Spirit to work upon a sinner's heart. Our fathers knew how to thunder the terrors of the law around a hearer's ears until they saw a Sinai altogether on a smoke

and were bowed before a great God of majesty. The law was preached first to awaken a sinner to his lost condition before the Gospel of the pearl of great price was presented. George Whitefield, the great British evangelist, illustrated it in this way. He said, "One must first bring a sinner to Mount Sinai before they can be brought to Mount Zion." Both George Whitefield and John Wesley preached the law before grace and preachers in former days understood the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing conviction of sin and how it is the Spirit of God applying the word of God to the heart that brings a person to salvation. But today, we have taken salvation out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of men.

Even Charles Finney understood the proper use of the law in preaching the Gospel. Listen how Charles Finney explained how the Gospel was preached in his day. Charles Finney used the example of the old grist mill that operated by the force of water upon two millstones. There was the top stone and the bottom stone and these two millstones were laid one atop the other and as they turned, they ground the wheat into flour. Finney said the bottom stone was the law of God written on the heart of man which is his conscience. From Romans 2:15, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." So the bottom stone was the law of God written on the heart of man which is his conscience. The top stone is the preached law of God thundered about the ears of the hearer and when this occurs, friend, then the Holy Spirit can operate by grinding upon the heart in conviction of sin.

Listen friends, the main problem with our evangelism today is that we do not make room for the Holy Spirit to operate because we do not preach the Gospel in its purity and proper order. We must change the way we preach to make an opening for the Spirit of God to work upon a sinner's heart. So the law must be preached to show a lost person that they are a sinner in need of a Savior. Our weakness in our evangelism today is that we offer people Jesus, the remedy for sin, before we even show them why they need a remedy for sin. If a man is not sick unto death, he will see no need of a medicine to save him. He will refuse the medicine or casually take it without applying it to his need. But if that same man is deathly ill and there is a cure for his illness, he will sacrifice no cost to obtain that remedy which can save him.

So this matter of the Gospel being preached in its purity and proper order is of great importance, friend. If we start on the wrong foot, we are off balance altogether. First and foremost, the law of God must be preached. This is how the Apostle Paul did it. Listen to Paul from Romans 7:7-9, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Listen friends, without the law, sin was dead like a snake in winter but when the law shone its holy spotlight upon the flesh and sin, it irritates and quickens to where a man sees his sin and the vileness of it. He feels the guilt of sin because he has seen his sin and the great evil of sin. Paul said,

"Sin revived and I died." He realized he was a lost sinner who was dead in sin and he needed life found only in Christ Jesus.

So the first step in preaching the gospel is to thunder the law about the ears of our hearers. This is what you say to them, Brother Preacher, "Listen sinner, you are a guilty rebel who has broken the strict and severe law of God and God is a God who must punish sin for the sentencing of the law must be carried out. God requires perfection to get into his heaven and you are not perfect. In fact, there is a coming day, a future day of judgment where the Judge of all the earth will try each man's case and a person's life will be reviewed. Your sins will be stacked up against you on that day, friend. Your sins are the evidence which show you your need of a sin-substitute. You cannot stand in your own merits and be held up against a strict and severe law of God because you will fail that test."

Listen friend, I know I'm a sinner and I need a sin substitute in the person of Jesus Christ and so do you, friend, so do you. But many pastors today offer people a casual Jesus like they would hand you a stick of chewing gum and folks take that Jesus and chew on him for a while and join the church without ever first seeing their need of a Savior from sin. So they remain in their sin because they've never been awakened to their lost condition, never been convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit and never have been truly born again through a supernatural work of grace called regeneration.

Listen friend, you are not a sinner because you sin, rather you sin because you are a big sinner. My Bible says we are born with a ruined nature and that man drinks iniquity like its water. A person is either dead in sin or dead to sin but our preaching must bring people to the place where they see their great danger of dying outside of Christ. A person must be awakened to their lost condition and shown they are a rebel who has broken the strict and severe law of God and who deserves punishment for that crime. Their sins condemn them and the sentence of the law must be carried out by a just Judge who hates sin. He hated sin so much he sent his only beloved Son into this world to hang on a bloody cross because of sin. Jesus Christ shed his precious blood for sinful man but one must stand under the blood to be saved, friend. Let me ask you, friend: are your sins washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you born from above through the new birth which is the act of regeneration upon the heart?

A sinner must be brought to the place where they see they're lost and guilty before God. They must see their need of a remedy for sin in the person of Jesus Christ and only the preached law can bring about this effect through the conviction of sin by the Spirit. We must shut men up to God and have them begging God for mercy. With our preaching, we must make men beggars for grace because although saving faith is something God requires, it is only he who can give it. We must preach effectively to get men who are lost and shut them up to God. This is the exact opposite of our pulpit preaching today. That's why few are being saved today in this country. Few preachers are giving the Holy Spirit room to operate on a sinner's heart like Finney's millstone which grinds upon the heart in conviction of sin.

So the Gospel must be preached in its proper order. First the law must be preached to awaken a person to their lost condition apart from God. They must see the peril of their lost condition before they can appreciate the pearl of great price. The second thing we must do as preachers is to preach an exalted God. We have shrunken God down to our size today to where he's just our pal. We look at him like we look at another man but men of former days preached an exalted God. They referred to him as the Great God or the Almighty and we must preach the full counsel of God which declares that God is a God of wrath as well as a God of love.

Listen friends, my Bible declares that God is angry with the wicked every day. If ye turn not, he will whet his sword. He hath bent his bow and made it ready. We have today taken all the teeth and terror out of the Gospel message but we must be faithful preachers and warn men of their great danger of dying in their sins and being cast into a place of eternal misery called hell. We must preach that hell is hot and sin is black and the law is strict and severe and man is a guilty rebel who has offended a Sovereign King and if you want to be saved, you must come to that King and throw down your shotgun of rebellion and repent of your sins. You must surrender your all to a Sovereign. You must bow to the living Lord. Jesus Christ sits on a heavenly throne at the right hand of the Father and he earned that right by way of a bloody cross and if you want him, friend, you must come to him there and bow to him, surrender to his Lordship because if he's not your Lord, he's not your Savior. I can promise you that. We live in a day that hates the doctrine of repentance. We live in a day that hates the doctrine of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We live in a day where the average church member cries, "We will not have this man reign over us." But he is a living Lord and if you want him, you must bow to him now or he will place his foot on your neck when he makes his enemies his footstool.

Listen, friend, Jesus Christ never preached a sinning religion. God's Gospel is no less severe than his holy law. Jesus Christ did not come to earth to suffer and die on a noble cross which had his blood all over it because of sin so you could stay in your sins and still believe you will go to heaven. Listen friend, God will have no rebels in his kingdom. You must repent. You must throw down your shotgun of rebellion and surrender to the King of kings.

So the third thing we must do as preachers is to warn men of their duty of repentance. Jesus declared, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We live in a day of a perverted, only believe Gospel and that is not the Gospel of the glory of God, friend. You must repent if you want to go to heaven. Hell is full of unrepentant church members.

The next thing to do when preaching is to explain to man their necessity of regeneration. There was a time in this country about 150 years ago where you could not join a church unless you provided clear evidence of regeneration. When George Whitefield was in Boston in 1740 during the Great Awakening and he was preaching in the open air on Boston Common to 20,000 people at a time, a minister approached him one day and asked, "Mr. Whitefield, how many converts have you had since you've been among us?" To which the great Whitefield replied, "I don't know, sir, but I shall return to these parts in a year or so and look for the evidence of their salvation."

But today most people join the church through a decision rather than through a regenerated heart through the new birth. They are merely decisionists who have believed a text or made a decision to become a Christian based on a text. I fear there are many today in our churches who believe in the death of Christ but they do not believe on the Christ who died. Today in our churches, you'd be hard-pressed to find much evidence of one's salvation through a new life. You see, friends, when you get saved, something happens. God takes the heart of stone and makes it a heart of flesh. When you get truly saved, friend, self is dethroned and another is enthroned there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last thing to do when we preach the Gospel is we must call men to Christ. I do not mean ask them to walk an aisle or repeat a prayer which is the way most people do things today. No one gets saved by walking an aisle or repeating a prayer. That's not even in my Bible. Just because a big evangelist made stadium invitations popular doesn't mean we have to follow his example. Our job as evangelists is not to get someone to walk an aisle or get them to repeat a prayer, our job is to preach the Gospel in its purity and proper order, getting men lost, make room for the Spirit of God to work in conviction upon a sinner's heart, then call them to Christ. We can call them to Christ by preaching Gospel words to them.

Let me tell you who the Gospel is for. It is for the person who is conscious of their need. It is for the hungry, the weary and the thirsty. Are you hungry for God? Are you weary of your sins? Are you thirsty for Christ? Then come. Listen to these calls to come to Christ. We must preach the Gospel first and foremost. Listen friends, to the Gospel:

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say,  
Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take  
the water of life freely.

Well, I hope this little exercise has helped us today to be better preachers of the Gospel of the Son of God. I pray that the Lord of the harvest will send workers into his harvest. Listen friends, we need God-called men anointed with the Spirit of God to preach the full counsel of God to this generation of hell-bound sinners. We must warn men to repent and that they must be born again. Preach it, brother, preach it! Be like old Paul and reprove, rebuke and exhort with doctrine.