

The Purpose of Preaching

by Sean P. Cavender

Preaching is the form of communication which God ordained to spread the good news of the kingdom of heaven. From the early pages of the New Testament, we find John the baptizer preaching (Matthew 3:1). Jesus of Nazareth began to preach as well (Matthew 4:17). The apostles proclaimed the gospel all over the world.

The apostle Paul asked a series of questions, leading the reader to perceive the importance of a preacher who shares the word of God. Those who hear the words of the gospel may believe and call on the Lord to be saved, but it begins with the instruction found in preaching (Romans 10:13-17).

Publicly teaching and explaining the word of God is fundamental to preaching. The eunuch did not understand what he was reading and said someone must guide him (Acts 8:30-31). Then Philip began to preach Jesus to him (Acts 8:35). Helping people understand the word of God better is one of the goals of preaching. Beyond that, however, helping someone understand the gospel applies to them and offers them the hope of eternal salvation is another chief aim of preaching.

The work of preaching has typically come under fire and scrutiny. Some will search for a preacher who will “*tickle their ear*” and not prick their hearts (2 Timothy 4:1-3). Others will simply not be impressed with the concept of preaching, searching for other avenues to be impressed or entertained. However, God chose the “*foolishness*” of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:18-ff). It might be foolish to the world, but for those who interact with the gospel, believe in Christ, and obey the truth, they will see its benefit and usefulness.

Preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified was certainly an essential component to the early church and the spread of the gospel. The missionary work of the apostle Paul emphasized preaching. Yet, preaching is not reserved solely for introducing lost souls to the gospel. It has a purpose of strengthening the churches. Paul preached in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31) and while he was there, he preached to admonish and build up the saints at Ephesus (Acts 20:31-32).

Preaching is manifold and serves both the lost and the saved. It is an important part of the local church and its work of teaching.

Therefore, preaching is not simply a work of one man standing in the pulpit. It is the work of the congregation. The church places their confidence in the preacher. The church then opens the Scriptures to see whether what the preacher says is true and faithful to the message of Christ (Acts 17:11).

Too often we think of preaching to be a spectator sport, where we watch one man stand before us for a little while on Sundays, we listen, nod our head (and maybe even say Amen!), but beyond that we neglect our own personal responsibilities of faithfully attending to the words and hearing the message of the gospel.

Dear Christian, the preaching of the gospel should be a delight and an opportunity for us to share and participate in the gospel. Look forward to that opportunity!

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