

Preach the Word

Sometimes people think they can't get saved because they are going to have to be something like a missionary or even a hermit. Some Christians think they can't serve God because they are terrified by the prospect that they are going to have to get up and preach. Others, not many, love the limelight and fantasize about getting their moment to stand up in front of the church and pontificate. One smartalecky teenager fooled around with wanting to get up and show off so we said, sure, go ahead, you have our attention, go ahead and preach. He found out quickly that it takes something to be able to share the Word of God. I hate preaching competitions at youth rallies. You have to judge the Holy Spirit in preaching competitions. One sermon is judged bad because of its form while another one is judged to be good. I can teach you form, I can't teach you how to grab the Holy Spirit and make Him do your bidding. The Holy Spirit is going to do what He is going to do. We don't know the extent of how God is working.

John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

By the implication of the title of this sermon, *Preach the Word*, preaching the Word of God is a command, not a suggestion.

2Tim 4:1-4 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.

If you are looking at how to preach, there are several things to look for in a sermon:

- hermeneutics – which involves how to effectively study the Bible
- homiletics – how to build persuasive, theologically sound arguments
- economics – how to apply Scripture to govern the management and stewardship of our lives

1. God's message in the glory of His creation -

Our preaching doesn't start with us. People are set up by God to receive the Gospel. Some have set their hearts against the drawing of the Holy Spirit, but all can attest to the power of God through His creation.

Psalms 19:1-6 To the chief Musician,
A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Romans 1:20-23 For the invisible things of him from the creation

of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

But God takes His message even further than what can be seen in nature.

John 16:7-11 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

2. God's message in Jesus, the Word -

John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

1John 1:1-4 That which was

from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Whereas people were drawn by the Father to come to Jesus through the testimony of the prophets during His life on earth, afterward, people would be drawn by the power of His resurrection. As He was rode into Jerusalem before the crucifixion, He plainly said:

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

3. God's message wrapped up in you -

With God's testimony of creation, testimony of the Holy Spirit, testimony of Jesus coming to earth, and testimony of Christ's resurrection, so much of our message is already taken care of. However, it does require us. God wrote His Bible and stopped so that not every Tom, Dick, or Harry can get away with wild and contradictory "revelations." Of course that doesn't stop them from taking God's name in vain and claiming them anyway! We are commanded to go preaching.

Rom 10:14-15 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how

shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

2Tim 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

So many of us here would be surprised if I announced your name as the one who would preach next Sunday. Certain situations do require extra, but let me emphasize two other ways that are within everyone's reach.

- Our way of living

The message is wrapped up in the whole package of how we present ourselves. There is a reason I will wear a suit when I preach. It is not because I believe it is sin to not have a tie and jacket on. It is simply because of power. If I were dressed down, people could be distracted by how hip (or not hip) I am. People who wear suits are understood to be people who mean business. I simply want to convey that I mean business for the lord.

1Pet 1:14-15 As obedient children, not fashioning

yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of **conversation**; [The word *conversation* included more than the things we talk about. It included the way we *present ourselves*.]

There is a saying by broadcast people that the *medium is the message*. That is, the medium through which information is communicated has a significant impact on how that information is perceived, understood, and ultimately affects society. The medium's influence is so profound that it often overshadows the actual message it conveys. One would think that the message is the information, the data, or the content. In my opinion, it should be. The reality that we are faced with is that the package that the message comes in so influences people's perception of the message that the medium is integrated *with* the message. The special effects, the background music, the laugh track are all designed to impart some understanding of how to receive the content. If the message is the medium then *you* are the medium, not just the words you say. People will look at you and connect you to their previous experience. Your clothing, your ethnicity, your style, your vocabulary, the *way* you express yourself, your body language – they are all part of the message. You might speak English, Spanish, Arabic, but you are also speaking shirt, face, and fingernail. Not fair? No, but people have no *obligation* to believe you. There are some things we can't control. The problem is when we *do* have control and insist that people cater to our *style* rather than our true *message*.

1Thess 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Matt 12:34-36 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Matt 5:13-16 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Getting up and pontificating and yelling is not preaching. However, there is more preaching done outside of the pulpit than behind one.

But we have a problem. We know A man filled with the Holy Spirit can have terrible form but the message is powerful, while another is an oratorical masterpiece and yet as spiritually dead.

There is a tale told of a great English actor, Macready. An eminent preacher once said to him: "I wish you would explain to me something." "Well, what is it? I don't know that I can explain anything to a preacher."

"What is the reason for the difference between you and me? You are appearing before crowds night after night with fiction, and the crowds come wherever you go. I am preaching the essential and unchangeable truth, and I am not getting any crowd at all."

Macready's answer was this:

"This is quite simple. I can tell you the difference between us. I present my fiction as though it were truth; you present your truth as though it were fiction."

— G. Campbell Morgan, Preaching

The Touch of the Master's Hand

by Myra Brooks Welch

It was battered and scarred, And the auctioneer
Thought it hardly worth his while
To waste his time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good people", he cried,

"Who starts the bidding for me?"

"One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?"

"Two dollars, who makes it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three", but, no,
From the room far back a grey haired man
Came forward and

picked up the bow,

Then wiping the dust from the old violin

And tightening up the strings,

He played a melody, pure and sweet,

As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that

was quiet and low,
Said "What now am I bid for this old violin?"

As he held it aloft with its' bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear two?"

"Two thousand, Who makes it three?"

"Three thousand o n c e , t h r e e thousand twice, Going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered,

But some of them cried,

"We just don't understand."

"What changed its' worth?" Swift came the reply.

"The Touch of the Masters Hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,

All battered with bourbon and gin,
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd

Much like that old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,

A game and he travels on.

He is going once, he is going twice,
He is going and

almost gone.	The worth of a
But the Master	soul and the
comes, And the	change that is
foolish crowd	wrought
never can quite	By the Touch of
understand,	the Master's Hand.

It has been said "I can't hear you. Your actions speak louder than your words." Everyone is communicating at all times. Sometimes people think they don't have a testimony to give about Christ's work in their lives. On the contrary, everyone *does* have a testimony. The only problem is whether it is a good one or a bad one. At some point people find out that I am a pastor. From time to time they will say, "Oh, that is why you are different." I am glad for moments like that. Everything about us should preach the glory of God. I debated with myself whether the title of this sermon should be *Preach the Word*, or *So you think you don't preach?* The Bible is clear that we do, even if we are not aware of it. We should *become* aware of it and realize how much of the preaching is not done behind a pulpit.

- Let everyone be prepared to answer

The Gospel runs against the natural way man thinks and might look odd or foolish. But we have to be prepared to answer from the Bible.

1Cor 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

2Cor 4:5-7 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in

earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

1Pet 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Does your life reflect the goodness and holiness of Jesus Christ? Of course, you have to have Jesus Christ for your Savior in order to reflect the character of Jesus. You can't successfully just *copy* Christ. In the day that you repent of your obstinate rebellion against God, surrender your heart to Christ, and ask Him to take your judgment of Hell, He will welcome you into His family and make you born again in your spirit. He will change your heart. You will need to grow in your spirit and your faith, but you will have the Holy Spirit to guide you. As you do, don't be surprised if people will notice your new message.

Are you a Christian who has never discovered how you are influencing others for Christ? Remember this, you are actually *always* influencing them. It is not whether you have a testimony for Christ. The question is whether you have a *good* testimony, *indifferent* testimony, or a *bad* testimony. If you are tired of all the human sinfulness that drags down our society, then rise to the occasion to *preach the Word!*