

The Centrality and Supremacy of Preaching

D.M. Lloyd-Jones – “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.”¹

G. Campbell Morgan – “The supreme work of the Christian minister is the work of preaching. This is a day in which one of our great perils is that of doing a thousand little things to the neglect of the one thing, which is preaching.”²

C.H. Spurgeon: “If God calls you to be a His servant, do not stoop to become a king.”

- This is true of *any* servant of the Lord and His word (and not just pastors or teachers).

Expositional preaching is what gives life and health to the church. It’s what shapes, forms, and reforms the church. It reveals God to us. It confronts our sin. It comforts us. It brings us to Christ. And it teaches us how to live together in a way that puts God’s glorious character on display for all the world to see.³

Moreover, sound preaching protects the flock from the dangers of false teachers and wolves, as well as the allurements and temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.⁴

- C.H. Spurgeon – “It is among uninstructed flocks that the wolves of popery make havoc; sound teaching is the best protection from the heresies which ravage right and left among us.”⁵
- See, for example, Paul’s urgent warning to the Ephesian elders in **Acts 20**, especially verses 25-32.

¹ Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers* (p. 17). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. Later, on p. 26, he says, “The primary task of the Church and of the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God.” On p. 31 he says, “As you take a bird’s-eye view of Church history, that the decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching had declined? What is it that always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching.”

² G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1974), 11.

³ Jamieson, Bobby. *Hearing God’s Word (9Marks Healthy Church Study Guides)* (p. 8). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Cf. **2 Corinthians 11:2-4**

⁵ C.H. Spurgeon, “Sermons – Their Matter,” Lecture 5, Book 1, *Lectures to My Students* (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 72.

Preaching is preeminent, for not only is it the instrument by which God ushers the elect into His Kingdom⁶; it is also the means by which those He saves are increasingly conformed into the image of Christ⁷:

- **Romans 10:17** (LSB) – So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”
 - NET (cf. NIV, CSB, NLT) = “Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word⁸ of Christ.”
- **1 Timothy 4:16** (LSB) – “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”
- **Colossians 1:28** (ESV) – “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we might present everyone mature in Christ.”
- **2 Timothy 3:14-17** (LSB) – “But you, continue in the things you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- **1 Corinthians 1:21** (NET) – “For since in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased to save those who believe⁹ by the foolishness of preaching.”¹⁰
 - The Greek makes it crystal clear that gospel preaching is the means/instrument¹¹ through which God has ordained to save His people *and* build His church.
 - Gospel proclamation is the means for our justification *as well as* our sanctification!

⁶ See, for example, **1 Cor. 2:1-5** (ESV) – “And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.”

⁷ Which, according to **Romans 8:29**, is His will and purpose for saving the elect.

⁸ NET note: The Greek term here is *ῥῆμα* (*rhema*), which often (but not exclusively) focuses on the spoken word.

⁹ Those who believe” is in the present tense, and highlights the ongoing nature of “salvation” (cf. Rom. 1:16).

¹⁰ The Greek can also accurately be rendered, “God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached.” (CSB, cf. ESV, LSB, NIV, NKJV). BDAG translates the Greek word, *kerugma*, as (1) “an official announcement, proclamation,” and (2) “a public declaration (by a herald sent by God).” Friberg translates it as “the content of a sacred message, preaching.” The idea of preaching conveying a message is also picked up in Romans 10:17, where Paul says, “Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ.” (NET) The Greek term here is *ῥῆμα* (*rhema*), which often (but not exclusively) focuses on the spoken word (i.e., the gospel of Christ).

¹¹ The Greek preposition *dia* means “through, by, by way of.”

- Notice also that gospel preaching “is pleasing” to God!
 - As we are conformed more and more into the image of God (by the gospel), gospel preaching should increasingly be pleasing to us as well.
 - Moreover, if preaching the gospel pleases God, let us endeavor for *more* gospel preaching, not less!¹²
- **2 Timothy 4:1-4** (LSB) – “I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”
 - William Gouge – “Ministers are herein to imitate God, and, to their best endeavour, to instruct people in the mysteries of godliness, and to teach them what to believe and practice, and then to stir them up in act and deed, to do what they are instructed to do.”¹³

Why the Elders are Seeking to Train Up More Competent Teachers and Preachers at GCC

Simply put, faithfulness to our resurrected and reigning Lord Jesus, whose primary and preeminent command to His people is to “make disciples” (and not mere “decisions”).

- **Matthew 28:18-20** (ESV) – “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority ^bin heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - Discipleship is a life-long endeavor and process, and we cannot be content to stop merely with seeing others converted; we must seek also to see them sanctified and growing in holiness, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13); that, as we “speak the truth in love” to one another, we all increasingly “grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (4:15), which results in the growth of the entire body/church (4:16), to the glory of God (3:21).

¹² With Paul, may we say that we are increasingly making it our aim “to please [God]” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9).

¹³ William Gouge, *Commentary on Hebrews* (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1980), 577-78. Accessed from John MacArthur and the Masters Seminary, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 3-4.

- **2 Timothy 2:1-2** (RC) – “So you, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in¹⁴ Christ Jesus, and what you heard from me through many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful¹⁵ men, who will be competent¹⁶ to teach others also.”
 - Though I am reticent to use the phrase “apostolic succession” here, the thought (and theology) here is that Paul, with the imminent closing of the apostolic era, is now passing the baton to the next generation, which is to be repeated and replicated until Christ’s return.
 - Ben Lane: What HeartCry has come to find out is that the problem that stymies world missions is not so much inadequate money, but unqualified men.
- **1 Peter 5:1-2** (KJV) – “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*.”
 - The crook by which Christ’s flock is shepherded is Christ’s Word as it is heralded.
 - The ointment by which Christ’s bride is washed and beautified is the water of the Word (cf. Eph. 5:26).

If this is true, and Christ’s bride and body is precious to us,¹⁷ let us, in the words of Paul, endeavour to be better servants of Christ’s people by becoming better students of Christ’s Word.

- **2 Timothy 2:15** (LSB) – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

Soli Deo Gloria!!

¹⁴ The preposition *en* can also carry the idea of means/instrument and be translated “by” (ESV).

¹⁵ NLT = “trustworthy”

¹⁶ Most EVVs = “able.” The Greek word for “able” is usually *dunamis*. The word Paul uses here (*hikanos*) carries the idea of adequacy, competency, sufficiency, ability.

¹⁷ **2 Corinthians 11:2** (LSB) – “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for I betrothed you to one husband, so that I might present you *as* a pure virgin to Christ.”

Next lesson:

1. How to determine what passage to preach
 - a. Understanding the difference between expositional, textual, and topical preaching styles.
 - b. Understanding our context/audience
 - Are we preaching on Sunday morning at? Quizzing devotional to young people? Family devotions? Sunday school? Working through a book for men's study?
 - c. Understanding different literary genres
 - For example, we can get away preaching one or two verses from an epistle, but probably not narrative.
 - d. What are some helpful resources and tips for determining a passage to teach or preach?
2. Working through Helm's helpful diagram of the four essential components of a biblically faithful sermon.
3. Spending some time together with the pastors in practically
4. (If time allows) The role of context, hermeneutics, and exegesis.

God calls pastors not to preach their own opinions or agendas; he calls them to preach his Word.¹⁸

Augustine: “When the Bible speaks, God speaks.”

Chapell

The Word uses His word to reveal His person and to carry out all His purposes. (28)

Because hearts are transformed when people are confronted with the Word of God, expository preachers are committed to what God says. (30)

¹⁸ Jamieson, Bobby. Hearing God's Word (9Marks Healthy Church Study Guides) (p. 8). Crossway. Kindle Edition.