

LESSON 2

THE PREACHER AND THE MESSAGE OF PREACHING

"Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men," said Phillips Brooks, an outstanding American preacher of the nineteenth century. The prominent elements in this act of communication are the truth, which is the message of preaching, and the person communicating, which is the preacher of the truth. Both are of the utmost importance for effective preaching.

The Preacher

The preacher is the instrument through which God has chosen to speak to the peoples of the world. He calls the men whom He chooses and prepares them for the task of preaching. The New Testament provides the necessary information regarding the calling and character of the preacher.

The call of the preacher

The call to preach the truth of the Gospel comes by God's sovereign will. The Apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy saying that he was "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" and that he was "appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (2 Tim. 1:1,11). God calls whom He wills and sets them apart for the specific work that He has planned, particularly in proclaiming His Gospel (Rom. 1:1).

This fact is seen in the ministry of Jesus. At the beginning of His public ministry, He began to preach the Gospel and called two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew and then James and John, to accompany him in His ministry (Matt. 4:17-22). He told them that He would make them fishers of men. Sometime later, after a night of prayer, He chose twelve to be apostles (Luke 6:12-16). The word apostle (apostolos) literally means "one sent forth as a messenger", the bearer of a commission from another. They were to be sent forth to preach the message of God, the good news of salvation (Mark 3:13-14).

The way God calls men to preach has varied through the centuries. God called the young child Samuel in his sleep. Through the help of the old priest Eli, Samuel responded to God's call (1 Sam. 3:1-18).

The two prominent elements in the act of preaching are the _____ and the _____.

(truth, preacher)

Who calls a person to preach? _____

(God)

CHOOSE ONE OF THESE WORDS TO FILL IN EACH BLANK: message, apostles, preach, messengers.
1. Jesus chose twelve _____.
2. They were _____ sent forth.
3. They were sent to _____ the _____ of God.

(apostles, messengers, preach, message)

He called the young man Isaiah in a vision during a time of national tragedy (Isa. 6:1-13). He had appointed Jeremiah a prophet from his conception and birth and called him in his youth (Jer. 1:4-10). He called the man Saul of Tarsus at the time of his conversion on the road to Damascus out of a great light from heaven (Acts 9:1-9). But for most preachers, God's call comes by a still small voice as He called the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-18). God speaks within by His Spirit. But at whatever time of life or in whatever manner—in a vision, in a dream, by providence, through tragedy, or by a still small voice—the important matter is that God issues the call and man needs to accept that call and carry out the tasks set forth.

The type of calling varies according to God's purpose. In order for men to call on the Lord, according to Romans 10:13-14, they must believe in Him. But in order to believe they must hear about Him, and thus they need a preacher (kerux). The Apostle Paul listed this calling first before his call to be an apostle and a teacher (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). But He has also called men to be apostles (apostolous), prophets (prophetas), evangelists (evangelous), pastors (poimenas), and teachers (didaskalous) (Eph. 4:11). The purpose for calling and sending forth these men is for the perfecting, or maturing, of the believers for the total ministry set aside for them in order that the body of Christ, the Church, might be built in number and in quality (Eph. 4:12-16). These men first of all are given grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). They are also given gifts, or talents, for the specific ministry for which God has called them so that they can accomplish what He has willed (Eph. 4:8; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Those whom God calls to preach are entrusted with the Gospel and find it necessary to do His will (1 Cor. 9:16-17). Some men are rebellious to God's calling, or reluctant to accept the task of proclaiming the Gospel. But those whom He has called must do as Paul urged Archippus, saying, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Col. 4:17). Some are timid, as Timothy, and need to accept the charge of Paul who wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2, 5). Some preachers are distracted from this main ministry of proclaiming the Gospel and like the Apostle Peter should give themselves first of all to prayer and the ministry of the Word, appointing other men for the other types of services (Acts 6:1-6).

The call to preach comes from God in many different ways--in a _____, in a _____, by _____, through _____, by a _____.

(vision, dream, providence, tragedy, still small voice)

In order to accomplish what God has willed, a person receives _____ or _____ for the specific ministry for which God has called him.

(gifts, talents)

Those whom God calls to preach are entrusted with the _____.

(Gospel)

READ AGAIN 2 TIMOTHY 4:2,5. WRITE IN YOUR OWN WORDS PAUL'S ADVICE TO TIMID PREACHER TIMOTHY.

The character of the preacher

The preacher is a minister of Christ, one who is entrusted with the stewardship of the mysteries of God. He is commissioned to manage in the proclamation and publication of these truths of God. The first requirement theh of these stewards is faithfulness to the calling, just as a steward or manager of a household (1 Cor. 4:1-2). He should be totally consecrated to the Lord, making a decisive dedication, a once for all offer, of his life as a living sacrifice to God, which is a reasonable service, well-pleasing unto Him (Rom. 12:1). He should no longer be conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of his mind, proving the will of God in his life and service (Rom. 12:2).

Furthermore, the preacher must be an example of the believers in speech, in behavior, in love, in faith, and in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). He should not neglect the gift of God given to him in his calling, but remember his calling and stir up the gift of God, that is the spirit of power, of love, and of self control, not the spirit of fear or cowardice, especially in testifying for Christ (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6-8). He should give attention continually to himself, his character, and to his teachings (1 Tim. 4:16).

He must give special attention to his body, disciplining himself and keeping his body in subjection, so that in proclaiming the Gospel to others he does not become unfit and rejected (1 Cor. 9:27). He should study to present himself to God as an approved workman, properly interpreting and presenting the message of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). He should learn to be content in whatever situation the Lord might have him serve, be confident that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him, and be assured that God will supply all his needs according to His riches (Phil. 4:11,13,19).

Moreover, the preacher should be diligent in his service for the Lord. He should be firm in his faith and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that his labor will not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). God's Word proclaimed will not return unto Him useless or be ineffectual, but it shall accomplish what He intended (Isa. 55:11). Therefore, he should not be weary in well doing, for in due time he shall reap spiritual fruit, if he does not lose courage (Gal. 6:9). He should put on God's complete armor in his fight against evil and for good, praying for freedom in proclaiming the Gospel boldly (Eph. 6:11-20). As God's fellow worker, he should not be a stumbling block in any way, but should show himself approved of God as His minister in all things and through all types of experiences (2 Cor. 6:1-10). Above all, he should

Faithfulness to the calling of God involves _____ and _____.

(consecration, dedication)

The preacher must be an example of the believers in _____, in _____, in _____, in _____, and in _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

An important requirement of a preacher is _____.

(discipline)

The preacher should be _____ in his service for the Lord.

(diligent)

YOU HAVE JUST LEARNED FOUR CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRED OF A PREACHER. CAN YOU LIST THEM?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

forget past failures and discouragements and should look forward to the tasks before him, pressing on toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ (Phil. 3:12-15).

The Message

The message of preaching is God's truth as revealed to men through the ages, uniquely in the revelation of Jesus Christ. God revealed Himself in person; the Son of God became a man and dwelt among us for a season to redeem us from sin and for life in Him.

The message of the Gospel

The central message of preaching is the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel, meaning literally "good news," is explicitly stated in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The Apostle Paul declared in his first letter to the Christians at Corinth the Gospel which he previously had preached to them and which they received and thereby were saved. They stood firm in their belief, except, of course, those who believed in vain, that is, those whose faith was not genuine.

The two central truths of the Gospel according to the text mentioned above are these:

- (1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
- (2) Christ rose again according to the Scriptures

According to the Old Testament passage Isaiah 53, the Messiah would come and bear the sins of the people. As the substitute for the guilty sinner then, He would bear the consequence for sin which is death, since the "wages of sin is death." This truth is explained in detail by the prophet Isaiah.

But also according to the Old Testament passage Psalm 16, the Messiah would rise again from the dead. David wrote that God would not leave His Holy One in the grave nor allow His body to be corrupted but would raise Him up (Ps. 16:8-11). This was Peter's interpretation in his message on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:24-28). The resurrection indicates that Jesus has power over death, has conquered sin which is the cause of death, and is alive forevermore. God was satisfied that the just demands of His law had been met and that the sin debt had been paid, and thus He could forgive the sins of men and justify them in His sight, and would declare those who believe in Christ righteous before Him (Rom. 4:23-25).

The central message of preaching is the _____.
The word 'gospel' literally means _____.
(Compare your answers with the text.)

WRITE THE TWO CENTRAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL.

1. _____

2. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The message of the apostles

The recorded messages of the apostles in the Book of Acts provide the message of preaching or proclamation (*kerygma*) of the early Church. Their message was based on the central truths of the Gospel (*evangelion*). The full scope of their preaching may be discovered by analyzing these messages, as was done by such men as C. H. Dodd, A. M. Hunter, and Robert Mounce.

First, the apostles proclaimed that the promises of the Old Testament prophets were fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah (the Christ). Peter in his messages, referring to these prophecies, used such expressions as "this was that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" and "to him give all the prophets witness" (Acts 2:16; 10:43). Paul in his messages indicated fulfillment of prophecies saying "when they had fulfilled all that was written of him" and "we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children" (Acts 13:29; 32-33). This aspect of the Gospel was emphasized less when the apostles preached more to the Gentiles as the Jews began to reject the Gospel.

Second, the apostles proclaimed the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the means by which men can be saved. Peter preached that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and went about doing good (Acts 2:22; 10:38). He was crucified by wicked men, but according to God's predetermined counsel (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15). But God raised Him from the dead, and the apostles witnessed to this resurrection (Acts 2:24-32; 3:15; 4:10). He is exalted at the right hand of God and declared to be Savior and Lord (Acts 2:33-36; 5:31). All of these apostolic messages recorded in the Book of Acts mention at least the crucifixion and resurrection, the central truths of the Gospel. Collectively they outline the story of Jesus Christ as depicted in the four Gospels.

Third, the apostles appealed to their hearers to repent and receive Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The first appeal was to repent, that is, to turn from sin and the world and to God and salvation (Acts 2:38; 3:26; 5:31). Then the appeal was to believe in Christ (Acts 10:43; 13:39). Those who repent and believe would receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38), and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32), salvation (Acts 4:12), and justification from all things (Acts 13:39). God appointed Jesus Christ to be the Judge of the living and dead (Acts 10:42) and remain in heaven until the restoration of all things at His return (Acts 3:19-21). Paul and the other writers of the New Testament explained the deeper

What is the source of the message of preaching of the early Church? _____

(the recorded messages of the apostles in the Book of Acts)

The apostles proclaimed that the promises of the _____ prophets were fulfilled in the coming of the _____.

(Old Testament, Messiah)

The apostles proclaimed the _____, _____, _____, and _____ of Jesus as the means of salvation.

(life, death, resurrection, exaltation)

The apostles appealed to their hearers to _____ and _____ Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

(repent, receive)

NOW CAN YOU NAME THE THREE ASPECTS OF THE APOSTLES' MESSAGE? TRY IT ORALLY.

meaning and significance of these events and the privileges and responsibilities of believers.

The message of the Bible

The whole message of the Bible is also the message of preaching. Paul told the leaders of the Church at Ephesus that he held back nothing that was profitable unto them, but declared unto them publicly and privately repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:20-21). In fact he said that he kept nothing back, but declared the whole counsel of God, that is, the whole will and purpose of God. These leaders were to watch over and to feed or tend the Church of God (Acts 20:28). At the close of the Book of Acts we note that Paul was still preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching these things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness (Acts 28:31).

Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy reminding him that he had known the Holy Scriptures since he was a child and that these were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:14-15). This is a primary objective of the Bible, to lead men to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and thus a primary objective in preaching. However, he went on to say that all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be completely fitted or equipped for all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus the whole teaching of the Bible needs to be preached that the people of God may be equipped for service, and so he urged Timothy to preach the Word of God at all times, reproving, admonishing, and exhorting with patience and with doctrine, that is, the teaching of the Bible (2 Tim. 4:1-2). All Scripture then needs to be proclaimed because the writers were inspired by God and recorded what He intended men to know. God directs the preacher to proclaim that portion of Scripture which a particular group of people needs to hear at a particular time.

ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE.

The whole message of the Bible is also the message of preaching. _____

(true)

The primary objective in preaching is to lead men to _____ through faith in _____.

(salvation, Jesus Christ)

Paul urged Timothy to preach the Word of God at all times, reproving, admonishing and exhorting with patience and with doctrine (which means _____).

(the teaching of the Bible)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3):

A. The Study Guide

1. What are the two prominent elements in the act of preaching? _____

2. The call to preach comes from whom? _____
3. In what ways has the call to preach come to men? _____

4. Write out the way you were called to preach in two or less pages of notepaper.
5. What charge did Paul give to the timid preacher Timothy? _____

6. What is the preacher entrusted with? _____

7. What are four requirements or necessities of the preacher?

8. What is the central message of preaching? _____
9. What does the word "Gospel" literally mean? _____
10. What are the two central truths of the Gospel? _____

11. Where can the sources of the message of preaching be found? _____

12. What were the three aspects of the message of the apostles?

13. The message of preaching is also the _____

14. What did Paul urge the young preacher Timothy to do? _____

B. The Bible

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11.

The Lord appointed Paul to be _____, _____ ;

_____ .

What was the first calling listed in the references? _____

2. Read Isaiah 6:1-13.

How did the Lord reveal Himself to Isaiah? _____

What did the Lord say to Isaiah and what was his response? _____

3. Read Ephesians 4:8-16.

What are the six callings mentioned by Paul? _____

What is the purpose in giving these callings? _____

4. Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16 and 2 Timothy 1:5-8.

In what ways was Timothy to be an example of the believer? _____

What was the gift God gave to Timothy? _____

5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-9.

What was the Gospel declared unto the Corinthians? _____

How are people saved? _____

Who were the people that saw the risen Christ? _____

6. Read Acts 2:14-40.

What prophet and what quotation from the Bible did Peter refer to at the beginning of the message? _____

Give the two passages from the Psalms that Peter quoted in reference to the resurrection of Christ? _____

What did Peter tell the people to do at the conclusion of his message? _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

Read pages 1-8 of the textbook. Then read the passages from the Bible as needed.

1. Upon what is the call of God dependent?
2. Explain what a man called to preach must commit to the Lord.
3. Describe the calling of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-10).
4. Compare Romans 4:24-25 with 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and explain the reason for the death and resurrection of Christ.
5. According to Romans 1:15-17, what have men been provided in the Gospel of Christ and how should it be received?
6. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5. Explain why the Holy Scriptures were given and how the Word should be preached.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Explain Robert Mounce's conviction that preaching is God's redemptive act. Do you agree or disagree and why?
2. Describe Paul's conversion and call to preach as recorded in Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-21; 26:1-29. Explain how this experience affected his ministry.

3. Analyze Peter's message from Solomon's Porch as recorded in Acts 3:11-26 and identify the three aspects of the message of the apostles. Identify the two central truths of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4) and show how they are central to this message.

Seminar Discussion

1. Let each student tell about his calling and then discuss how a man can know he is called to preach.
2. Discuss the importance of the character of the preacher. In what ways are preachers failing to live up to their calling? How can they help themselves and each other?
3. Discuss the central truths of the Gospel and their relationship to the larger message of the apostles and to the whole message of the Bible.