



“He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:42).

Preaching in Worship

Central Truth: We can worship God through His preached Word.

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Topic: Preaching; Worship.

A family was returning home from a Sunday morning worship service. One of the children said, “Daddy, I learned something in church today.” The father replied, “Great. What did you learn?” “I learned that the sermon is not as long when you listen to the preacher!” It is true, isn't it?

Preaching is a vital part of worship. It becomes worship for those who (1) respect the preacher as God's spokesman, (2) listen for God to speak through the sermon, and (3) prepare in advance for the message of the sermon. Otherwise, preaching can seem mighty dull.

Does God really speak through the sermon of a mere man? Indeed He does. It might be one sentence from an entire sermon which He places in your heart. It might be that the central theme of the whole sermon is His message to you. It might be that a statement in the sermon is used to direct your thoughts to an application which relates particularly to you.

But God speaks through the sermon to the heart that is ready to receive His message. James 1:21, 22 tells how to hear a sermon. (1) Before the sermon, “*Lay apart all filthiness.*” (2) During the sermon, “*Receive with meekness the engrafted word.*” (3) After the sermon, “*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.*” Put those principles into practice and see how your pastor's preaching seems to improve!

Listen for God to speak in each sermon you hear, whether in church, by radio, by television, or by printed page. He has a very special message for you alone. It would be tragic if you should miss it. This is why we have this

study on the place of preaching in worship.

I. PREACHING IS APPROPRIATE (Acts 10:34-36)

God's will is to proclaim His message by the spoken word of men who are His messengers. Its purpose is to proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It signifies a herald proclaiming publicly and loudly the message assigned of God. It is the highest honor to be a preacher called and commissioned by God.

A. Preaching is needed by all people. Since God is "*no respecter of persons*" (Acts 10:34), His message is to be proclaimed to all people. The first disciples of Jesus understood His commission in that way, for He said, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15).

On my first trip to preach in the Orient, the missionaries took me into the temples to expose me to the religious needs of the people. For the first time in my life I saw people bowing down in worship to images made by human hands. Being overawed, I asked, "What do you preach to these people?" The missionaries replied, "The same thing you preach at home. There is only one gospel." It is true. Everyone needs the same message, for salvation is by Jesus Christ alone.

B. Preaching produces righteousness in people (Acts 10:35). It is not that the act of preaching creates righteousness, but rather that the message preached tells how to receive the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Only the one who lives righteously is accepted of God, and the only righteousness which God accepts is the righteousness of Jesus which is received by faith (Romans 3:21-26).

Salvation is by believing on Jesus. Faith in Jesus is possible only by hearing the gospel. The gospel can be heard only as there is a preacher of the gospel. Therefore, preaching is essential to people being saved (Romans 10:12-17).

C. Preaching is God's method of sending out His message (Acts 10:36). His word is "*sent, . . . preaching peace by Jesus Christ.*" To those who are perishing the preaching of the cross is foolishness. To those who are saved it is the power of God (I Corinthians 1:18). The gospel message is the atoning sacrifice which Jesus made that we might be set free from the penalty and guilt of our sin. Do you remember when the gospel became clear to you? For most of us, it was when we heard the spoken message about Jesus. Since preaching is ordained of God, respect the preacher and receive the message. Worship as you listen.

H. PREACHING IS CENTERED IN JESUS (Acts 10:36-42)

A. Worship at the announcement of peace through Jesus (verse 36). Peter summarized the whole Christian message in the statement that God is *“preaching peace by Jesus Christ.”* Can you grasp the grace and love of God that He would go to such an extreme to save guilty sinners? How do you respond to that? A spirit of humility and worship is appropriate, don't you think? Romans 5:6-10 states that while we were weak (*“without strength”*), wrong (*“sinners”*), and wicked (*“enemies”*), God responded by Christ dying for us. Amazing grace! When you hear the gospel preached, worship God.

B. Worship at the affirmation of the Lordship of Jesus (verse 36). *“He is Lord of all.”* He really is! To be Lord means He has the power and mastery over all persons and things. God declared Jesus to be Lord (Acts 2:36). It is the Christian's privilege to sanctify Christ as Lord in his heart (Peter 3:15). The New Testament shows that to call Jesus *“Lord”* is to recognize Him as God. When you sing a hymn or hear a sermon that affirms the Lordship of Jesus, let it be a call to worship Him. Think about what you hear in church, and make the services truly worship services.

C. Worship at the testimony of the ministry of Jesus (verses 37-41). The details of His life and work are recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. That has been repeated over and over, wherever the gospel is preached. Peter's sermon indicates five things which call us to worship.

1. We worship Jesus as the anointed one. *“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power”* (verse 38). His name Christ means *“anointed one.”*

2. We worship Jesus as the servant of the Lord. He *“went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil”* (verse 38) just as Isaiah had prophesied that the servant of the Lord would do.

3. We worship Jesus as God's sacrifice for sin, *“whom they slew and hanged on a tree”* (verse 39). There He died, the just one for us unjust ones, that He might bring us to God (I Peter 3:18). His vicarious suffering made salvation possible for you and me.

4. We worship Jesus as the risen Savior. *“Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly”* (verse 40). His resurrection, following His life of unblemished holiness, proves Him to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4). He who has conquered death is worthy of our worship.

5. We worship Jesus as the living Lord. God showed Him openly to chosen witnesses in many places and on different occasions to remove any

doubt that He lives (verses 40, 41).

D. Worship Jesus by repeating His message (verses 42, 43). He is Judge, having been ordained of God to be the judge of the living and the dead. Each person will stand before His great white throne or His judgment seat to account to Him. Worship is an act of obedience in telling of that awesome day. He is Savior, attested by all the prophets. Whoever believes in Him receives the remission of sin. What a Savior! Come before Him in a spirit of reverence and worship.

III. PREACHING IS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 10:44)

The power of a sermon is not dependent upon the skill of organization or oratory in the preacher. The power is in the truth preached. The world may call it foolishness, but God puts power in it and calls people to Jesus by it.

Jesus promised power when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8). The early disciples went out with their message, and God worked with them by giving signs which confirmed their message (Mark 16:20). The Holy Spirit is still here, doing His work of conviction. Preaching should produce a spirit of worship because it is accompanied by the power of God's Spirit.

Never go away from a service where you have felt conviction and say the preacher did something to you. No. Conviction is by the Holy Spirit. Give God credit for God's work. When the Holy Spirit convicts you, it is an act of worship of God to respond as He directs. The preacher is the spokesman, but God is the one with whom you have to do.

IV. PREACHING GETS RESPONSE (Acts 10:45-48)

Read the Acts of the Apostles and notice the threefold response given when the message of Jesus was preached. (1) Some became mad, as did the mob that stoned Stephen to death for preaching about Jesus (Acts 7:57-59). (2) Some became sad, as did the hearers on the day of Pentecost when they cried out for further information on how to be saved (Acts 2:37). (3) Some became glad because they responded with faith to the fact preached and were saved (Acts 8:8). Preaching always gets response.

A. Preaching calls for faith. Cornelius and all of his household believed the message of Jesus which was preached by Peter (verse 45). Like the Philippian jailer, he believed in God with all his house (Acts 16:34). They believed in Jesus just as the Jewish Christians had done, and as all other people must do to be saved.

B. Preaching brings assurance. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household as Peter was still preaching (verse 44). The indwelling presence of the Spirit is the proof that one is saved (Romans 8:9) and is the source of assurance of salvation (Romans 8:14-16). Thus assurance comes by preaching, which calls to repentance and faith and explains the ministry of the Spirit.

C. Preaching leads to confession. Cornelius and his household were baptized in water as a confession of their faith in Jesus Christ (verses 47, 48). There was no question but that baptism should follow immediately upon salvation. Cornelius wanted to confess his faith in Jesus. The unsaved needed to witness his confession of faith. The Christians present never questioned but that baptism was the appropriate method of confessing one's faith. So Cornelius confessed his faith in Jesus by baptism, as all obedient converts should.

A ministry that calls forth faith, is accompanied by the Holy Spirit, and leads people to make a public profession of faith in Christ is a blessed ministry indeed. Preaching is an appropriate avenue for us to worship God.

V. PREACHING CREATES A HUNGER FOR MORE (Acts 10:48)

Those new converts in the house of Cornelius wanted to know more about their newfound Lord. They urged Peter to stay with them and help them in their faith. He tarried there for several days. Thank God for spiritual hunger. It is a sign that salvation has truly come.

Make the sermon a vital part of your Sunday worship experience. It will require an act of the will, a discipline of the mind, and a repeated reminder if you are accustomed to “coasting” through the sermon. But it will be well worth the effort. Worship as your pastor preaches this Lord's Day.

Questions

1. What is preaching?
2. Why should you give respect to the preacher?
3. How can you prepare in advance to worship in the sermon?
4. Why is preaching needed today?
5. Why is Christian preaching centered in Jesus?
6. How is the Holy Spirit related to Christian preaching?
7. What responses do people give to preaching?
8. What does I Corinthians 1:18 say about preaching?

9. How does preaching both create and satisfy spiritual hunger?
10. How can you make the sermon more of a worship experience?