

SOME THOUGHTS ON PREACHING

Daniel F. Cates

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THE MUST OF PREACHING IN THE CHURCH

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"Foolishness. [Pause] Preaching is foolishness! Drama [or insert some other substitute for preaching] would be far more effective in saving people." Whether members of the Lord's church hear this or merely see it in practice, this much is true: God knew that men would think that preaching is foolish; nonetheless, He chose it as the avenue by which the Gospel would be propagated! Paul acknowledging his task, wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... 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" (1 Cor. 1:20-21). Preaching is not some humanly conceived means of spreading the Word of God; rather, it is the divinely appointed way that the lost are converted and the sinful are convicted! It is for this cause that Paul gave the aforementioned command: "Preach the Word" (II Tim. 4:2).¹

The Bible is replete with imperatives (commands) regarding this avenue of proclaiming God's Word. Jonah was commanded, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jon. 3:2) The disciples were commanded to preach on numerous occasions including the limited commission (Mat. 10:7,27; Luke 9:2) and the great commission (Mark 16:15). One bidden to follow Jesus tried to excuse himself; "...he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-60).

The Bible also contains numerous indicators that others were commanded to preach. Noah had been "a preacher of righteousness" in his antediluvian civilization (2 Pet. 2:5). The prophets were appointed to preach (Neh. 8:7). Isaiah was anointed to preach (Isa. 61:1). The disciples were sent forth to preach (Mark 3:14). The apostles were commanded to preach (Acts 10:42). Paul was called to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts 16:10); in fact, he was ordained and appointed both preacher and apostle (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 2:11). The Bible also contains the examples of the Lord (Mat. 4:17; 11:1; Mark 1:38; Luke 4:18-19,43;), John (Mark 1:4), and the apostles (Acts 5:42; 14:15; 17:3; Rom. 1:15; et al) who all preached as they were required. The Lord even provided for the payment of those who preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:14).

"Foolishness"? Not in the eyes of the Lord!

THE PREACHER'S PORTRAIT: WORD STUDIES FOR THE PREACHER

Daniel F. Cates

Generalization

Old Testament words

זָהַר, *zahar*, "to *gleam*; figuratively to *enlighten* (by caution): - admonish, shine, teach, (give) warn (-ing)" (Strong).

[2Ch_19:10](#), "And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and *so* wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass."

[Exo_18:20](#), "And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do."

קְהֵלֶת, *koheleth*, "a (female) *assembler* (that is, lecturer); abstractly *preaching* (used as a 'nom de plume', *Koheleth*): - preacher." (Strong)

[Ecc_1:1](#), "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."

קָרָא, *kara*, "to *call* out to (that is, properly *address* by name, but used in a wide variety of applications): - bewray [self], that are bidden, call (for, forth, self, upon), cry (unto), (be) famous, guest, invite, mention, (give) name, preach, (make) proclaim (-ation), pronounce, publish, read, renowned, say." (Strong)

[Jon_3:4](#), "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

[Deu_20:10](#), "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it" (cf. Philo, "The Special Laws, IV," xli.221; "On the Virtues," xxii.109; xxix.151).

דָּבַר, *dabar*, "perhaps properly to *arrange*; but used figuratively (of words) to *speak*; rarely (in a destructive sense) to *subdue*: - answer, appoint, bid, command, commune, declare, destroy, give, name, promise, pronounce, rehearse, say, speak, be spokesman, subdue, talk, teach, tell, think, use [entreaties], utter, X well, X work" (Strong)

[Deu_20:5](#), "And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man *is there* that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die

in the battle, and another man dedicate it" (cf. Philo, "On Husbandry," xxxiii.148).

[Lev_23:44](#), "And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD."

New Testament words

[κηρύσσω](#), "to *herald* (as a public *crier*), especially divine truth (the gospel): - preach (-er), proclaim, publish" (Strong)

[2Ti_4:2](#), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

[Rom_10:14](#), "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?"

[κήρυγμα](#), "a *proclamation* (especially of the gospel; by implication the *gospel* itself): - preaching" (Strong).

[1Co_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."

[Tit_1:3](#), "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;"

[εὐαγγελίζω](#), "to *announce good news* ("evangelize") especially the gospel: - declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel)" (Strong)

[1Co_1:17](#), "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

[λόγος](#), "something *said* (including the *thought*); by implication a *topic* (subject of discourse), also *reasoning* (the mental faculty) or *motive*; by extension a *computation*; specifically (with the article in John) the *Divine Expression* (that is, *Christ*): - account, cause, communication, X concerning, doctrine, fame, X have to do, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, + reckon, remove, say (-ing), shew, X speaker, speech, talk, thing, + none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work" (Strong)

[1Co_1:18](#), "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

[καταγγέλλω](#), "to *proclaim, promulgate*: - declare, preach, shew, speak of, teach" (Strong)

[1Co_2:1](#), "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God."

[1Co_2:4](#), "And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:"

[λαλέω](#), "to *talk*, that is, *utter* words: - preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter" (Strong)

[1Co_2:7](#), "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:"

[1Th_2:4](#), "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

[παρρησία](#), "*all out spokenness*, that is, *frankness, bluntness, publicity*; by implication *assurance*: - bold (X -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, X freely, X openly, X plainly (-ness)" (Strong)

[2Co_3:12](#), "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:"

[διαβεβαιόομαι](#), "to *confirm thoroughly* (by words), that is, *asseverate*: - affirm constantly" (Strong)

[Tit_3:8](#), "*This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

[διδάσκαλος](#), "an *instructor* (generally or specifically): - doctor, master, teacher" (Strong)

[Heb_5:12](#), "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

[ὀρθοτομέω](#), "to *make a straight cut*, that is, (figuratively) to *dissect (expound) correctly* (the divine message): - rightly divide" (Strong)

[2Ti_2:15](#), "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

[κατακρίνω](#), "to *judge against*, that is, *sentence*: - condemn, damn" (Strong)

[Heb_11:7](#), "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

[Act_17:2-3](#) Reasoned Opening Alleging

Latin: *Praedica* (from *praedicare*, that is, *prae*-before+*dicare*-to proclaim/say)

Specialization

The role of the "herald" in the ancient, secular world

Philo

Of the sun as herald: "And the day also laughs in anticipation of the early dawn, when the sun is about to rise; for one ray is a messenger of another, and one beam of light, as the forerunner of another though more obscure, is still a herald of that which shall be brighter" ("On the Change of Names," xxx.162).

On what Joseph was given by Pharaoh upon Joseph's elevation in the kingdom: "... a herald also going round with him, and announcing his appointment to those who were ignorant of it" ("On Joseph," xxi).

On the role of a herald in seeking peace: "... in order that he might so proclaim peace instead of war to all men everywhere" ("On the Eternity of the World," xii.68; cf Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, IV.viii.40).

On the failure of some heralds to seek peace: "... wars which have no heralds to terminate them cause endless calamities to both parties. ... And of what use was the herald's wand [his sceptre indicating his having been given authority, cf. Livy, *History of Rome*, XLV.12-DFC] to him, who never either said or did anything bearing upon peace, but who rather filled every house and every city within Greece and in the countries of the barbarians with civil wars" ("On the Embassy to Gaius," xiii.100,102).

Polybius

On calling the Isthmian games to order and announcing the freeing of certain peoples--including the Corinthians--following Roman victory over Macedonia: "While people were still in this state of uncertainty, all the world being assembled on the stadium to watch the games, the herald came forward, and having proclaimed silence by the sound of a trumpet, delivered the following proclamation: ..." (*The Histories*, XVIII.46).

Cassius Dio

On being able to be bypassed: "So he [Vercingetorix-DFC] came to him without any announcement by herald, but appeared before him suddenly, as Caesar was seated on a platform, and threw some of them that were present into alarm;" (*Dio's Rome*, XL.41).

Xenophon

On calling to battle: "The heralds cry, 'To arms!'" (*Hellenica*, VII.ii).

Ammianus Marcellinus

On the herald's demeanor: "Then laying aside his anger, he [the king Sapor] sent some heralds with all due solemnity, ..." (*The Roman History*, XX.vii.3).

The role of the warner in ancient, Hebrew world

[Eze 3:17-21](#), "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

A HISTORY OF PREACHING: CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Daniel F. Cates

The **Fiftieth Annual Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship** is fittingly being held on the theme "*Preach the Word*"; that great expression from II Timothy 4:2 has been a worthy motto for this school as she has prepared men capable of doing just that! It is this writer's privilege to be able to have a part in this fiftieth lectureship marking the fiftieth anniversary of this special school. This school is a special place to many who have been educated in the school or have supported the school; it certainly is special to those who labor here; it ought to be special to any who love sound Gospel preaching! This writer falls into each of those categories: he graduated from the school in 1994 (from the two-year program) and 2002 (from what is now the M.O.S.T. program); he has been a supporter of the work in numerous respects; he has been blessed with the opportunity to teach at the school since 1999; and he loves sound Gospel preaching. In addition to these things, he is privileged as the younger child of Curtis and Annette Cates to have spent his formative years around the Memphis School of Preaching (hereafter, MSOP) and other such programs, and so has seen the work from what may be described as a *rarer* perspective. It is that perspective which has given the writer the opportunity to address the topic at hand.

INTRODUCTION

In this study, the writer has been asked to include the preacher training conducted by Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Curtis A. Cates, Sr., so the study will be developed as follows: first, the writer will show the Biblical mandate of preaching; second, the writer will identify what preaching is; third, the writer will show the role of preaching in the worship of the Lord's church; fourth, the

writer will examine the efforts of Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Curtis A. Cates, Sr., and others associated with MSOP in training preachers--the time and scope of the study will not allow a broader examination of other faithful schools, neither would the writer's relative lack of personal experience or observation allow for such.

PREACHING COMMANDED: THE MUST OF PREACHING IN THE CHURCH

"Foolishness. [Pause] Preaching is foolishness! Drama [or insert some other substitute for preaching] would be far more effective in saving people." Whether members of the Lord's church hear this or merely see it in practice, this much is true: God knew that men would think that preaching is foolish; nonetheless, He chose it as the avenue by which the Gospel would be propagated! Paul acknowledging his task, wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... 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" (1 Cor. 1:20-21). Preaching is not some humanly conceived means of spreading the Word of God; rather, it is the divinely appointed way that the lost are converted and the sinful are convicted! It is for this cause that Paul gave the aforementioned command: "Preach the Word" (II Tim. 4:2).¹

The Bible is replete with imperatives (commands) regarding this avenue of proclaiming God's Word. Jonah was commanded, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jon. 3:2) The disciples were commanded to preach on numerous occasions including the limited commission (Mat. 10:7,27; Luke 9:2) and the great commission (Mark 16:15). One bidden to follow Jesus tried to excuse himself; "...he said, Lord, suffer me

first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-60).

The Bible also contains numerous indicators that others were commanded to preach. Noah had been "a preacher of righteousness" in his antediluvian civilization (2 Pet. 2:5). The prophets were appointed to preach (Neh. 8:7). Isaiah was anointed to preach (Isa. 61:1). The disciples were sent forth to preach (Mark 3:14). The apostles were commanded to preach (Acts 10:42). Paul was called to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts 16:10); in fact, he was ordained and appointed both preacher and apostle (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 2:11). The Bible also contains the examples of the Lord (Mat. 4:17; 11:1; Mark 1:38; Luke 4:18-19,43;), John (Mark 1:4), and the apostles (Acts 5:42; 14:15; 17:3; Rom. 1:15; et al) who all preached as they were required. The Lord even provided for the payment of those who preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:14).

PREACHING DEFINED: THE WORDS OF PREACHING IN SCRIPTURE

As there have been preachers in all ages, so in both Old and New Testaments are found words pertaining to the work of preaching. The writer will introduce the reader to some of the words found in Hebrew and Greek, will give definitions for them, and will list some of the ways they are translated in some of the passages which incorporate them.

In Hebrew, the word *zabar* (זָהַר), meaning "to *gleam*; figuratively to *enlighten* (by caution): - admonish, shine, teach, (give) warn (-ing)" (Strong). This is the word translated "warn" in 2 Chronicles 19:10 (cf Eze. 3:17-21) and "teach" in Exodus 18:20. The preacher has the grave responsibility of showing people the danger of sin helping them to learn what the Lord requires of them.

A second Hebrew word is *kohleth* (קהלת), meaning "a (female) *assembler* (that is, lecturer); abstractly *preaching* (used as a 'nom de plume', *Kohleth*): - preacher" (Strong). This is the word Solomon used to describe himself in Ecclesiastes 1:1. The preacher is a lecturer, drawing people together to receive instruction from the Lord.

A third Hebrew word is *kara* (קרא), meaning "to *call* out to (that is, properly *address* by name, but used in a wide variety of applications): - bewray [self], that are bidden, call (for, forth, self, upon), cry (unto), (be) famous, guest, invite, mention, (give) name, preach, (make) proclaim (-ation), pronounce, publish, read, renowned, say" (Strong). This word was used for the crying of Jonah against Nineveh (Jon. 3:4) and the proclaiming of peace called for by Moses (Deu. 20:10)2. The preacher calls for men to turn from evil and to turn to God so that they might be in fellowship with Him and His.

Another Hebrew word is *dabar* (דבר), meaning "perhaps properly to *arrange*; but used figuratively (of words) to *speak*; rarely (in a destructive sense) to *subdue*: - answer, appoint, bid, command, commune, declare, destroy, give, name, promise, pronounce, rehearse, say, speak, be spokesman, subdue, talk, teach, tell, think, use [entreaties], utter, X well, X work" (Strong). This is the word translated "speak" in Deuteronomy 20:53 and "declared" in Leviticus 23:44. The preacher is to present a message that is reasonable, educational, and sound.

One of the most common Greek words for preaching (found sixty-one times in the New Testament and often outside of Scripture) would be *kerusso* (κηρύσσω), meaning "to *herald* (as a public *crier*), especially divine truth (the gospel): - preach (-er), proclaim, publish" (Strong). This is the word "preach" in 2 Timothy 4:2 and "preacher" in Romans 10:14. The preacher would publish the *kerugma* (κήρυγμα), "a *proclamation* (especially of the gospel; by implication the

gospel itself): - preaching" (Strong). This is the preaching of 1 Corinthians 1:21 and Titus 1:3.

The preacher is a herald of the Lord's grand proclamation!⁴

Another of the most common Greek words is *euangelidzo* (εὐαγγελίζω), meaning "to announce good news ("evangelize") especially the gospel: - declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel)" (Strong). This is "to preach the Gospel" in 1 Corinthians 1:17. The preacher is a messenger of good tidings (cf Rom. 10:15)--indeed of the *best* tidings!

The word "word" is also associated with preaching. *Logos* (λόγος), meaning something *said* (including the *thought*); by implication a *topic* (subject of discourse), also *reasoning* (the mental faculty) or *motive*; ...: - account, cause, communication, X concerning, doctrine, fame, X have to do, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, + reckon, remove, say (-ing), shew, X speaker, speech, talk, thing, + none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work" (Strong).

This is the word for "preaching" in 1 Corinthians 1:18. The preacher's primary tools are words; if he is sound, those words will have come from God's Word!

A fourth Greek word for preaching is *katangelo* (καταγγέλλω), meaning "to proclaim, promulgate: - declare, preach, shew, speak of, teach" (Strong). This is "declaring" in 1 Corinthians 2:1. The preacher declares the Word of God.

A fifth Greek word is *laleo* (λαλέω), meaning "to talk, that is, utter words: - preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter" (Strong). This is "speak" in 1 Corinthians 2:7 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4. Again words are the preacher's tools.

A sixth Greek word regarding preaching is *parrasia* (παρρησία), meaning "all out spokenness, that is, frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication assurance: - bold (X -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, X freely, X openly, X plainly (-ness)" (Strong). The

"plainness of speech" of 2 Corinthians 3:12 is this word. The preacher's being "instant in season, [and-DFC] out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2) reminds us of the necessity upon him to speak frankly.

A seventh Greek word for preaching is *diabebaioomai* (διαβεβαιόομαι), meaning "to *confirm thoroughly* (by words), that is, *asseverate*: - affirm constantly" (Strong). This word found in Titus 3:8 translated "affirm constantly." The preacher will preach unceasingly.

An eighth word is *didaskalos* (διδάσκαλος) meaning, "an *instructor* (generally or specifically): - doctor, master, teacher" (Strong). It is more general, translated "teachers" in Hebrews 5:12. The teacher must be knowledgeable, prepared to broach his subject knowledgeably and confidently.

A ninth word regarding preaching is *orthotomeo* (ὀρθοτομέω), meaning "to *make a straight cut*, that is, (figuratively) to *dissect (expound) correctly* (the divine message): - rightly divide" (Strong). This is the "rightly dividing" of 2 Timothy 2:15. The preacher must be able to rightly apply the teachings of God's Word making sure that they are kept in their divinely given contexts.

Another Greek word for preaching is perhaps the most serious. This word is *katakrino* (κατακρίνω), meaning "to *judge against*, that is, *sentence*: - condemn, damn" (Strong). The preacher's message will be a message of condemnation of sin and sinner. As used in Hebrews 11:7, it is the implied condemnation of the wicked by way of contrast with the righteousness of Noah. The preacher must live the message that he preaches!

PREACHING PRACTICED: THE ROLE OF PREACHING IN WORSHIP

Worship is not *one* single act performed to appease God, it is the return to God of that which He desires of man in glorifying and praising Him and in edifying and instructing and

challenging and even rebuking those who have assembled to worship. It is that which *must* be offered in spirit--with the right attitude--and in Truth--with the right Doctrine (John 4:24). It is that which contains a memorial to the sacrifice of the Lord (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-28), which contains speaking to God in prayer (Acts 2:42), which contains singing praises to and teaching each other through singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), which contains returning to God a liberal and sincere portion of blessings received of Him (1 Cor. 16:2), and which contains hearing God speak to the worshipper through His Word including through both Scripture reading and preaching (Tit. 1:3; Acts 20:7). Worship occurs every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2) and must not, if one be able to attend, be forsaken (Heb. 10:25).

One should note that preaching is as fundamental to and important in worship as any other act! There are some who believe that one must participate in the Lord's Supper, but that other acts of worship fall into the "optional" category, but that is in now way supported by Scripture. One could just as well hold that *only* a prayer would be sufficient, or that *only* a song would be sufficient, or that *only* a Scripture reading or brief exhortation from God's Word would be sufficient, or even that *only* giving a physical gift would be sufficient. The imperative nature of preaching in Scripture (Old and New Testaments alike), the terms associated with that responsibility, and the practice of the early church all support the necessity of preaching; moreover, its practice through the centuries demonstrates that its importance caught on quickly. Preaching is how the spreading of the Gospel *was* accomplished and how it must *yet* be accomplished.

Was preaching in the first century *exactly* like the preaching of today? Not necessarily; however, neither was the singing. In both areas, as means in accord with Scripture have been

introduced and refined (for example, having three points or having alliterated points or having songs with individual parts) the style has changed while the act has not. Such introductions are not tantamount to using choirs or musical instruments, because those additions change the act!

Of the early development of preaching, Dargan wrote,

More important, however, for us is the inner development of preaching during the second and third centuries. It is an obscure period, and we therefore cannot trace the development with as much accuracy and clearness as is desirable; but there are not wanting some valuable hints and data whereby a tolerably distinct view of the preaching of the age may be presented. That there was a great decline in the power of the preaching after the death of the Apostles and on to the times of Hippolytus, Origen and Cyprian in the latter part of the second and early part of the third century seems quite certain. For about a hundred years after the death of Peter and Paul (say from 70-170) the traces of preaching are extremely scanty, and do not exhibit any great degree of power (p. 35).

This decline is not surprising given the loss of inspired preachers (Acts 8:18), the threat under persecution of meeting openly and recording sermons (Rev. 2:10), and the openness for sermons that pleased men rather than God (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The result would equally be unsurprising: false doctrines could run rampant--and they did!

What developed after this period was similar to the preaching of today.

In form the sermons of the early times were unpretentious addresses, as their name "homilies"--conversations, talks--sufficiently indicates. They were without much logical order, and give little if any indication of a previously prepared outline. The character of the audience would determine whether the talk should be chiefly didactic or evangelistic, and the circumstances and purpose of the preacher would decide whether it should be principally doctrinal, expository, or hortatory; or how far any or all of these elements might be combined in one discourse. There was progress both toward a more orderly structure and a more expository character, and these tendencies were powerfully furthered by the example and teaching of Origen toward the end of the third century. Before his time Scripture was used in the homilies, but rather by way of quotation and application than as furnishing text for exposition. But in his hands continuous exposition with hortatory application became the rule (Dargan 41-42).

Through the intervening years, while the style may have been less organized, the emphasis upon decrying false doctrine was held by those who respected God and the teaching of the Lord and His Apostles. Ferguson wrote, "Naturally, what was believed and confessed was what had been preached [this could be good or bad (2 The. 3:6)-DFC]. In preaching, especially in polemics against false doctrine, appeal was made to summaries of the faith. ... When Christians opposed false teaching, they pointed to the facts of the preaching as it had come down to them" (28). The importance of preaching was unquestioned, as Hippolytus wrote in his *Apostolic Tradition*, xxxv,

The God-fearing man should consider it a great loss if he does not go into the place where they give instruction, and especially if he knows how to read. If there is a teacher there,⁵ let none of you be late in arriving at the assembly at the place in which they give instruction. Then indeed it shall be given to him who speaks to utter things which are profitable to all, and thou shalt be profited by the things which the Holy Spirit will give to thee by him who instructs and so thy faith be established by what thou hearest (Ferguson 70).

Ferguson wrote, alluding to references from Justin and Tertullian and agreeing with Dargan, that "The preaching was based on the Scriptures read in the assembly. ... Early Christian preaching seems to have been predominantly expository. ... It so happens that the few surviving second-century sermons are more topical in nature, but they are still closely based on the Scripture reading" (87). This review of three of Dargan's summary points should suffice to demonstrate the view of preaching in the early centuries: first, "There was a profound conviction of the truth of the gospel (sic), and of its power to redeem men from sin" (59); second, "For the most part the preaching of the time teaches a pure and lofty morality" (60); and, third, "the preaching is firmly based on the authority of Scriptures, both of the Old and of the New Testament, as revelation of the thought and will of God" (ibid.).

By the fourth century, preaching was pretty well what preaching would be, stylistically; however, content-wise, Gospel preaching is always what Gospel preaching is; or, as worded by Hudson, "Preaching in the twentieth century--is it any different from preaching in any other century? The Gospel is not different. The needs of men and women are not different." H. Leo Boles' *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers* and Loyd L. Smith's *Gospel Preachers of Yesteryear* and numerous other books give biographical sketches of preachers from the 1760s through the 1970s who, though certainly differing stylistically, strove alike to preach the Gospel. F.D. Srygley's *Biographies and Sermons* and B.C. Goodpasture and W.T. Moore's *Biographies and Sermons of Pioneer Preachers* and numerous other books record not only the names and histories but the actual sermons they presented. While there may have been a few in some of these books who ultimately left the Word of God for some human religion, philosophy, or folly, these generally did exactly what the Lord's church was commanded to do!

PREACHING PERPETUATED: THE NEED OF PREACHING IN SCHOOLS

The feet of preachers are beautiful, but "how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15). Paul instructed Timothy, "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" (2 Tim. 2:2). The imperative of preaching in Scripture, the stress on the words describing the preacher and his task, and the practice of the early church and the many centuries since all loudly voice the need to be preparing preachers!

Some have seen the need but have turned away for the responsibility. Some have tried to meet the need but have seen their efforts fail, or worse, be change to perverting rather than preaching the Truth. Many have seen the need and have answered the call successfully and

faithfully! Among those is the host of this series of lectures: the Memphis School of Preaching. Founded fifty years ago, as former directors and numerous others have said, "The school's shoes are pointed in the same direction as at the the beginning."⁶ That way is the way of Christ! While some training is done by schools such a Freed Hardeman, even its founder, N.B. Hardeman, saw the need of a school dedicated to the Word of God alone; he said, "If I could start over (sic) I would have a school in which only the Bible would be taught" (Hardeman, 9).⁷

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.'s, preface of the book in which this lecture appears gives some of the background of the school, specifically regarding the discussions at the building of the Waverly-Belmont congregation in Nashville in which B.C. Goodpasture, E. Ray Jerkins, J. Roy Vaughn, Roy J. Hearn, and others proposed a school such as the Memphis School of Preaching. In 1966 such a school was established at the Getwell congregations building under the direction of Roy J. Hearn. In 1968, the young school was moved to the facilities of the young Knight Arnold congregation (which had begun meeting in 1959). During this same period, a young preacher and educator in Alabama was cutting his teeth under the instruction of Rex A. Turner, Sr. In 1942 Rex A. Turner, Sr., and Leonard Johnson had founded the Montgomery Bible School (later Alabama Christian College, now Faulkner University) and this young preacher and his bride-to-be were educated there. In 1967 brother Turner founded the Alabama Christian School of Religion (later Southern Christian University and Regions University, now Amridge University), also in Montgomery, Alabama (Curtis Cates, "Man of Renown" 2). The young preacher continued his education under brother Turner, but also taught at Alabama Christian and Alabama Christian School of Religion. Brother Turner, who had a doctorate in education, was a brilliant man, having--if this writer's recall is accurate--received the first law degree from Auburn

University. He was also a man beloved by "his 'boys,'" those whom he trained in the Bible (Mosher 1). He was even well beloved by that young preacher's children (Andy and Dan Cates, "An Encourager of Youth" 3). This writer remembers the many times that he heard about the schools of the prophets while he was growing up--those schools were a favorite subject for brother Turner and his students. That training of future prophets in Samuel's day surely influenced the training of preachers by both brother Turner and the young preacher, Curtis A. Cates, Sr. In fact, the latter dedicated an article in the February 17, 1988, *Yokefellow* to that very subject (Curtis Cates, "The Schools" 2).

Curtis A. Cates, Sr., took the love of the Word of God and to educating preachers and other Bible students to heart early in his life. He preached from his teenaged years, taught college and university classes from his twenties--often flying many miles in adverse conditions to do so, and capped his in-class education when he received his doctorate from the University of Alabama in 1977--the writer has eleven or so of his father's diplomas in his office and proudly displays several of them. In 1982 Curtis A. Cates, Sr., was extended an invitation to teach at the Memphis School of Preaching and to become director when Roy J. Hearn would step down. Curtis A. Cates, Sr., would be as beloved by his students as Rex A. Turner, Sr., had been by his; both can be seen in the many former students who carry on their legacies. It should be noted that it was under Curtis A. Cates, Sr.'s, watch that the school was moved to its present location--the class of 1998 were the first to graduate in the new facilities--and that the N.B. Hardeman Library and student housing were built.

After twenty-five years, brother Cates stepped back from the strenuous work of directing the Memphis School of Preaching to become director emeritus. The elders chose a sound Gospel

preacher who had been teaching at the Memphis School of Preaching since the fall of 1994.

Bobby Liddell became director on March 27, 2007. Brother Liddell has had a passion for training preachers and for preaching for years. His desire to do more preaching and teaching led to his stepping down on December 31, 2012 (Liddell). Brother Liddell remains at the school and continues to do a wonderful job in all the roles he fills.

Bobby Liddell was succeeded by B.J. Clarke on January 1, 2013. In the fall of 2006, B.J. Clarke had begun teaching at the Memphis School of Preaching. He had, as an alumnus' (T.J. Clarke) son and as the located preacher at the Southaven (MS) congregation, been quite close to the school for many years prior. His addition to the faculty and ascent to the directorship were both important steps in the continued, sound success of the Memphis School of Preaching. The faculty, staff, and students of the school are all grateful to have him working with them, because he maintains the stand which has been taken for these past fifty years.

END NOTES

1 Considering the Greek love of theater, would not the first century have been the perfect time to win people to God via dramatic performance if God were going to sanction such?

2 One might consider also Philo's use of this word in his "The Special Laws, IV," xli.221 and "On the Virtues," xxii.109; xxix.151.

3 One might consider the use of this word in Philo's "On Husbandry," xxxiii.148.

4 The role of herald is well documented in antiquity. See Philo's "On the Change of Names," xxx.162; "On Joseph," xxi; "On the Eternity of the World," xii.68 (cf Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, IV.viii.40); and "On the Embassy to Gaius," xiii.100,102 (cf. Livy, *History of Rome*, XLV.12). See also Polybius' *The Histories*, XVIII.46; Cassius Dio's *Rome*, XL.41; Xenophon's *Hellenica*, VII.ii; and Ammianus Marcellinus' *The Roman History*, XX.vii.3.

5 If there were no teacher there, Hippolytus instructed, "let each one at home take a holy book and read it sufficiently what seems profitable" (Ferguson 70) Ferguson wrote later, "Other Christian literature and communications between churches might also be read at the Sunday gatherings" (87).

6 The reader is encouraged to see the constant stand that the school has taken as illustrated by Curtis A. Cates, Sr.'s, *Yokefellow* articles "The Importance of Teaching" (XXII.vii, July 11, 1995, p. 2), "Why Churches Hire M.S.O.P. Graduates" (XIV.xi, November 24, 1987, p. 2), and "Accreditation and the Memphis School of Preaching" (XV.iii, March 22, 1988).

7 Commendations of the Memphis School of Preaching by Guy N. Woods, J. Franklin Camp, and Robert R. Taylor, Jr., implying its capably filling a need and recommending it are recorded on page 8 of the General Catalog.

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THE SON OF GOD: HIS DISTINCTIVE TEACHING

Dan Cates

It is a distinct privilege to this writer to have been invited to Hobart to speak in the Sixteenth Annual Eastern Shore Lectureship. The theme, *We Preach Christ* ([1Co_1:23](#)), is one so greatly needed throughout the brotherhood as ones who strive to spread the kingdom must be seeking to preach Christ; furthermore, it is one extremely needed in a world where Christ is not as much preached as He is denigrated. This writer greatly appreciates the director of the lectureship, Gary Young, and the work which he does in preaching Christ in this community and defending Him throughout the world! The writer also appreciates the congregation at Eastern Shore who are hosting this lectureship and who are serving as lights reflecting the Lord to the community. It is this writer's prayer that the congregation in this location and that the congregations throughout Tasmania and the rest of Australia and the many other nations of this area of the world will uphold the Truth for generations to come.

The concern of this lesson is the distinctive Teaching of the Son of God. Perhaps an analogy can help to couch the tenor of this study: Were everyone reading this to take into account every skilled orator whom he had ever heard and then imagine the sum of all of those skilled orators--including those whom both he and the others imagined, the sum of oratory ability contained by them would pale in comparison to that possessed by the Lord! One might argue that the Pharisees' and chief priests' officers' impressive statement "Never man spake like this man" ([Joh_7:46](#)) was a one for one comparison; however, such argument would be futile, for this speaker was sent of God ([Joh_7:28-29](#), [Joh_7:33](#)) and, more than that, *is* God ([Joh_1:1](#); [Joh_10:30](#)). Accordingly, His speech had authority which none other could even begin to match

([Mat_7:28-29](#))--Jesus' Teaching was, and remains, distinctive! This study shall focus upon the distinctive Teaching of the Son of God by noting Its indescribable depth, inexhaustible wealth, and indispensable health.

THE INDESCRIBABLE DEPTH OF JESUS' TEACHING

"Never man spake like this man" did not merely apply to the Divine nature of Jesus and His Teaching; rather, it also applied to the varied means of teaching which He could effectively utilize and the wide range of subjects He could knowledgeably address.

Among countless means He could utilize, Jesus could teach through parable (relating spiritual lessons in physical stories) as in Matthew 13, prophecy (accurately foretelling future events) as in Matthew 24 and the Revelation, challenge (testing the resolve of would-be disciples) as in [Luk_18:18-23](#), name calling (answering fools according to their folly [[Pro_26:5](#)]) as in [Mat_23:13-33](#), proof texting (quoting Scripture) as in [Luk_24:44-47](#), and question and answer (asking and answering the questions of the sincere and insincere, at times even answering through the use of though provoking questions) as in [Mat_22:15-46](#). Regardless of the method used, Jesus always accomplished His purpose through His Teaching!

One may remember that when the twelve year old Jesus was inadvertently left in Jerusalem, He was found in the temple ([Luk_2:41-45](#)). Perhaps a hint at the ability of Jesus to knowledgeably, and even masterfully, speak on any subject is seen in the account of the events which took place in this early context--well before Jesus' use of miracles ([Joh_2:1-11](#)). The reader might carefully consider the situation in which Jesus was found: "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding

and answers." Was it necessarily the case that Jesus was asking to learn of the men skilled in the law? When one remembers that Jesus would at times answer questions by means of questions, one might consider that Jesus was teaching the doctors who were among "all that heard him [who-DFC] were astonished at his understanding and answers" ([Luk_2:46-47](#)). Is it not reasonable that being about His Father's business ([Luk_2:49](#)) to a degree not yet appreciated by his parents ([Luk_2:50](#)), He was already seeking and saving "that which was lost" (cf. [Luk_19:10](#))?

Of Solomon's wisdom, the Queen of Sheba marveled and acknowledge its exceptional character saying, "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" ([1Ki_10:7](#)). Given that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" ([Joh_21:25](#)), it is reasonable that the half of the depth of Jesus' Teaching has not even begun to be hinted at!

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE WEALTH OF JESUS' TEACHING

The New Testament is exactly what the Holy Spirit desired It to be--His plan for the New Testament did not include a New Testament parallel to the beautifully expressive poetry of the Old Testament; however, as Jesus Christ is God and is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," so descriptions applying to the Word of God in the Psalms and Proverbs can be applied to Jesus' Teaching. While the types of literature in the New Testament may not be conducive to doing justice to the *value* of Jesus' Teaching; Its value can be rightfully compared to that of wisdom:

Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy *is every one* that retaineth her ([Pro_3:13-18](#)).

Jesus could have said as Solomon, "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold" ([Pro_8:10](#)). Of Jesus' Teaching could the Psalmist have said, "The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward" ([Psa_19:9-11](#)).

The value of Jesus' Teaching is seen in Its authority ([Mat_7:28-29](#)), in Its confirmation by miracles ([Mat_9:35](#)), in Its effect as seen in the reactions of those who heard It ([Mat_13:54](#)), and in Its transmission to others who could authoritatively pass It on ([Gal_1:11-12](#); cf. [2Ti_2:2](#)).

THE INDISPENSABLE HEALTH OF JESUS' TEACHING

Upon Jesus' arriving at Jacob's well in Sychar as He travelled through Samaria on His journey from Judea to Galilee ([Joh_4:3-6](#)), Jesus met a woman of whom He asked water ([Joh_4:7](#)).

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give

him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw ([Joh 4:9-15](#)).

That which Jesus offered in His teaching was health--It was life! The Psalmist, again writing words which could have been applied to Jesus' Teaching, penned, "The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes" ([Psa 19:8](#)). What benefit was, and is, found in the Doctrine of Christ! There would be Divine Motivation for Paul to tell Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" ([1Ti 4:6](#)).

Weighing the humble position of man and the exalted position of the Lord, one might wonder why the Lord would provide such health, why He would offer such life. The simple reason is due the love for man, which love was shared by Father ([Joh 3:16](#)) and Son ([Joh 14:21](#), [Joh 14:23](#)).

CONCLUSION

The indescribable depth, inexhaustible wealth, and indispensable health of Jesus' Teaching all cooperate to make It distinct. Having established these things, and knowing that Jesus was from God ([Joh 7:29](#)), is God ([Joh 4:26](#)), and has in His Teachings commands reflecting ultimate authority ([Joh 8:31-32](#)), it is incumbent upon man to react to that distinct Teaching in obedience.

BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM

Daniel F. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. Like Psalm 137, Psalm 126 is a Psalm about Babylonian captivity.
2. Actually the two Psalms are a contrast.
 - a. [Psa 137:1-9](#) shows the sadness of the captives.
 - b. [Psa 126:1-6](#) shows the joy of the released captive.
3. Sadness and tears had characterized the captivity, laughter and singing characterized the release.
4. The people of God, by His will, had been returned to their former state: Redeemed and precious.
5. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” means that those who so long had been captive would finally have opportunity to rejoice.
6. The captive, who weeping had borne precious seed into captivity, would return “bringing his sheaves with him.”
 - a. He who had faithfully undergone the punishment would return joyful.
 - b. A feeling of victory would accompany the return.
 - c. He would bring his sheaves with him.
 - (1). The sheaf was a bundle of wheat that would be left behind the reaper.
 - (2). Those who physically could not reap would follow behind and carry those sheaves to the thresher.
 - (3). Here the sower would return from the field bearing his own sheaves with him.
7. We need preachers who will bear and sow precious seed.
 - a. The sower must bear precious seed, the Word of God ([Luk 8:11](#)).
 - b. At times the seed will be easily sown.
 - c. At other times the seed will be sown in tears, reaping in such a case will be so much the more joyous.
 - (1). Some see faithful preachers as the enemy.
 - (2). Wicked Ahab asked Elijah, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” ([1Ki 18:17](#)).
 - (3). In actuality it had been Ahab and his father’s (Omri: “Worse than all before him” ([1Ki 16:25](#))) house ([1Ki 18:18](#))
8. For the preacher that goes forth sowing precious seed, weeping at times, there will be a victorious return carrying his sheaves with him.
9. Our task is to see what the preacher must be before he can return again bringing his sheaves with him.

I. THE PREACHER MUST BE FAITHFUL HIMSELF.

- A. There are certainly cases where unfaithful preachers have had members that overcame their lack of faithful preaching, but when those members and preachers appear before god, the unfaithful preacher will not be bearing his sheaves with him.
 - 1. The preacher should be faithful in lifestyle.
 - 2. The preacher should be faithful in attitude.
 - 3. The preacher should be faithful in doctrine.
- B. The preacher should ask himself several questions.
 - 1. “Do I have the religious conviction to give my all to the Lord?”
 - 2. “Do I have a faith that will inspire others?”
 - 3. “Do I teach only that for which I can find Bible authority?”
- C. The preacher that tries to “sell” Christianity must use it himself.
 - 1. Who would buy a car from a salesman that does not drive his product?
 - 2. This is true of many products: Computers, pizza, etc.
 - 3. Who will hear a preacher who does not stand behind the Word?
 - 4. The preacher should demonstrate excitement about the message.
- D. Furthermore the preacher must count his own blessings.
 - 1. What benefits have you received in your life from faithful instruction?
 - 2. What benefits have you received in your life from being a part of God’s kingdom?
 - 3. If we do not see what we have received we will be a lot less motivated to share the great Message with others.

II. THE PREACHER MUST KNOW WHY HE IS PREACHING.

- A. There must be the understanding that there is nothing more precious than a soul.
 - 1. There is a battle taking place for the souls of the members ([Eph 6:12](#)).
 - 2. Today the spiritual lives of our members are sacrificed at the altars of entertainment and recreation.
 - 3. Furthermore the secular school has precedence all too often over the Bible school.
 - 4. In the battle for our children, the only winners are the children whose parents, guardians, or Christian family or neighbors, take the small amount of extra

time and effort to have them where the saints are being nurtured and taught.

- B. There should be an understanding that the message, kingdom, and King are unique.
1. There is no message that can compare with that which the Bible preacher presents.
 - a. It is not just a moral principle.
 - b. It is not only a “Bible story.”
 - c. The Bible preacher is presenting the only message that speaks of eternal life ([Joh_10:10](#); [Joh_5:40](#))!
 2. In a world of “conscience confidence” the message of the kingdom is one of “conscious conviction.”
 - a. The kingdom stands apart from catch-all denominations.
 - b. The church stands as the only place in which one can present himself a living sacrifice ([Rom_12:1](#)).
 3. The greatness of the King being served should never be underestimated.
 - a. We commemorate His death every week when we partake of the Lord’s supper.
 - b. But more than that we glory in His life every time we pray through His name!
 - c. How can we pray to God for the souls of men, through the mediation of our own Savior, and at the same time not even give ourselves fully to the task of winning the lost
 - d. Despite the sacrifice of the King, some, even preachers, are ashamed to proclaim His name loudly enough that it be heard.
 - (1). We should never fear to do the work of our Lord.
 - (2). Jesus Himself was not ashamed but in the words of Roy Hearn ,”Came to start a fight.”
 - (a). It was a fight for souls ([Luk_12:51](#)).
 - (b). It was an effort to give life where only death had been ([Luk_19:10](#)).
- C. There should be an understanding of the needs of the individual members.

1. Different members require different types help.
2. Some members require special motivation, others may require special instruction.
3. The preacher must be able to walk in the members' shoes and make an appeal from the level of each individual.
 - a. One could have the greatest knowledge of any man alive and yet be ineffective.
 - b. At the same time one could lack the years of instruction and yet know how to relate to the individual member and be a fruitful worker.
4. The ideal preacher is the one who understands the needs of all of the individual members under his care and is able, without compromising Scripture, to touch their lives.

III. THE PREACHER SHOULD BE OPTIMISTIC.

- A. [Joh 4:35](#) teaches, “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”
- B. Our attitude as preachers should be that of the previous verse, “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
- C. What must we do?
 1. We must preach to our members, but we also must go beyond the walls and ground of the building and apply all of these things to preaching to the community.
 2. We must seize any and all opportunities.
 - a. In [Isa 6:1-8](#) Isaiah did not look around to see who would do the Lord’s work, he said, “Here am I; send me.”
 - b. There are only two types of servants in the kingdom: the faithful and the unfaithful, and the Lord has said that “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” ([Mat 12:30](#)).

CONCLUSION:

1. Preachers, preach with your all.
2. Preach so that one day you will carry your sheaves with you.

THE GREATEST SERMON EVER

Daniel F. Cates

[Mat_5:2](#), "And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,"

Thus begins the Sermon on the Mount--the greatest sermon ever preached!

This sermon did not measure up in many areas to what some would expect the greatest sermon to be

It was not alliterated

It did not have three points, a poem, and a death bed story

It did not contain perfectly symmetrical points

It was not designed to cater to its audience

It was long--107 verses, over four times longer than the sermon of Acts 2

What made it the greatest sermon ever?

It was preached by God

[Joh_1:1](#), "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

[Joh_10:30](#), "I and my Father are one."

God still speaks through His Word today; those who preach It and It alone are speaking for Him

[1Co_1:18](#), [1Co_1:21](#), "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... 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."

It was preached with authority

[Mat_7:28-29](#), "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes."

[Mat_22:33](#), "And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine."

[Mar_1:22](#), "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."

[Mar_11:18](#), "And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine."

These, like most today, were not used to hearing the authority of the Word of God!

[Mat_15:9](#), "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."

It was Truth

[Joh_17:17](#), "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

It was, indeed, "sound doctrine"

[Tit_2:1](#), "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:"

His teaching is still Truth and sound doctrine, for neither It nor Truth have changed!

It was personal

"You" 34 times

"Thou" 27 times

"Thee" 20 times

"I say unto you" 13 times

The message of God is a personal message!

[Tit_2:11](#), "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," (cf [Joh_3:16](#), "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.")

[1Ti_2:3-4](#), "For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

[2Pe_3:9](#), "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

It was challenging

Roughly 42 imperatives--equivalent to a "Thou shalt" with 8 or so other commands

Commands are given because men are required to meet the standard the Lord sets!

Beyond the commands, think of just trying to live up to the level of the Beatitudes

Righteous living is not an accident; one must purpose to attain that level!

Too many sermons today are more like advice columns than Divine dictate, but while "Thou shalt"s and "Thou shalt not"s have gone out of favour with man, they are still essential for his salvation!

It was instructional

Imperatives are empty without instruction accompanying them!

A child who is told *to do* something needs also to be told *how* it can be done

Adults need the same type of instruction from their heavenly Father!

"Teach me" 15 times in Scripture--most in the Psalms, with 9 being in the great Psalm on the Word of God, Psalm 119

A few times the similar "shew me" is used as in [Exo_33:13](#), "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy

sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people."

Today, sermons must continue to be instructive so that those convicted of sin can know how to have the weight of sin removed and so that those who have been obedient know what else the Lord would have them do

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL SERMON?

Dan Cates

TEXT: [1Co_1:18](#), [1Co_1:21](#), "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. . . . 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."

INTRODUCTION:

1. If we are to be honest, it is likely the case that the average person listening to a sermon today, here or elsewhere, is not too excited about it.
 - a. Minds wander, eyelids droop, attention finds another host.
 - b. This is true no matter how well the preacher speaks, nor how desirous people are of worshipping God through Bible study.
 - c. It may not be a commentary on the speaker nor on the subject; it may just be sitting still for half an hour to listen to one man on one subject.
 - d. Indeed, if Paul could put people to sleep, then who is exempt from doing so himself? ([Act_20:9](#)).
2. Unfortunately, some will attack the preacher and the preaching when they do not "get anything out" of a given study.
 - a. In his book *The Empty Pulpit* Clyde Reid wrote concerning why some do not like sermons--among other reasons, "Most sermons today are boring, dull, and uninteresting . . . Preaching today is irrelevant . . . Preaching does not lead to change in persons . . . Preaching has been over-emphasized."
 - b. Remember that Paul was called a babbler when he spoke upon Mars Hill ([Act_17:18](#)), and yet he was an inspired speaker with an inspired message.
3. That some would attack sermons and those who deliver them is not really a surprise, for God said that some felt preaching was foolish.
 - a. Paul wrote, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. . . . 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" ([1Co_1:18](#), [1Co_1:21](#)).
 - b. Notice that while man may scorn preaching, God deems it as a great and important tool by which men may be saved.
4. We ask then, what makes a successful sermon?

I. IT IS PREPARED TO MEET A NEED.

- A. Not every person who hears a particular sermon needs that sermon, per se; however, the preacher strives to meet needs with sermons.

1. There may be different moods.
 - a. It may be that a sermon is meant to convert the lost.
 - b. It may be that a sermon is meant to convict sinners.
 - c. It may be that a sermon is meant to build faith.
 - d. It may be that a sermon is meant to educate new Christians.
 - e. It may be that a sermon is meant to improve worship.
 - f. It may be that a sermon is meant to strengthen families.
 - g. It may be that a sermon is meant to empower students.
 - h. It may be that a sermon is meant to motivate action.
 - i. It may be that a sermon is meant to defend Truth.
 - j. It may be that a sermon is meant to refute error.
 2. Accordingly, there may be different audiences.
 - a. The alien sinner.
 - b. The erring Christian.
 - c. The struggling Christian.
 - d. The stressed parent.
 - e. The complacent worshipper.
 - f. The novice.
 - g. The unaware.
 - h. The endangered.
 3. Today's sermon may not be for you, but it may be for the person beside you; conversely, next week's sermon may suit your needs more than those of the person beside you--either way, the sermon is designed to meet the needs of someone.
 - a. If you are not "getting anything out" of the sermon, why don't you pray that the efforts of the preacher will bear fruit in others; better yet, listen to the sermon so that you can help the preacher be knowing how to reinforce what has been said.
- B. The sermon is not designed to merely be hot air--such would be the waste of the hearers' time, and a waste of the speaker's.
1. There are not enough hours in the day to waste time of frivolous subjects; neither would the One who prescribed preaching be satisfied with such!
 2. The preacher worth his salt will prepare, truly prepare, appropriate sermons for all with whom he works and pleads.
 - a. Here is Paul's advice which is heeded by thoughtful preachers: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" ([1Ti 4:13](#)).
 3. The preacher worth his salt will be motivated out of love to seek the needs of every one whom he addresses ([Eph 4:15](#)).
 4. If just one person is aided by the message prepared, then the preacher will feel that he has preached a successful sermon,

the prudent hearer will as well!

II. IT IS TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

- A. Paul told Timothy, "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; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" ([2Ti 4:1-5](#)).
- B. Peter said, "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" ([1Pe 4:11](#)).
- C. Here is the point: A sermon not rooted in the Word of God will not have been successful even if the speaker were the world's greatest orator and every hearer were to respond!
- D. Why was Paul a successful preacher?
 1. It was not due to his speaking ability ([1Co 2:1-4](#)).
 2. It was not due to the responses he received ([2Co 11:23-28](#)).
 3. It was because he had "not shunned to declare . . . all the counsel of God" ([Act 20:27](#)).

III. IT CHALLENGES PEOPLE TO ACT.

- A. The preacher can go only so far in his striving to win souls, to edify the brethren, or to address Biblical subjects.
 1. The preacher tries to follow the example of Christ in presenting a message which *may* be understood by all ([Mar 12:37](#)).
 2. Paul likewise presented a message which *could* be understood ([2Co 3:12](#)).
 3. If the preacher can say after he has preached that such was done to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" ([Col 1:28](#)), then he has gone as far as he can.
- B. The balance of the responsibility in making the sermon truly successful rests upon the hearer.
 1. The hearer must be concerned about hearing ([Jam 1:19](#)).
 2. The hearer must be determined to be understanding ([Mat 13:14](#)).
 2. The hearer must be sincere about applying ([Mat 13:19-23](#)).
 3. The hearer must be serious about doing ([Jam 1:22-25](#); [Mat 7:24-27](#); [Rom 2:13](#)).

CONCLUSION:

1. When a sermon is prepared to meet a need, is true to the Word of God, and challenges people to act, then it has been successful whether or not any fruit immediately be seen and whether or not all of those who hear it are impressed.
2. Today, and every time a sermon emanates from this pulpit--preached by this preacher or another--God has "manifested his word" ([Tit_1:3](#)); the question is, "What will we do with the message presented?"
3. Answer that question today with action--obedience to the Word of God!

WHY PAUL PREACHED

Dan Cates

TEXT: [Rom_1:13-18](#), "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"

INTRODUCTION:

1. Few would argue about Paul's position as one of the great preachers of Scripture; his being a teacher, a missionary, a writer, an encourager, a soul winner.
2. What one might ask in reaction to Paul's great work as a preacher, "What motivated Paul? Why was he a preacher?"
3. This study shall answer these questions based upon what he told the Romans regarding his preaching to them ([Rom_1:13-18](#)); here is why Paul preached: because he could bear fruit, because he was a debtor, because he was ready, because he was not ashamed, and because he knew what eternity holds.

I. BECAUSE HE COULD BEAR FRUIT ([Rom_1:13](#), "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.").

- A. Paul could expect to bear fruit, because similar efforts had already borne fruit "among other Gentiles"!
- B. Bearing fruit would be a sign of productivity.
 1. Paul knew that productivity was required of the disciples.
 - a. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" ([Joh_15:16](#)).
 2. Paul knew that fruit was a sign that the seed was active!
 - a. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" ([Luk_8:11](#)).
 - b. "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also

bearth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" ([Mat 13:23](#)).

3. Paul knew the danger inherent in not bearing fruit.
 - a. He had probably heard of the unfruitful fig tree which Jesus cursed ([Mar 11:13-14](#)).
 - b. He undoubtedly knew of Jesus' similar teaching, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" ([Joh 15:1-2](#)).

II. BECAUSE HE WAS A DEBTOR ([Rom 1:14](#), "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.").

- A. Paul knew how far his fellow-men had brought him, and he knew how far the Gospel had brought Him; the next step, logically, was to lead his fellow-men to the Truth.
- B. As debtor, it behoved Paul to preach the Gospel, no matter what it might cost him!
 1. Paul, as one who had been an opponent but became a proponent, could have said like Jeremiah, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*" ([Jer 20:9](#)).
 2. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" ([1Co 9:16](#)).
- C. Though he had and would pay physical price ([Act 14:19](#); [Act 16:23-24](#); [2Co 11:23-27](#)) and an emotional price ([2Co 11:28](#)) for his preaching, anything he suffered in seeking to save the souls of others was but a "light affliction" which would result in "a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;" ([2Co 4:17](#)).
 1. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." ([2Ti 2:10](#)).
 2. "And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation" ([2Co 1:6](#)).

III. BECAUSE HE WAS READY ([Rom 1:15](#), "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.").

- A. Paul's readiness was more than simply preparedness--which was also a trait found in him; his readiness was eagerness--the meaning of the word

used translated "ready" in this verse.

1. Eagerness is "A positive feeling of wanting to push ahead with something" (WordWeb).
 2. Being "eager" is "Having or showing keen interest or intense desire or impatient expectancy" (Word Web).
- B. Paul was not only able to preach the Gospel, nor only able and willing to preach the Gospel; rather, he was anxious to have any opportunity to take the Truth to the Romans!
1. Like Isaiah Paul could have said regarding his being called, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me" ([Isa_6:8](#)).
 2. Instead of simply praying for laborers ([Mat_9:38](#)), Paul want to be one of the laborers "bringing his sheaves *with him*" ([Psa_126:6](#)).

IV. BECAUSE HE WAS NOT ASHAMED ([Rom_1:16](#), "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.").

- A. Many, perhaps out of shame--which may be akin to fear, remain silent while those in the world perish in sin.
1. Perhaps were these not threatened souls but sinking bodies, there would be incentive to toss out a life preserver.
 2. Perhaps were these not endangered souls but trapped bodies, there would be strength to claw through an obstacles.
 3. Perhaps were these not souls approaching a fire but fire approached bodies, there would be the courage to pull them out of the fire (cf. [Jud_1:23](#)).
- B. Paul saw the lost condition of those outside of Christ and, rather than being ashamed, boldly declared the Good News!
1. Perhaps he thought of David's example.
 - a. "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation" ([Psa_40:9-10](#)).
 - b. "My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only" ([Psa_71:15-16](#)).
 - c. "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed" ([Psa_119:46](#)).
 2. Perhaps he thought of Jesus' warnings.

- a. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the lory of his Father with the holy angels" ([Mar_8:38](#)).
- b. "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" ([Mat_10:33](#)).
- 3. Whatever the case, Paul was not and urged others not to be ashamed!
 - a. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" ([2Ti_1:12](#)).
 - b. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;" ([2Ti_1:8](#)).

V. BECAUSE HE KNEW WHAT ETERNITY HOLDS ([Rom_1:17-18](#), "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;").

- A. God's righteousness provides for the just eternal life ([Rom_1:17](#), "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.").
 - 1. The lot of all righteous of all time has been eternal life!
 - a. "Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith" ([Hab_2:4](#)).
 - b. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" ([Heb_10:38](#)).
 - 2. One does not need to think that Paul was saying that man's faith alone is what merited eternal life; it is man's obedience to the system of faith--as opposed to the law--that saves.
 - a. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith" ([Gal_3:11](#)).
 - b. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" ([Phi_3:9](#)).
- B. God's wrath reserves for the ungodly and unrighteous eternal death ([Rom_1:18](#), "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in

unrighteousness;").

1. There is physical death which all shall see; for the unrighteous, there is a second, far more menacing spiritual death ([Rev_21:8](#)).
 - a. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" ([Jas_1:15](#)).
 - b. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Rom_6:23](#)).
 - c. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" ([2Co_7:10](#)).
2. Note the simple, yet often misunderstood or even overlooked, contrast: Life for obedience; death for disobedience.
 - a. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" ([Joh_3:36](#)).
 - b. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" ([Mat_25:46](#)).

CONCLUSION:

1. Why did Paul preach?
2. Because he could bear fruit, because he was a debtor, because he was ready, because he was not ashamed, and because he knew what eternity holds.
3. Today, the same things which motivated Paul to preach, motivate every child of God to reach out to others with the Gospel.
4. It may be that there is one here today who has not obeyed the Gospel; if your soul is in that precarious position, understand that not only **why**, but also **what** Paul preached remains true today--the question is this: Will the Truth of God's Word be accepted in belief and obeyed through repentance, confession, baptism, and subsequent faithfulness?

WHY PREACHERS PREACH

Dan Cates

TEXT: [2Ti 4:2](#), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

INTRODUCTION:

1. Why do preachers preach?

I. TO FULFILL A MOST IMPORTANT CHARGE.

- A. [2Ti 4:2](#), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
- B. [2Ti 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."

II. TO REVEAL THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

- A. [Eph 3:8-11](#), "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"
- B. [2Ti 1:10-11](#), [2Ti 1:13](#), "... our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ... Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

III. TO TURN MEN UNTO GOD.

- A. [Act 14:15](#), "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:"
- B. [Joh 6:45](#), "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

IV. TO SHARE GOOD NEWS.

- A. [Rom 10:15](#), "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!"

- B. [Act 10:36-37](#), "The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;"
- C. [Act 13:26](#), "Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."

V. TO SAVE SINFUL MEN.

- A. [1Co 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."
- B. [Rom 6:23](#), "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- C. [1Co 1:18](#), "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

VI. TO COMPLETE THE OBEDIENT.

- A. [Col 1:28](#), "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: "
- B. [Eph 4:11-13](#), "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"
- C. [Heb 13:20-22](#), "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words."
- D. [2Ti 3:16~2Ti 4:2](#), "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 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; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

CONCLUSION:

1. We have seen why preachers preach: to fulfill a most important charge, to reveal the Doctrine of God, to turn men unto God, to share good news, to save sinful men, and to complete the obedient.
2. The question now is whether listeners will "suffer [allow] the word of exhortation" ([Heb 13:22](#)).

WHY, WHAT, AND TO WHOM WE PREACH

Dan Cates

TEXT: [1Co_1:18-21](#), "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 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."

INTRODUCTION:

1. Some think that preaching is an outdated, outmoded way to carry God's message.
 - a. Of these, some would promote testifying, dramatic presentations, story-telling, concerts, or other such over "book, chapter, and verse" preaching.
 - b. Many, therefore, are either literally or effectively calling preaching foolish.
 - c. Apparently, the same attack was being made against preaching in the days of Paul in the area of Corinth.
2. Paul was answering just such an attack when he penned [1Co_1:18-21](#) in defense of that which men deemed foolish.
 - a. What men deemed foolish had been commanded by God ([Act_10:42](#), "And 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.").
 - b. What men deemed foolish had been pictured as necessary and beautiful by the Holy Spirit as He inspired Paul to write, "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? 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! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Rom_10:14-17](#)).
 - c. What men deemed foolish was, nonetheless, esteemed in the wisdom of God to be the best way to present His Word.
3. Since preaching is right, necessary, and wise, let us ask three questions:

I. WHY DO WE PREACH?

- A. Because men are living in vanity ([Act_14:15](#), "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:").
 1. Song: "Years I spent in vanity and pride."
- B. Because there are things about which man must be warned ([Col_1:28](#);

- [1Co_4:14](#); [1Th_4:6](#), [1Th_5:14](#)).
- C. Because there are peace and goodness in the message of God ([Rom_10:15](#), "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!").
 - D. Because we want all to be saved ([Col_1:28](#), "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:").
 - E. Because we do not want to be held accountable for those we did not seek to persuade ([Act_20:26-27](#), "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"; c.f., [Act_18:6](#); [Eze_3:18-21](#), [Eze_33:2-9](#)).
 - F. Because even believers need to be exhorted to obedience ([1Co_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.").

II. WHAT DO WE PREACH?

- A. The Gospel ([Mar_16:15](#), "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; [Act_16:10](#), "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.").
 - 1. This is the message of "Christ and him crucified" ([1Co_2:2](#)).
- B. God's Word ([Luk_8:5](#), "A sower went out to sow his seed: . . .", [Luk_8:11](#), "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God"; [2Ti_4:2](#), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.").
- C. The kingdom.
 - 1. While Jesus, John, and the disciples preached it was at hand ([Mat_3:2](#); [Mat_4:17](#); [Mat_10:7](#)), none did after Pentecost for at that time it came into existence ([Col_1:13](#)).
 - 2. Before he claimed purity from the blood of men, Paul acknowledged he had preached the kingdom ([Act_20:25](#), "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.").
- D. Peace ([Act_10:36](#), "The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)").
- E. Words of life ([Act_5:20](#), "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.").
- F. Forgiveness of sins ([Act_13:38](#), "Be it known unto you therefore, men

and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:").

- G. Unsearchable riches ([Eph_3:8](#), "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;").
- H. Salvation's plan ([Rom_10:17](#); [Mar_16:16](#); [Joh_8:24](#); [Heb_11:6](#); [Luk_13:3](#); [Mat_10:32-33](#); [Act_2:38](#); [Act_22:16](#); [Rom_6:3-4](#); [Gal_3:27](#); [1Pe_3:21](#); [Rev_2:10](#)).

III. TO WHOM DO WE PREACH?

- A. To all men ([Mat_28:19](#); [Mar_16:15](#); [Luk_24:47](#); [Act_8:4](#); [Rom_1:16](#)).
- B. To those who have already obeyed ([Act_14:21-22](#), "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"; c.f., [Act_15:32](#), [Act_15:41](#), [Act_18:23](#); [1Th_3:2](#)).

CONCLUSION:

1. Preaching is a necessary means by which we reach out to the lost and strengthen the saved through education and edification.
2. Let us always place due value upon the preaching of God's Word, and instill in those around us (especially, but not only, our children) a love of, appreciation for, and respect for the preaching of God's Word.