

SUMMARY

PREACHING AND PREACHERS

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- Key Insights
- Best Quotes
- Study Questions

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Preaching and Preachers



MAIN IDEA

Preaching is a work that only the church is equipped to do. It is the main task of the church and the main work of the preacher. Any other work is secondary. Preaching is essential because of the sinful condition of man and because of the Redeemer revealed in Scripture.

The Holy Spirit is essential for preaching to be preaching. He must be involved in every aspect of the sermon from preparation to delivery. The main point of the sermon should come from the main point of the text. The Holy Spirit reveals this to the preacher and gives him the message. The preacher is a vessel used by God to deliver His message, not any message they think they should deliver. Preaching is theology coming through a

man on fire to help the congregation have an encounter with God.

In our day, there is a dearth of biblical preaching. There is a clear call to return to preaching as the Bible reveals it so that people may have an encounter with God.



Preaching Is Primary

Preaching is the primary work of the church and the preacher.

There are many good and noble tasks that grab the attention of the church and the preacher. The church cannot fulfill the [Great Commission](#) without preaching is the primary task. The church makes disciples through preaching ([Mat. 28:20](#); [Mark 16:15](#)), and the church is a preaching organization led by a preacher.

For the church as a whole, there is the desire to feed the poor, educate the uneducated, and pursue social justice. All of these are good and noble, but they are not of primary importance. When other goals are placed in the primary position there is a risk of distraction but also that God will not work as we might desire Him to. The church is in the business of proclaiming the message of salvation to a lost and dying world.

The preacher's primary work mirrors the primary work of the church. He does not have the authority to proclaim any message he wants but is

bound to preach the Bible. He does not lecture or recite a magazine-style article, he proclaims the word of God. He is God's mouthpiece proclaiming salvation to sinners in desperate need of it.

It is easy to say that the primary work of the church is preaching, but in reality, it is hard to execute. Satan is pleased when this is not the primary work of the church. Our flesh militates against this, and there are times when we have itching ears and want to hear a different message. But this task is worth fighting for and pursuing. God is most glorified in the church when it preaches the gospel as its primary task.

KEY QUOTES

- “What is it that always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching.” (p. 31)
- “Preaching is the primary task of the church and therefore of the minister of the Church, that everything else is subsidiary to this, and can be represented as the outworking or carrying out of this in daily practice.” (p. 37)

- “This is the most wonderful thing that can ever happen to a human being. You are standing there between a soul and God.” (p. 314)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Do you view preaching as the primary work of the church?
- Does your church have a secondary focus as their primary focus?



Preaching Involves the Whole Man

Preaching involves the intellect, personality, and affections of the preacher.

God uses men called by Him to deliver through preaching His message of salvation. We often miss that God uses the whole of a man to do that. It is important that the preacher is equipped intellectually, but his intellect is not the only part that needs to come through in preaching.

He not only needs to tell people about his passion for God, but people need to know that he feels it. A preacher that speaks in a boring manner about God's love for wretched sinners is unconvincing. If there is no passion, there is no evidence that he has been moved by God's love. No one will believe he has been gripped by the love of God.

This means that the preacher should always prepare himself as a whole

person. If he reads just for intellectual stimulation he could drain the brainpower needed to prepare a sermon. On the other hand, if he only reads for pleasure he will not stimulate his brain enough to help with sermon preparation. He is a whole person, and he should take care of and prepare himself for his task physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.

This should come through in the delivery of the sermon. His mind, will, and affections are at work. They drive the delivery of the message God has given him from His word. God uses the whole man to preach a whole message, a message of salvation for sinners.

This means that how God has gifted each preacher is important. Not all preachers are alike, and each preacher must understand how God has gifted him and wants to use all of him in preaching. The preacher preaches to whole people, and his whole person should be involved.

KEY QUOTES

- “These people do not come just as minds or as intellects, they come as total persons in the midst of life, with all its attendant circumstances, and its difficulties and its trials;

and the business of the preacher is not only to remember that but to preach accordingly.” (p. 66)

- “The whole personality of the preacher must be involved.” (p. 96)
- “The preacher’s first, and most important task is to prepare himself, not his sermon.” (p. 178)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- As a pastor, do you rely on one part of yourself in your calling? What do you need to change?
- How have your affections shaped a recent sermon you preached? If you are not a preacher, how has the pastor’s affections shaped a recent sermon you heard?



Spirit-Empowered Preaching

True, fruitful, and effective preaching only happens through the Holy Spirit.

The preacher, in preparation and delivery, must rely on the Holy Spirit. True preaching only happens when the Holy Spirit takes the message God gives the preacher and empowers it. The preacher's role is to be sensitive to and submit to the Holy Spirit. He must be totally and utterly reliant on the Spirit if his sermon is to be effective in the lives of his hearers.

If God chose preaching to be the primary work of the church and her ministers, then it follows that if this task of preaching is going to bear fruit, God must do it.

It makes sense that the preacher delivering his sermon must rely on the Holy Spirit. The sermon is a complete package from beginning to end. The Spirit gives power to the sermon while it is prepared and delivered. It is in

the stage of preparation that the Spirit grips the preacher with the truth of the text. Apart from His work, this would never happen.

When the preacher is gripped by the truth of the text, the people can sense it. The Spirit uses this to communicate to them biblical truth. But during delivery, the preacher is just as dependent on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit must supply the power to the sermon so that the Word of God being proclaimed will accomplish what God wills.

Preaching cannot happen when the Spirit is absent, and the Spirit will be absent when the preacher does not rely on Him and submit to Him. The Spirit delights to empower the preaching of Scripture. It is the preacher's delight when he witnesses this happening.

KEY QUOTES

- “Preaching should be always under the Spirit — His power and control — and you do not know what is going to happen.” (p. 99)
- “To be effective witnesses you need the power and the unction and the demonstration of the Spirit.” (p. 325)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Are you relying on the Spirit or your own natural gifts for effective preaching?
- As a sermon listener, do you rely on the Spirit to give you understanding and change your affections?

CHAPTER

1

The Primacy of Preaching

Preaching must be the priority of the church because many deny the authority of the Scriptures, and there is a decrease in belief in the truth. The solution is not less preaching but more of what the Bible says is preaching.

The primary work of the church is preaching the Bible. The primary work of the pastor is preaching the Bible. Jesus came as a preacher. Preaching was just as important to His earthly life as were His miracles. Jesus passed this priority to the Apostles, who we see preaching early on in the book of [Acts](#).

The history of the church bears out that when preaching has the rightful place God has seen fit to work through it, many times by sending revival. [George Whitefield](#)'s ministry is one such example.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “The primary task of the church and the Christian minister is the preaching of the Word of God.” (p. 26)
- “I suggest that in the Gospels, and in the life and ministry of our Lord Himself, you have the clear indication of the primacy of preaching and teaching.” (p. 28)

CHAPTER

2

No Substitute

The primacy of preaching is a theological conviction. When one understands the condition of man and the rescue the Bible proclaims for sinners, no other work will do. You must be convinced of this in order for preaching to have its proper place.

It is only through Scripture that we come to a knowledge of the saving truth ([1 Ti. 2:1-4](#)). When preaching is absent from the life of the church, the possibility of the salvation of sinners dwindles. The preacher knows the diagnosis and the symptoms: man is sinful and in need of the rescue that only God can provide. But the preacher also has the cure: the gospel.

The church can educate people, give them food, or proclaim a social gospel, but none of that is primary. Preaching the Word of God will enable people, by God's grace, to be the people they were created to be.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “The moment you consider man’s real need, and also the nature of the salvation announced and proclaimed in the Scriptures, you are driven to the conclusion that the primary task of the church is to preach and proclaim this.” (p. 37)
- “The Church is a special and specialist institution and this is a work that she alone can perform.” (p. 43)

CHAPTER

3

The Sermon and the Preaching

Many argue that instead of the monologue we know as preaching there should be a conversation. Or a debate should replace the sermon. The assumption here, even if unspoken, is that preaching is meant to entertain.

Preaching addresses the whole person and is an interaction between the preacher and the listener. The preacher wants to effect change in the listener by proclaiming God's Word.

There is a distinction between the message, which is the content, and the delivery of the content, which is the act of preaching. The content is the word that God has given the preacher. This is done through evangelistic preaching aimed at non-believers and through edifying preaching aimed at believers. There will be times when the two are interwoven in one sermon.

Preaching is effective when the Holy Spirit empowers it. It is powerless without the help of the Holy Spirit in preparation and delivery.

KEY QUOTES

- “Preaching is a transaction between the preacher and the listener. It does something to the soul of man, for the whole of the person, the entire man; it deals with him in a vital and radical manner.” (p. 64)
- “That is what determines the message or the sermon as such; it is that which the preacher has received.” (p. 71)

CHAPTER

4

The Form of the Sermon

Preaching must have a theological foundation. Preaching that is non-theological is not preaching. The preacher needs an understanding of the whole message of the Bible to present it as a unified book.

The preacher must preach the whole gospel passionately. It is a message to be declared with passion because of the great God it reveals.

To accomplish this, a sermon must be expository. The main point of the text is the preacher's main theme. The theology of the text is the theological foundation of the sermon.

Preparation begins with expositing a single verse or passage. Rightly understood, the preacher will arrive at a doctrine for the sermon's foundation. The sermon is arranged to bring out this doctrine. Application

is sprinkled throughout as the text demands. Each sermon should be a whole sermon, leaving no one hanging.

It is the Spirit who uses the sermon to accomplish God's purposes.

KEY QUOTES

- “Preaching must always be theological, always based on a theological foundation.” (p. 75)
- “If you have truly understood the verse or passage you will arrive at a doctrine, a particular doctrine, which is a part of the whole message of the Bible. It is your business to search for this and to seek it diligently.” (p. 86)

CHAPTER

5

The Act of Preaching

The preacher's whole personality must be present during the delivery of the sermon. The preacher demonstrates authority throughout the service by declaring Scripture unapologetically.

The preacher must experience freedom which comes from the Spirit while preaching. The act of preaching should always be done in submission to the Spirit.

Preaching is a serious task not to be taken lightly. It should never be fake or focus on trivial matters. Because of this serious nature, there is urgency.

The delivery of the sermon shows the preacher's zeal. His concern for the people is evident and leads to warmth in the delivery. He tries to persuade people to change their thinking according to God's Word.

There is a difference between the sermon and preaching. The sermon is the content; preaching is the delivery of the content under the submission of the Holy Spirit.

The preacher's main goal is to give the congregation an encounter with God.

KEY QUOTES

- “Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.” (p. 110)
- “What is the chief end of preaching? I like to think it is this. It is to give men and women a sense of God and His presence.” (p. 110)

CHAPTER

6

The Preacher

Preaching is reserved for men who are called by God. The call is something God gives and rarely is sought out. The call involves concern for others and an overwhelming desire that you cannot do anything else but preach. The call is confirmed by the local church, but, inevitably, feelings of inadequacy will follow.

God calls men of character ([Acts 6](#)). Once his character is proven, the man must demonstrate the ability to teach ([1 Ti. 3:2](#)).

The preacher must be tested and trained by the local church. His training includes learning the Bible, theology, and church history. Church history helps the man learn about the great preachers of the church, which will inform and sharpen his own preaching.

The main concern of the preacher is loving God and souls, having knowledge of the truth, and the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “The preacher must be a godly man.” (p. 122)
- “The chief thing is the love of God, the love of souls, a knowledge of the Truth, and the Holy Spirit within you.” (p. 131)

CHAPTER

7

The Congregation

The preacher must consider the congregation, but the congregation should not determine how the preaching happens or the content of the message. The preacher should never dumb down the message, which is insulting to the people. The gospel message is for all types of people, so each group does not need its own message.

Preaching aims at giving the congregation an understanding of the text preached. The people have a disease, sin, and the preacher treats it. He does not help with the symptoms but gives them the cure. They need a Savior, and the preacher proclaims Him and the salvation that only He can give. The Holy Spirit is essential for this to happen. Only as He works will the cure be applied to souls.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “The business of salvation is not merely to get rid of particular problems but to put the whole man right in his relationship to God.” (p. 134)
- “The whole point of preaching is to give them understanding.” (p. 142)

CHAPTER

8

The Character of the Message

Attention to the people is required. The preacher must preach to the people where they are, not as he imagines them to be. This involves not deceiving ourselves about people who profess Christ but show no fruit in their lives. Consequently, evangelistic preaching is paramount.

After the assessment of the congregation, gospel power must be brought to the situation. Proclaiming the gospel is primary. The Holy Spirit uses this, but we rarely know how. The preacher is responsible for creating an atmosphere of expectation of what God might do. Many in the audience have not prepared themselves for listening to the sermon, and the preacher has the privilege of helping them prepare based on what God might do. This authority comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

If the audience is poor listeners, the antidote is good preaching. Good preaching leads to good listening.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “The whole glory of the ministry is that you do not know what may happen.” (p. 166)
- “There is but one thing that gives a preacher authority, and that is being filled with the Holy Spirit.” (p. 171)

CHAPTER

9

The Preparation of the Preacher

The preacher is always preparing. Everything he does and encounters prepares the preacher. While it is tempting to think the most important preparation is for the sermon, it actually is for himself.

First, he must be self-disciplined. He must have control over himself. This can be done by safeguarding his mornings. His time should be spent in God's Word and then for getting ready to be in the pulpit.

Second, he must be a man of prayer. Without this, his ministry will be fruitless and ineffective. Third, he is a man of the Word. He should be reading the Bible for his own benefit and not just for sermon preparation. When something sticks out, it is important to stop and ponder and see where the Spirit is leading.

Fourth, he must read. Read far and wide and for the soul and the mind. Reading is both a stimulus and a retreat for the preacher.

KEY QUOTES

- “Prayer is vital to the life of the preacher.” (p. 181)
- “Read it because it is the food that God has provided for your soul, because it is the Word of God, because it is the means whereby you can get to know God.” (p. 184)

CHAPTER

10

The Preparation of the Sermon



nce the preacher has prepared himself, he turns to the sermon.

The preacher selects the text after asking himself if he is going to preach through a book chapter by chapter or if he will preach different texts each Sunday. Whatever is chosen, it is imperative that the preacher deal with the text honestly. What does the text say? Why did the author say it that way? The preacher must learn how to have a conversation with the text.

Once this is determined, the preacher can move on to the main message of the text, and the sermon takes its shape around that. The sermon should be a complete unit. Even when it is in a series it needs to be able to stand on its own.

KEY QUOTES

- “You have got to be honest with your text. I mean by that, that you do not go to a text just to pick out an idea which interests you and then deal with that idea yourself.” (p. 212)
- “One of the first things a preacher has to learn is to talk to his texts. They talk to you, and you must talk to them. Put questions to them.” (p. 215)

CHAPTER

11

The Shape of the Sermon

How does the sermon take shape? How does the preacher persuade the congregation of the main point of the text?

Headings are used to break down the thought of the text and drive the theme of the sermon. The points should be helpful, but cleverness should be avoided. We want the people to remember Scripture, not our headings.

There is much freedom in how one develops the shape of the sermon. The main point is that people have an encounter with God through it as the preacher proclaims the Word of God.

Therefore, each preacher decides if he will or will not quote from commentaries or books he used for preparation. He decides if he takes a full manuscript into the pulpit or if he takes the skeleton (outline) with him. Each man must know himself and prepare in the way God has gifted him.

The main point is to let the text shape the sermon under submission to the Holy Spirit.

KEY QUOTES

- “Avoiding every suspicion of artificiality or cleverness, our headings should appear to be the inevitable way of dividing up the matter.” (p. 222)
- “A sermon is meant to be a proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher.” (p. 233)

CHAPTER

12

Illustrations, Eloquence, and Humor

Whether or not a preacher uses a manuscript, he must be free in the pulpit. The sermon should not be memorized, it should not be read, and notes should be a guide, not a restriction.

The Holy Spirit empowers preaching, and the preacher must be open to Him. The preacher walks into the pulpit with a plan, but the Spirit may have different plans altogether. If the preacher is tied to his manuscript, this will be harder to do.

Illustrations should enhance the sermon. They should not be used to spiritualize anything but to help explain a truth from the text. If they detract from the text they should not be used.

Imagination and humor are similar: if they detract from the text they should not be used. The main goal with the sermon is for people to understand Scripture.

KEY QUOTES

- “When the Spirit lays hold of you and leads you out, allow yourself to be led. Do not be tied, do not be fettered.” (p. 241)
- “Stories and illustrations are only meant to illustrate the truth, not to call attention to themselves.” (p. 245)

CHAPTERS 13, 14

What to Avoid

Calling for Decisions

There are many pitfalls to avoid in order to accomplish the goal of the congregation encountering God and His presence:

1. *The medium should not control the message:* An example would be a televised service. The preacher should not be constrained by the television schedule.
2. *Professionalism:* The preacher has a calling, not a profession. He is a messenger.
3. *Strengths:* Do not think too highly of yourself. Allow the Spirit to work.
4. *Intellect:* Your intellect alone cannot persuade people of the truth; God does.

When thinking through whether to have an altar call, music comes into the equation. The music should serve the sermon and not be used to persuade

people or tug on their emotions.

Whether or not one calls for a decision, what should be primary still is the truth. The approach for the preacher is to get to the will through the intellect, and the Holy Spirit will work as He sees fit.

KEY QUOTES

- “Watch your natural gifts and tendencies and idiosyncrasies. Watch them. What I mean is that they will tend to run away with you. It can all be summed up in a phrase — watch your strength.” (p. 270)
- “The will should always be approached primarily through the mind, the intellect, and then through the affections.” (p. 286)

CHAPTER

15

The Pitfalls and the Romance

There are other potential pitfalls to think through:

1. *Should a sermon be repeated?* A preacher may want another chance to preach a sermon because he wants to give his best. If a sermon is too familiar, the preacher should not repeat it. When the sermon stops gripping the preacher he should stop preaching it.
2. *Plagiarism:* Do not preach another man's sermon without giving him credit. If you do not acknowledge what you are doing, you are dishonest.

The pulpit for the preacher is one of the most romantic places in the world. There is nothing like it. This is even truer when the Holy Spirit carries you along and you sense that you are more of a spectator than a participant. It is a sacred trust and responsibility, and it is a pure joy to be used by God to proclaim His Word.

66 KEY QUOTES

- “Stop preaching that sermon when it ceases to grip you, when it ceases to move you, when it ceases to be a means of blessing to you yourself.” (p. 302)
- “I know of nothing comparable to the feeling one has as one walks up the steps of one’s pulpit with a fresh sermon on a Sunday morning or a Sunday evening, especially when you feel that you have a message from God and are longing to give it to the people.” (p. 311)

CHAPTER

16

‘Demonstration of the Spirit and of the Power’

The most essential thing about preaching is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Everything else builds to this. Preparing yourself and the sermon climaxes in the unction and anointing of the Spirit. Without them, there is nothing for the Spirit to work with.

Far from denigrating hard and precise preparation, the unction is a complement to these tasks. You cannot have one without the other. The unction is the Holy Spirit falling on the preacher in a special way giving him access to power.

There are examples in Scripture: [Luke 1](#) and [4](#) tell about the anointing of John the Baptizer and Jesus. The Apostles in the book of Acts also experienced this ([Acts 2](#)).

Church History testifies to this truth through men such as [George Whitefield](#) and [John Wesley](#).

Seek the Spirit always in order to experience this. It is not something we can manufacture, and without it our preaching will not be effective.

KEY QUOTES

- “The greatest essential in connection with preaching is the unction and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.” (p. 321)
- “Without the unction of the Holy Spirit you will have no power, and your preaching will not be effective.” (p. 335)



CONCLUSION

Preaching is the primary work of the church and of the pastor. A pastor is a man who has been given a message. He does not have the right to make up his own message. Preaching is theology coming through a man on fire. The preparation and delivery of the sermon must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Apart from His work, preaching will be fruitless.

The main 3 Key Insights in this book are:

1

Preaching Is Primary

Preaching is the primary work of the church and the preacher.

2

Preaching Involves the Whole Man

Preaching involves the intellect, personality, and affections of the preacher.

3

Spirit-Empowered Preaching

True, fruitful, and effective preaching only happens through the Holy Spirit.

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