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THE PAPER PULPIT

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BIBLICAL PREACHING

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With Authority

Jesus captivated multitudes of thousands of people at a time because, when He preached, “*he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*” (Mark 7:29). People were hungry and thirsty for righteousness, and Christ gave them food for their souls (Mat. 5:6; John 6:35). Biblical preaching is supposed to do the same thing for people in the modern world: it is supposed to feed their souls (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

That is why Biblical preaching must be authoritative. If it is not, then it will not provide the spiritual sustenance that people need so very much. The vast majority of souls walking the Earth are withered and emaciated—starving for what only authoritative Biblical preaching can provide. Paul described the condition of those whose souls are lost as being “*dead*” while they “*liveth*” (1 Tim. 5:6). Only the message of God’s Word can bring these dead souls back to life (Eph.2:1).

The problem with most preaching that is done in churches today is that it lacks authority from the Word of God to back it up. In most churches, sermons consist of one or two quotations from the Scriptures and then a series of illustrations, jokes and inspirational stories. In Second

Timothy 4:1 and 2, preachers are charged to “*preach the word.*” God does not want preachers to entertain people with anecdotes, but to “*persuade men*” to obey the will of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:11). To accomplish this lofty goal, preaching must be authoritative.

As indicated earlier, it is the Word of God, which is the source of all religious authority. Colossians 3:17 reads, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*” To speak or to act in someone’s name is to do so by their authority. Therefore, preachers are required to preach and to teach in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—having the authority of His Word to verify everything that is said.

Beware of preachers who overuse the phrase, “I think.” Frankly, it does not matter what any preacher *thinks* about anything. It only matters what the Bible says. Preaching that is not reinforced with multiple references in Scripture is not authoritative preaching. When I was learning to be a preacher, my teachers would say, “Always include lots of Scripture in every sermon. Then, you can be sure that at least that much of your sermon is correct.” It still rings true today.

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...”

—1 Peter 4:11

Quotable Quotations

“Those who stand before men to faithfully declare the Word of God indirectly speak for God. What an awesome responsibility for any man to assume! No wonder an inspired man of God would urge, *“preach the Word”* (2 Tim. 4:2)!”

—Thomas H. Holland

“Many motives may cause a man to want to preach: the

applause of fellow men, financial considerations, escape from military service are a few. The only worthy motive, however, is the urgent, overpowering desire to help others be saved.”

—Batsell Barrett Baxter

“One warning that must be sounded: it is a mistake to think of gospel preaching as a public performance!”

—Gary Colley

“...to proclaim the unsearchable riches of divine grace, and the conditions on which these blessings are secured and appropriated, to a world lost in sin...should be, must be and is, the aim and intent of every faithful and earnest preacher of the Word...”

—Guy N. Woods

“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.”
—Acts 20:26,27

With Honesty

Preachers must be honest with the people to whom they preach. One might think that much is obvious, but most preachers are under constant pressure to tell people what they *want* to hear, rather than what they *need* to hear. The apostle Paul felt this pressure acutely, and indicated as much, when he wrote to his brethren in the churches of Galatia: *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”* (Gal. 4:16).

Many preachers dare not to say anything that might be perceived as controversial, lest they

cause someone in the congregation to be offended. The result of this policy is sermons that are only loosely based on the Scriptures, and that are designed to make the hearers feel better about themselves as they are, rather than challenging them to improve. Ecclesiastical cowardice rules the day—and many people will be lost because of it.

Preachers do not need to preach only on controversial subjects, but they need to do as Paul did, when he was in Ephesus: preach all the counsel of God (Acts 20:26,27). The fact of the matter is

that every soul needs to hear everything that God has to say. Preachers who will not be honest with their hearers about God’s will for them are only guaranteeing that the people to whom they preach will be lost eternally.

Preachers who are honest with themselves know that when they preach the Word of God to any group of people, there will be those who will not accept it. But they must not allow this fact to cause them to “water down” the message. It is their task to boldly stand and speak the truth, with love in their hearts (Eph. 4:15).

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With Consistency

Faithful preachers of the gospel are charged with preaching a consistent message to those who will listen to them. With so many preachers preaching so many different things in the “religious world,” consistency is something that is sorely lacking. But, the kind of consistency that Bible challenges us to present in sermons is not so difficult to understand.

In First Timothy 4, the apostle Paul issued a solemn charge to the young minister: “*Preach the word.*” In order to present a consistent message, it is necessary for preachers to routinely base their preaching upon the Word of God. In Philippians 2:5, Paul wrote: “*Let this mind be in you, which was*

also in Christ Jesus.” The implication of this command is that, it is possible for us to know the mind of Christ, and if it is possible to know the mind of Christ, then it is possible to communicate His will to others. If preaching is based solely upon the Bible, then it will be consistent.

One of the hallmarks of man-made religion is inconsistency. Man-made religion tends to be inconsistent with itself and with the Bible. For example, in the case of churches which teach the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, this doctrine contradicts other doctrines that they teach. If it is true, that once a person is saved he can never be lost again, why do these churches also teach that one must at-

tend worship services and do benevolent works for others? If what they teach about the impossibility of apostasy is true, then what compelling reason would anyone have to try to reform themselves and live a faithful Christian life?

Of course, the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy also contradicts the Bible. Warnings against falling from the grace of God abound in the New Testament (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; Jude 24). Not only are Christians warned against the loss of their salvation, but they are also instructed as to how they can fortify themselves against such a loss (Acts 20:32). The Bible presents a consistent message, and it is the job of gospel preachers to convey it accurately.

“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, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

**—1 Timothy
4:1,2**

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Do a search for the “Madisonville Church of Christ” on Facebook, and “like” our page. We post many announcements about happenings at the church and other items of interest, each week. We would love to have you as part of our Facebook following!





Madisonville Church of Christ

Sunday Morning Bible Study

—9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship

—10:30 a.m.

Sunday Evening Worship

—6:00 p.m.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

—7:00 p.m.

A Christ-Preaching, Bible-Teaching Church

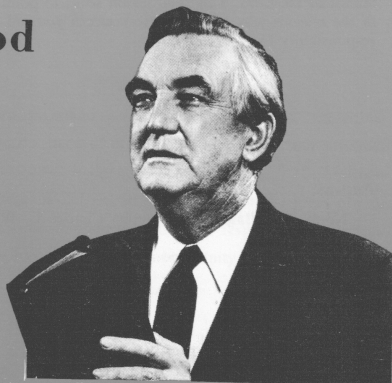
What Is Biblical Preaching?

Biblical preaching is becoming increasingly rare, in the twenty-first century. What passes for preaching in the modern world is anything but Biblical. Most preachers today might begin their sermons with a text from the Bible, but the points that they make and the lessons that they teach are more likely to have their origins in pop psychology than in the Word of God. A new convert once told me that, while he had attended the services of many so-called “churches,” no one had ever really explained the Bible to him before he came to the church of Christ. Of course, Biblical preaching is part of the worship we offer to the Lord, every Sunday. It is, at once, an affirmation of our love and appreciation for the Word of God, and an opportunity to instruct people in its wisdom. It is *the* method that God has chosen to disseminate the gospel of Christ to the masses (1 Cor. 1:21). In this issue of the Paper Pulpit, we shall discuss the essential elements of Biblical preaching, in an effort to fully appreciate what is required of those who would “*preach the word...*” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Lesson 8

GOD SPEAKS TODAY

Man's
Responsibility
To
God



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