

“THE POWER OF PREACHING”

Romans 10:13-17

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴How 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? ¹⁵And 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! ¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? ¹⁷So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

I. The Need for a Preacher

A. God's Chosen Method of Salvation

1 Corinthians 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.

1. There is no “Plan B” – we can’t be saved without a preacher!

Romans 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?

- a. Consider Paul’s words to the Romans.

Romans 10:17

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- b. The Greek word for “hearing” ὁ ἀκοῆς (akoe) can also be translated “that which is preached.”

(1) In fact, it is the SAME word as was used in Verse 16, when Paul quoted Isaiah: “Who hath believed our REPORT?”

Romans 10:16

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

- c. The literal Greek for verse 17, therefore, is “So faith comes out of preaching, and preaching through the utterance of God.”

(1) Thus, the only way to obtain faith is through preaching.

(2) Note, furthermore, that the only way to please God is to have faith!

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

(a) I submit to you that you cannot please God without hearing the message of a preacher!

B. The Tragic Condition of Current Affairs

1. Paul warned that a terrible time was coming.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

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; ⁴And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

a. What could be worse than to reach a time in which people did not want to hear the truth?

(1) Yet Paul was not the first to warn that this time was coming.

Amos 8:11

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

(2) This is not a famine of the Word, but a famine of HEARING the Word!

(3) I cannot comprehend someone not wanting to hear the truth, especially in light of the fact that the TRUTH is our ticket to freedom!

John 8:32

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

(4) Nevertheless, both Paul and Amos let us know that the time would come that people would choose fabrication over fact and tradition over truth.

(5) I, for one, believe that time is NOW!

b. The remedy for this problem is for the laity to grant liberty to the ministry to “Preach the Word.”

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

(1) If there has ever been a time in which we need our preachers to preach the Word, IT IS NOW!

II. The Power of the Word

A. Receiving the Word

1. The key to the effectiveness of God’s Word in your life hinges entirely upon how you receive that word when it is preached.

2. The author of Hebrews plainly stated that the ORIGINAL possessors of the Word of God received NO BENEFIT (it “did not profit them”) by simply hearing it.

Hebrews 4:2

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

- a. These people studied the Word – they could quote the Word, yet it “did not profit them!”
- b. What good does it do to hear the Word of God if you don’t believe it with all of your heart?
- c. How much difference does faith make? Consider the woman with the issue of blood.

Mark 5:27-31

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. ²⁸For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. ²⁹And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. ³⁰And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, **Who touched my clothes?** ³¹And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, **Who touched me?**

- (1) MANY people touched Jesus that day, but only ONE touched Him with faith.
- (2) That touch stopped Jesus in His tracks! That touch changed a woman’s life.
 - (a) I wonder how many times during a service or during personal devotion, some saint has stopped Heaven and caused God to ask, “Who touched me? I know many people are HEARING or READING my Words, but THIS person BELIEVES what he is hearing!”

B. Responding to the Word

Deuteronomy 27:14-19

And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, ¹⁵Cursed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth *it* in a secret *place*. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. ¹⁶Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. ¹⁷Cursed *be* he that removeth his neighbour’s landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. ¹⁸Cursed *be* he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. ¹⁹Cursed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

1. The Levites were to preach for a response!
2. While I myself have said many times that I do not preach for a response, I have had to rethink this statement.
3. It is clear here that God not only told the preachers what to preach, he told the congregation how to respond.
4. I am convinced that they were not to go any farther in their message until they got the proper response out of the congregation.

- a. ALL THE PEOPLE were to say, “AMEN!”
- b. ALL THE PEOPLE were to state that they firmly believed every word the preachers were saying.

(1) They were also asking God to honor their words and saying to Him, “Lord, so be it,” or “Lord, let it be.”

5. It is not enough for the preacher to preach the Word, but I believe God looks to see our response to the truth.

- a. Do we believe it as strong as the preacher?
 - (1) If so, we have an obligation to verbally express our belief.

C. The Power of the Word

Ecclesiastes 8:4

Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?

1. Where the word of ANY king is, there is power – where the word of the King of Kings is, there is more power than can be humanly expressed.

2. It is the LOGOS – the expression of God’s intentions – that is powerful; not just the reading of a few scriptures.

3. There is NO POWER ON EARTH as effective as Anointed Preaching.

Hebrews 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

a. When God’s Word was spoken, worlds were brought into existence. When He said, “Let there be...”, there WAS!

b. Today, ONLY anointed apostolic preaching – the declaration of the word of God – can make something out of nothing.

c. When God got ready to turn dry bones into a dread battalion, he picked up a preacher and said, “Prophesy!”

Ezekiel 37:1-7

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones, ²And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. ⁴Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: ⁶And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. ⁷So I prophesied

as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

(1) Singing can't do what preaching does; dramas can't do it; TV programs can't do it – ONLY preaching can take a life of “nothingness” and turn it into a life with meaning!

4. Brethren, we have enough sermonizing; we need more preaching!

Preaching is.....

Preaching is truth on fire. Preaching is the Word of God in the hand, the fire of God in the heart and the zeal of God in the soul. Preaching is the gift of God wrapped in an excited voice. Preaching is the soul of the church. Preaching is teaching with a tear in the eye. Preaching is demolition of error. Preaching is doubt's healing balm. Preaching is the Holy Ghost's amplifier. Preaching is worship's entree. Preaching is the adornment of the Bible. Preaching is the power of God unto salvation. Preaching is revival's forerunner. Preaching is the church's heart. Preaching is doctrine clothed in excitement.

Preaching is love's smile. Preaching is sin's greatest adversary. Preaching is frustration's funeral. Preaching is doubt's demise. Preaching is fear's failure. Preaching is depression's death. Preaching is disappointment's decline. Preaching is faith's food. Preaching is vocal light. Preaching is profundity delivered in simplicity. Preaching is the mender of broken relationships. Preaching is the healer of broken hearts. Preaching is the revival of broken dreams. Preaching is Hell's greatest enemy. Preaching is the sinner's best friend. Preaching is the saint's dinner. Preaching is a rebel's doom. Preaching is genius with a halo. Preaching is fire in the pulpit that melts the ice in the pew. Preaching is God's chosen vehicle of salvation.

Preaching saved Nineveh, ignited Pentecost and turned the Judean wilderness into a Holy Ghost revival. When the man of God approaches the pulpit, let angels stop flying, let Heaven's hosannas hush, let adults hearken and children listen, let young people be alert, let all ears pay attention, let Heaven respond, let Hell tremble, let the church wait in holy expectation, let all eternity tremble, let Satan and his angels be anointed with fear! As the preacher opens his mouth as he opens the Book ... to preach!

—James Groce

a. Perhaps one of the reasons there is a “famine of hearing the Word” in our land today is that people have lost their appetite for preaching!

b. During World War II, Germany had surrounded the Russian city of Leningrad. The siege lasted 900 days (almost 3 years)! There was not enough food for the populace, so the authorities began rationing. Eventually, the rations had to be cut. In fact, they were reduced even more over time. Finally, the authorities realized that they could not ration enough to satisfy the hunger of the population. Therefore, they began adding what one survivor called “sawdust.” Another man said it was “cellulose” – wood fibers so fine in consistency as to blend naturally with the grain which was being rationed. The population used this “sawdust-filled grain” to bake bread

and they at least felt full. The problem was that there was no nutritional value in cellulose. Therefore, they were feeling full, but they were literally starving with a “full” stomach! My research indicated that some 600,000 people died of starvation, although they went to bed at night without feeling hunger pains!

c. The reason people settle for something other than the Bread of Life is that they are filling themselves with substitutes which mask the hunger of their souls.

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

d. As long as they “feel” full, they override the natural hunger that exists.

e. Men have turned to pleasure, false doctrine, narcotics, and innumerable other things trying to fill a void that can only be satisfied by the Bread of Heaven.

f. They may feel full, but the problem is they will STILL starve to death!

g. The ONLY thing that can satisfy the cravings of your soul is for you to receive the Word when it is preached!

James 1:21

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.