

Preach the Word

Paul said to Timothy, “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 [the religious world] will not endure [tolerate or put up with] 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” (II Timothy 4:2-5).

Preach the Word! That simple imperative frames the act of preaching as an act of obedience. No preacher, nor any church, should doubt if they are doing the will of God when they are preaching the Word of God. When I preach the Word of God, I know beyond any doubt that I am pleasing to God.

The church does not preach because preaching is thought to be a good idea or an effective technique. The sermon has not earned its place in Christian worship by proving its purpose in comparison with other means of communication or aspects of worship. Rather, we preach because we have been commanded to preach. Preaching is a commission given to the church. And the church is to preach at all times (“in season” or “out of season”) whether it’s popular or not.

The church’s main function is to preach the Word. True preaching begins with this statement: we preach because God has spoken. The preacher dares to speak the Word of truth to a generation which rejects the very idea of objective, public truth. He does this not out of arrogance, or defiance, but because he has been commanded by God to do so. God has spoken, and He has commanded us to speak of Him. God has called the church to speak of Him on the basis of His Word and deeds. All Christian preaching should be biblical preaching. Those who preach from some other authority or text – that really has nothing to do with a Bible text – no matter how great the speech, nor the attractiveness of its presentation, it is not biblical preaching.

The Bible bears witness to itself as the written Word of God. This springs from the fact that God has spoken. It is said, In the Old Testament alone, the phrases “the Lord said,” “the Lord spoke,” and “the word of the Lord came” appear at least 3,808 times. This confession of Scripture brings the preacher face to face with the Scriptures being from God – and he must not carelessly handle the Word of God. He must preach the Word. That’s his calling, and his charge. When the Word of God is preached in an understanding manner all who will heed its teaching will benefit.

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