

2 Corinthians 2:1-5

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN FOR PREACHING

Intro: The text we have read contains the biblical standard for all our preaching. Let's face it, as it was in Paul's day, preaching is decried in our day as foolishness, **1 Cor. 1:18a**. many say that preaching is outdated. they say it has outlived its usefulness. The lost world, and even some in the church, would like to see old-fashioned Bible preaching swept into the dustbin of history. But, God says that the preaching of the Word of God is "***the power of God,***" **1 Cor. 1:18b**, and that it is His chosen means to bring the lost to Jesus.

"...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," **1 Cor. 1:21b**.

"...how shall they hear without a preacher?" **Rom. 10:14**.

"...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," **Rom. 10:17**.

Since preaching is so important to what God is doing in the world today, we who are preachers need to consider our own preaching. We need to be sure that our preaching fits the biblical pattern for preaching. While many texts in the New Testament deal with the preacher, his message and his preaching, this text lays out God pattern for true, New Testament preaching. Consider with me a few ***thoughts*** about ***The Biblical Pattern For Preaching***.

I. WHAT IS TO BE AVOIDED IN OUR PREACHING

- v. 1, 4 **Stirring Oratory** - Paul tells the Corinthians that he did not come to them with "***excellency of speech.***" The word

“excellency” refers to **“something that is elevated.”** It refers to flowery speech that is designed to catch the ear.

The word **“enticing”** in **verse 4**, means **“persuasive.”** Paul is saying that his preaching was not designed to coerce men into making a decision. Paul knew that souls are saved, not by our persuasive preaching, but by the grace of God as He draws the lost to Himself. It is the power of the Gospel that convicts and converts the heart, not the skill of the preacher.

There is nothing wrong with having a good vocabulary, but when the message gets lost in the oratory, you have missed the point. When the language becomes so verbose, and the rhetoric becomes so stilted and hard to decipher, it becomes obvious that the preacher has lost his desire to feed the sheep, and is more interested in flaunting his supposed intellect. Learn words and love words. They are the tools of our trade. Just as a carpenter uses the saw, the hammer and the ruler to build his creations; the preacher uses nouns, verbs, propositions and adjectives to build his sermons.

(III. **“A Trio Of Sightless Rodents”**; **“Scintillate, Scintillate, Globule Vivific”**; **“Propel Your Craft.”**)

True intelligence has the ability to make the profound simple. True brilliance does not flaunt its abilities; true brilliance simplifies the difficult so that all can understand.

III. When criticized for his simple speech, D.L. Moody responded by saying, ***"I have been called to feed Sheep, and not giraffes. I put the cookies on the bottom shelf where the children can reach them."***

There is nothing wrong with using expressive language to describe the glorious truths of the Word of God. But, the language should never overshadow the message.

- v. 1 **Human wisdom** - The Greeks were famous for their love for philosophy. They sought out men who would give them new theories and new thoughts. It is not too much to say that the Greeks had elevated human wisdom and philosophical thought to the status of a religion. They worshipped knowledge.

The call to preach is not a call to express our opinions, or to give the congregation a weekly rundown on what we think about this issue or the other. The call to preach is not an invitation to rise our favorite hobbyhorses and enforce our personal standards on our congregations. The call to preach is the call to open the Word of God and declare the timeless truths of the Lord to people who need desperately to hear from Him, **2 Tim. 4:1-2**. The call to preach is the call to declare the Gospel, **1 Cor. 15:3-4**.

We do not go to church to hear the pastor's opinions about politics, psychology, economics, or religion. We go to hear a word from the Lord through the preacher. God's Word edifies

and unifies; human opinions confuse and divide. In light of that, here is what Timothy was told to do by Paul, “***Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,***” **1 Tim. 4:13.**

The world does not need our opinions. The world needs to hear about Jesus Christ. They do not need philosophical thought or a treatise on current events. They need to hear the plain, simple Word of God.

If that kind of preaching was good enough for Paul, it should be good enough for us!

I. **What Is To Be Avoided In Our Preaching**

II. **WHAT IS TO BE ADOPTED IN OUR PREACHING**

While we are to avoid soaring oratory, human philosophies and persuasive techniques, our preaching should flow from a power that is heavenly and not earthly. In **verse 4**, Paul says that while his preaching was lacking in what the world favored, it was done in the “***demonstration of the Spirit and power.***” The word “***demonstration***” means “***proof.***” The word “***power***” means “***strength, authority, and force.***”

The reason Paul was successful when, by all human standards he should have been a failure, was because he operated in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though he was educated, he did not flaunt his education. He preached the simple truths of the Gospel of

grace, and God saved souls, build churches and honored His Word.

If we are to see any lasting, eternal results from our ministries, we must do it the way Paul did it. We have to forget about impressing the world. We have to forget about attracting the world, or being acceptable to the world. We have to abandon every pragmatic attempt to carry out the Lord's work in the power of the flesh and through the abilities of our intellectual gifts.

What we need more than anything is to yield the control of our lives to the will of God. We should be filled with the Spirit of God, **Eph. 5:18**. When we yield ourselves to Him, He will attend the preaching of the Word of God with a “**demonstration**” of His power.

One reason we lack the power of God in our services, is that we are so full of us, that there is no room for the Holy Spirit to get in. We are so sure that we have all the answers and the ability to make it happen, and we do not realize that we are helpless and totally dependent upon the Lord and His power.

Brothers, our preaching, by itself, saves no one. Our preaching, by itself, changes no lives. Our skill in presenting the Gospel, by itself, is an exercise in futility. But, when our preaching and our witnessing are carried out in the power of the God, the results will be astonishing.

When we come to the place where we acknowledge that we cannot do the work of God, we are on the road to doing the work of God. When we come to place where we realize that we are helpless without Him, we are on the verge of real power in our ministries. When we realize that God and God alone can fill us with His power and work through us, only then can we expect to accomplish anything of eternal value.

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II. **What Is To Be Adopted In Our Preaching**

III. **WHAT IS TO BE AFFIRMED IN OUR PREACHING**

Since we are not to preach in our own power, and showcase our education and our skills as a word smith, what are we to do when we preach? Paul answers that question very clearly and concisely in these verses.

- v. 1 **We Are To Affirm The Testimony Of God** - The word “*testimony*” carries the idea of “*witness*.” Gentlemen, this Bible is the “*testimony of God*.” The Bible is to be our text for preaching, not current events, or the latest theological best seller. As preachers, we are to preach the Bible in its fullness. We are to preach “*all the counsel of God*,” **Acts 20:27**.

Remember what Paul told Timothy? He said, “*Preach the Word...*,” **2 Tim. 4:2**.

- Not just your pet doctrines. Preach the Word!
- Not just the parts you approve of. Preach the Word!

- Not just the parts that are pleasing to others. Preach the Word!
- Not just the parts that are without controversy. Preach the Word!

Preachers, we are to take the Bible, the whole Bible, and we are to make it the bedrock of all our preaching. Every verse, and every word, from **Gen. 1:1** to **Rev. 22:21** is fair game for preaching. Preach it all, and preach it all in the power of the Holy Ghost!

v. 2 **We Are To Affirm The Gospel Of The Lord Jesus Christ** - In **verse 2**, Paul tells the Corinthians that his goal in Corinth was to avoid becoming entangled in their problems, their differences and their disputes. His goal was to “***preach Christ and Him crucified.***” Paul's goal in Corinth was to preach the Gospel.

That is our mandate! We are not to concern ourselves with the petty affairs of men. We are not to get caught up in the mundane business of a fallen world. We have been called to a heavenly task, We have been divinely and sovereignly chosen from among all the 7 billion people living on earth today to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are to tell them “***how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,***” **1 Cor. 15:3–4**. That is the Gospel, and we are to preach it! We must tell them about Jesus Christ, “***Who was delivered for our offences, and***

was raised again for our justification,” Rom. 4:25. That is the Gospel, and we are to preach it! We are to trumpet the message of ***Rom. 10:9; Acts 16:31***, and ***John 3:16***. We are to tell them that ***“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,” 1 John 5:12.*** We are to preach the Gospel!

This is not to say that we will not preach other texts, for we will. This is not to say that we will not deal with other issues, for we will. But, we must do as Spurgeon said when told by someone that all his sermons sounded the same. The great preacher said, ***“That's because I take a text and make a beeline to the cross.”*** That should be our mission as well my brothers.

The Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel should be the centerpiece of all our preaching. Why? The saints feed on it, and the sinner desperately needs to hear about it. The Gospel is encouraging, thrilling and wonderful to the converted, and it is the only means of salvation for the lost.

Refuse to get caught up in the controversies, scandals, divisions, distractions, and compromises of the day. Get caught up in Jesus Christ and His glorious Gospel and preach it in the ***“demonstration of the Spirit and power.”*** That is the kind of preaching God blesses!

Conc: When you die, and they bury your body beneath the cold earth; every opinion you have ever espoused will die with you.

Your prejudices, your opinions, your personal thoughts, etc., will not outlive you by one second. Since they are so fleeting, none of those things are worthy of taking up any of our preaching time now. The focus of our preaching should be nothing but the whole counsel of the Word of God, and the precious Gospel of our wonderful Savior. Preacher, preach the Word!