

Does Street Preaching Work?

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I often find myself on the street open air preaching the gospel when someone (usually, a professing Christian) will approach me and tell me that I'm doing 'it' the *wrong way*. Then, the usual follow up question that people often ask is: "what kind of results have you seen from this?" Every open air preacher can relate to this fairly typical and common conversation.

Does street preaching work? To answer that question, one must ask a more basic and fundamental question, "*does preaching work?*" If the answer to that question is in the affirmative, then one must also believe that street preaching works.

The very fact that many defy street preaching as a valid method of evangelism underscores the man-centered, self-exalting, arminian, and shallow distrust of the Word that exists in our day. In so far as the man standing in the open air lifts up His voice for the glory of Christ and with His Bible in hand proclaiming the biblical gospel, then street preaching works. As long as the herald is faithfully proclaiming the Word, as long as the herald is living an above-reproach life in harmony with the qualifications of a man of God who is to serve as a leader (which, open-air preaching is a form of 'leadership' and 'teaching'), then it is a valid form of evangelism.

Street preachers who faithfully represent Christ, who powerfully preach the gospel, and who urgently plead with sinners to repent, turn to Christ, count the cost and follow Him are those who understand the power of the gospel. The power is *not* in the messenger, but in the message. The power is not in the *cleverness* of preaching but in the fidelity to the Scriptures.

Every open air preacher gains immeasurable comfort in recognizing the unrivaled sovereignty of God over all things — including His power over the rebellious, human heart. No preacher can gauge his results based upon visible responses. This reflects the man-centered form of evangelism that bases its *methodology* on human programs based on achieving a certain amount of numbers. The preacher preaches for conversions. But the faithful open air evangelist knows that no amount of wooing and faithful pleading on *his* part will convert a soul until the sovereign Spirit of God opens the heart of the sinner, raises that dead soul to life, and allows the sinner to see His sin, the beauty of Christ, the sufficiency of His wrath-bearing atonement, and His desperate need to trust in Christ alone and follow Him. Thus, the preaching on the streets is as effective as the Word of God itself is.

As the man stands and opens His mouth proclaiming Christ and Him crucified, so does the power of the Word go forth. The power is in *the gospel*, not in the man-made methods. God has declared that His messengers stand and preach His Word all through history — from Noah, to Jeremiah, to Amos, to Jesus, to Paul, to Whitefield, to Spurgeon, to Ravenhill — so that the lost who live on the broad road headed for destruction might hear the gospel of Christ, repent of their sins, believe and follow Christ alone, and serve Him with their whole lives.

Does street preaching work? As long as the faithful Word goes forth, absolutely! Does open-air preaching really make a difference? The man obeys God's call, preaches for Christ's glory and endeavors to present the gospel in such a way that the Spirit of God will awaken darkened hearts through the message preached so that some may be saved! Indeed, street preaching works!