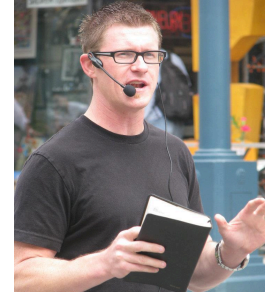


Philosophy of Open-Air Preaching

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Mission Statement:

My mission in open-air preaching is to glorify God by proclaiming the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness, regardless of the visible response, trusting in God's sovereignty, and speaking for His renown.

Goal:

My goal in open-air preaching is to accurately herald the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost with exegetical fidelity, gospel accuracy, with urgent compassion so that God may glorify His name by drawing His elect to Himself through the preaching of His gospel.

Reasons for Open-Air Preaching:

1. It presents the gospel to people who may not otherwise step foot into a church.

Many people in our day and age refuse to step foot in a church. This may result from a myriad of reasons. But one undeniable benefit of open-air preaching is that instead of waiting for the people to come into the church, the preacher goes out to the lost. Thus, those people who may not enter into a church building can hear the gospel proclaimed to them in an area or setting in which they gather. Rightly did Spurgeon remark regarding preachers of the gospel: "traders go to the markets, they follow their customers and go out after business if it will not come to them; and so must we."

2. It allows the preacher to obey the most frequent command regarding the manner in which the gospel is presented.

One only needs to read through the Scriptures (both OT and NT) to find the clear emphasis on the bold, public, and even at times "in-the-moment" proclamation of God's truth. A concept that very frequently arises is the command given and pattern exemplified in the act of preaching the Gospel and proclaiming the truth of salvation (cf. Acts 26; 2 Tim 4:2; Luke 14:23; cp. Neh 8).

3. It follows the historical pattern of pastors open air preaching.

Beginning with Noah who was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet 2:5), to Ezra (Neh 8:1-4), to Jeremiah (Jer 7:2; 19:2), Ezekiel (Ezek 11:off), other prophets (cf. Jonah 3:2-4),

John the Baptist (Matt 3:1-2), our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 5-7, et al.), Paul (Acts 26), Peter (Acts 5:17ff), and hundreds through Church history, an unbroken pattern of open-air preaching can be observed. For instance, in the 18th century, Gideon Ouseley, heralded God's truth in the open-air in the country of Ireland. Ouseley first preached in a church-yard, at a funeral, and after this point, he preached in the streets and church-yards, at fairs and markets, at wakes and funerals, wherever in fact he could find a congregation assembled. He would ride on his horse from county to county preaching and exhorting wherever and whenever he could.

Even Spurgeon provided a list of eleven qualifications for open-air preachers: (1) a good voice, (2) naturalness of manner, (3) self-possession, (4) a good knowledge of Scripture and of common things, (5) ability to adapt himself to any congregation, (6) good illustrative powers, (7) zeal, prudence, and common sense, (8) a large, loving heart, (9) sincere belief in all he says, (10) entire dependence on the Holy Spirit for success, (11) a close walk with God by prayer, and (12) a consistent walk before men by a holy life.

4. It plainly understands the command of our Lord to "go into the highways and the country roads" and compel sinners to come.

In Luke 14:23, Jesus commanded His disciples to go out into the highways and the country roads (or, hedges) and compel sinners to come in so that His house may be full. Open-air preachers take this verse and read it at face value and have no need to spiritualize or take this text figuratively. O how important it is to go out to where the sinners are, gather, commune, party, and live so that the biblical gospel is presented to them in a winsome and compelling way so that they may repent of their sin and believe in Christ.

5. It trusts wholly that God's Word will never return void.

Every time the preacher heralds God's truth, he recognizes that God's truth never returns void. It especially is the case when the open-air preacher takes God's Word and delivers it to the passers-by that an unshakable trust in God's promise that His Word will never return empty but it will always accomplish what God sovereignly ordains.

6. It encourages believers to go out together as a team and it mutually stirs others to more fervent and urgent evangelism.

Open-air preaching can provide a great opportunity to take other believers from a local church to gather and hand out tracts and to approach people who have listened to the preaching of the Gospel and engage in further conversation. It can be an effective way of openly proclaiming the Word and deliberately engaging people in personal conversation about their own heart and soul before a sovereign Judge.

7. It convicts Christian passers-by who are not sharing their faith to consider evangelizing with greater zeal.

Oftentimes, the open-air preacher will hear from Christians who walk by and say something along the lines of: "I wish I could do what you're doing," or "I could never do that!" but this allows the preacher a great opportunity to challenge those passers-by to be diligent, vigilant, and urgent in their own gospel-proclamation in the life-setting in which God has placed them. By the preacher's urgency and intensity, he reproves other Christians who wonder if God may ever put them up to such a daunting task of evangelizing in public! The open air preacher must, from beginning to end, be an intense man and preach with urgency, intensity, and bulldog tenacity. And, it could be argued, he could shepherd other Christians to do the same in their evangelism.

8. It always glorifies God because His Word is being proclaimed.

When a man of God proclaims the Word of God that salvation is found in the one true God, Jesus Christ, and in His righteousness received by faith alone, God is always glorified. He can be glorified in the drawing of sinners to repentance or He can be glorified in the hardening of sinners further toward judgment. God's Word that is faithfully proclaimed always glorifies God even if the outward results are nonexistent.

9. It depends wholly on the sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit to quicken dead hearts to new life as sinners hear the word preached.

Preaching by definition takes the divine message and preaches that message of new life to dead sinners who cannot, in and of themselves, listen to, hear, and respond to new life. They simply can't believe by their own freewill. The open-air preacher heralds God's truth anywhere and everywhere depending wholly on the sovereign work of God the Holy Spirit to awaken spiritually dead souls and impart spiritually new life into the sinner's soul. This is the divine act of regeneration. God can do it from the pulpit in a church. And God can perform this sovereign act on a streetcorner in a public square.

"No sort of defence is needed for preaching out of doors; but it would need very potent arguments to prove that a man had done his duty who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting-house" (Charles Spurgeon).