

# My Earnest Desire to Preach the Word

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The Lord requires His servants to be faithful in all things. As I handle the Word, as an expository preacher of the Bible, I earnestly desire to preach the Word *faithfully*. The Lord will take care of the results, the breadth of the impact, the way in which people respond obediently to God's Word heralded, and the measure by which people will tolerate the Word. But my duty does not change. My earnest desire is to *herald* God's Word, to declare the King's message, to convey the Master's mandate, to proclaim the edict of the Sovereign. To be true to God and true to His Word, I want to preach His Word in the following ways.

## 1. Accurately

As a messenger of God, I'm described as a workman in Scripture who works so as to not be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth. This means I must accurately interpret the Word and rightly divide the text. My hermeneutic must be accurate and my applications should be appropriate. This takes time and requires diligent effort. I'm resolved to preach the Word accurately.

## 2. Faithfully

The requirement that God demands from His servants is faithfulness, not productiveness. Lots of people succumb to the temptation to concern themselves with ensuring that they are *fruitful* when God calls them to be *faithful*. As I study and preach the Word, I must proclaim it faithfully, fearlessly, and truly as it was given from the Master. I cannot change the meaning of the text or alter it to suit my interests or those of my hearers. I'm resolved to preach faithfully.

## 3. Clearly

The Lord has spoken clearly and God's men must preach! When God has so clearly spoken, his prophets must clearly speak! What God has spoken clearly in the light of the Word, His ministers must not muddy the message and whisper it in the dark. The Bible reveals the existence, nature and character of God with clarity. The Scriptures reveal the depravity and condemnation of man lucidly. The Word details the crosswork of Christ and His redemption of undeserving sinners. And God demands that all sinners turn from sin and trust in Christ alone for the salvation of their souls! The truth of the Bible must come to light as God's man heralds. I'm resolved to preach the Word clearly.

## 4. Consecutively

God gave a whole Bible to be preached. God entrusted us with a whole Bible to make a whole Christian. As a preacher of the gospel, I am diligently committed to the *consecutive* expository preaching of the Bible. That means I make it my regular practice to take a book of the Bible and preach through it verse-by-verse. This allows the congregation to understand the context, the background, the author and main themes. Further, it enhances our understanding of *how* and *why* God gave us the books of the Bible the way He did. So I take His Word and preach it consecutively by reading the text, explaining it, applying it, and then moving to the next verse till I complete the book.

## 5. Compellingly

One duty that rests upon me as a preacher is that I must preach the Word compellingly. I must preach it with passion and with a purpose. To minister the Word means that people *ought* to be changed by the Word. I want God's truth to transform human hearts. I want believers to imbibe the living Word so that they *want* to change and are *compelled* to

implement steps of godliness in their Christian lives. To preach compellingly means that I preach in such a way that I evoke interest, and call for attention, and present the Truth in such a way that it cannot be refuted. Of course I believe fully in the sovereignty of God as I proclaim His Word and I trust that only God can do the internal, soul-changing work in the lives of people. Nevertheless, my desire is to overwhelm people with the majesty of God, the marvel of grace, and the mercy of salvation!

## 6. Compassionately

How many lost souls live at this moment on the brink of a Christless eternity! O to think of the untold multitudes of immortal souls who will receive divine punishment without end forevermore because of their sin and their rejection of Christ as Savior and Lord. I endeavor to preach the Word with compassion as so many are like sheep without a shepherd. When Christ saw the multitudes on the mountain, He had compassion for them. When Jesus saw the two blind men on His final journey to Jerusalem, he had compassion and touched their eyes resulting in their healing. Jesus had affection in His heart for those to whom He ministered. So it must be with me! As I preach the Word to men and women, boys and girls, church-members or not, I resolve to preach compassionately.

## 7. Courageously/boldly

No one was as bold as Jesus. In the face of many crowds and vehemently hostile enemies, He continued to walk obediently to His Father and to speak boldly concerning sin and salvation. Every minister of the gospel *must* be courageous. He must fear God and *not* man. To be a man-pleaser in ministry is to be a bird that is trapped in a net. To fear God and serve Him boldly requires the proclaimer of the gospel to not fear men or live for man's applause. This means that the herald should prioritize the affirmation from God and not fall prey to the admiration of men. This is deadly for his ministry, his preaching, and his faithfulness. To preach courageously requires a man to stand confidently on God and His Word, to prioritize the soul and eternal realities. Fear God, not man, O man of God! Preach boldly!

## 8. Urgently

The time will come when everyone will hear their last sermon. No one knows when that last sermon will be. Life is so short and eternity is soon coming that preachers do well to recast their hearts upon the imminency of death. Preaching with an eye toward heaven and an eye toward hell and preaching with one ear hearing the singing of heaven and the other ear hearing the shrieks in hell will assist the herald to preach with urgency! O the tragedy of someone coming into contact with us and, worse, sitting under our preaching, and then dying without a specific and urgent summons to forsake his sin and rely upon Christ's righteousness and atoning blood for eternal salvation! We must regain an eternal mindset. As a Christian preacher once said: "stamp eternity upon my eyeballs!" The very nature of the ministerial work necessitates an urgency as we deal with eternity. Souls! Eternity! Heaven! Hell!

## 9. Persuasively

When Paul traveled to Rome, he testified about the kingdom of God and sought to persuade people concerning Jesus (Acts 28.23). Elsewhere, Paul affirmed that he persuades men (2 Cor 5.11). Paul believed in the sovereignty of God and the need for God to change the heart. Paul understood that he could not persuade someone into the kingdom. Nevertheless, he sought to make the gospel so clear, to wound the conscience with the Law, to preach the horrors of sin, and then to present the all-sufficient balm of Christ's propitiation so that sinners would flee to Christ for everlasting hope and refuge. O may I study the Word and craft the sermon and preach the Word with such a passion so as to persuade my hearers to make the decision today to turn to Christ and live!

## 10. Engagingly

I want to be an engaging preacher. It's one thing to have someone's attention. Clowns jumping up and down can get someone's attention. But I want to secure interest and preach so engagingly that people not only are listening but that they *listen engagingly*. I long for the hearers to silently answer the questions that I present from the pulpit. I want them to nod their heads when I make comments. I want them to get lost in the Truth presented and in the glory of the God proclaimed. I cannot engage the hearer on human terms but the Spirit of God must assist me as I preach the Word accurately so that my hearers are engaged with the biblical message I'm heralding.

## 11. Authoritatively

These things speak and exhort and reprove with *all authority* (Titus 2.15). Those words from Paul to Titus serve as an important element in preaching. All true preaching is authoritative preaching. This does not mean that it's angry or harsh or mean-spirited. Rather, to preach authoritatively means that the authority and demand to listen to the message comes *not* from the preacher but from the *source*, the *giver* -- God Himself. Thus, since I bear the King's message and I preach the Lord's gospel, I preach authoritatively because it belongs to and comes from *God*. So I must not apologize for the hard truths declared. I must not shrink from the difficult demands. I must preach as a man under compulsion and a man who has been entrusted with a ministry from the King of the universe!

## 12. Prayerfully

The Apostles publicly stated that they will devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Paul came to the Corinthians not in rhetorical finesse but with full confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit as he preached. We must pray before we preach, as we preach, and after we preach. Prayerless in ministry signifies self-confidence in ministry. Rather, men of God must be wholly dependent upon God, fully reliant on His grace, and utterly desperate for His power. And these particular realities will drive God's man to his knees in genuine prayer calling upon God and asking for God's blessing. Ministers of the gospel do well to pray on their knees more and peruse the commentaries less. Heralds must beg God for His power to go forth even through weak vessels. So then, preach prayerfully.