

## Why doesn't preaching always achieve the desired result? Pleasant Plains 4-24-2016AM NICK ANGEL

- **\*Read Ephesians 4:11-24\*** In a text that we are well familiar with, the Apostle Paul lays forth the design that God has put in place for the Church, the Body of His Son to grow and be strengthened. God has established positions of leadership and service within the Church that will help to facilitate learning and growth among its members. In the first century, Apostles, prophets, and others with miraculous gifts were used to share God's will with the masses. Pastors, teachers, and evangelist were used then, as well, and they are still used today as instruments to strengthen the Lord's Body within the 21st century, and they will continue to be used as long as there is a Gospel message to be shared with the spiritually poor.
- The Apostle Paul recognized the great necessity of those who were willing and able to publicly share the Gospel message and other Biblical teachings with the masses. Paul felt the responsibility to teach those who would take up this work, and we have three letters written by Paul to evangelists who were endeavoring to take up this mantle of sharing the Gospel with those who would hear. **(I & II Timothy & Titus)** In **II Timothy 4:1-5**, Paul shares some very important words with Timothy concerning his work as a preacher of God's Word.
- Paul knew the importance of the preaching of God's Word. He knew that it served as a way for people's lives to be changed. He knew that the preaching and teaching of God's Word would lead people to be more like their Savior Jesus Christ. Paul says in **Ephesians 4:13** that God desires for all members of the Church to grown into the stature that belongs to Christ. He wants us to be like Christ. He continues on to say that the Ephesians were to no longer live their lives as the Gentiles do, but they are to lay aside the old self in order to put on the new self that God expected for them to be in righteousness and holiness. **(Eph. 4:20-24)** They were to be able to do this based upon the teachings that they had heard concerning Jesus and His will for them. They were to be changed through the hearing of God's Word preached to them. We would say that this is the edification of the saints. "Edification is the application of Bible truths to my life and circumstances so that I am made more like Jesus Christ." (Max Dawson)
- This continues to be God's will for all people even today. He expects for people to be changed through the hearing of God's Word preached and taught to them. However, we don't see all people walking in the way of God. Even those who profess Christ and listen often to preaching and teaching are not transformed to be like Christ in all things. Because this is what we see around us, I ask the question, "Why doesn't preaching always achieve the desired result?" Why aren't people changed to be more like Jesus when they hear preaching and teaching on a regular basis? I think this is a worthwhile question for us to consider this morning. My desire, and the desire of every person who preaches and teachings the Word of God ought to be for the hearer to be make more like Jesus through the words that they share...but that just doesn't always happen. Let's consider 3 reasons why people aren't always made more like Jesus through the preaching of God's Word.

### 3 reasons why we don't become more like Jesus through the preaching of the Gospel.

#### **I. The Preaching Is Poor**

- A. Sometimes, people need have a chance to be made more like Jesus through the preaching of the Word because the preachings isn't good.
  1. It might be that the presentation of the lesson just isn't very good.
    - a) The preacher might not be able to speak in a way that he can be understood.
    - b) The preacher might not have his lessons organized in such a way that people can take something away from the lesson. "So what??" (David Banning)
  2. It also might be that the preacher spend his entire time telling stories and chasing rabbits instead of focusing on how the listeners can learn to be more like Jesus. **(II Tim. 4:2 "Preach the Word)**
  3. He might be ineffective because he only preaches from a soapbox. **(II Tim. 2:14)**
  4. The preacher might not preach the meat of God's Word, but he instead spends his time giving motivational talks that are filled with fluff. **(II Tim. 4:3)**
  5. It might be that the preacher isn't effective because his tone is such that people tune him out. He might constantly yell in a hateful manner or his attitude might push people away instead of draw them into a good study of God's Word. **(Eph. 4:15)**
  6. Possibly worst of all, the preacher's material might not be accurate according to the Scriptures. Those who hear unbiblical lessons can't come to be more like Jesus.

- B. If the preacher preaching is the problem, then what is next?
1. The preacher needs to make corrections that will allow his lessons to be effective. He needs to put in the time and effort to improve the abilities that he lacks in. **(II Timothy 2:15)**
  2. This doesn't mean that a man can never make mistakes, or that he must be perfect in everything that he does from delivery, knowledge, & style. The best preachers and teachers in the world make mistakes from time to time and have their weaknesses. But it does mean that we must not be careless in this all important work that we do of preaching and teaching from God's Word, and that we will give every effort to strive to make our weaknesses out strengths.
  3. Everyone else should demand that they are fed well. It is the responsibility of the preacher to feed the local congregation with a steady diet of reproving, rebuking, & exhorting. We know the power that the Word of God possesses **(II Tim. 3:16,17)**, and it is the job of the preacher/teacher to make sure those things are present and showing within the lessons that he presents.
  4. It is serious business that the preacher preach well. His efforts play a part in whether or not people have the opportunity to grow to be more like Jesus. He must never take that responsibility lightly.

## II. The Listening Is Poor

- A. Let's not lay all of the blame at the feet of the preacher because sometimes the listeners are not growing because of something that is lacking on their end. It might be that they are not listening to the good lessons that the preacher puts before them.
1. It might be that listeners allow a personal grudge to keep them from hearing what the preacher is laying before them. They allow the grudge to stunt their growth as a Christian because they are not willing to let go and move past a perceived issue in their mind.
  2. Or it might be that the listeners' minds are pre-occupied with other things on their mind. They might be thinking about lunch, an afternoon nap, the upcoming week, or any variety of things. These listeners aren't able to listen to the lesson because their minds are already jam packed.
  3. Or possibly worst of all...the listener might just not care at all about what is being said. This disciple is eaten up with apathy and he or she is only attending to save face and keep up a facade that they are bought into the light of a disciple of Christ. This person allows the words to go in one ear and there is an easy exit out of the other.
  4. These issues and others might keep an individual in the audience from ever getting the chance to grow because he/she isn't hearing anything that is coming out of the pulpit.
- B. We must make sure that we are giving every effort to listen to God's Word as a disciple gives the time and effort to stand and teach us.
1. If we have an issue with the presenter, then we need to go and figure that thing out so that this road block to growth is removed. If it can't be resolved, then it might be that a Paul and Barnabas move might be in order. **(Acts 15:36-39)** We ought not allow personal issues to stunt our growth as Christians.
  2. If our minds are so pre-occupied with other things of this life that we cannot listen to someone presenting the Word of God to us, then we need to take a step back and evaluate our priorities in this life. **(Matt. 6:25,26)**
  3. If we just don't care...then we need to find a reason to care. We need to find something that will ignite a flame of zeal within us for God's Word, and no better motivation might there be than the fact that if we don't care...then God will spit us out of His mouth just as He threatened to those in Laodicea, and we will have no part with Him. **(Rev. 3:16)**
  4. If the preacher is doing his job by putting together beneficial lessons that will help me be like Jesus, then I need to put forth the effort to listen and weigh his words. **(Acts 17:11)** If they are good and right, then I need to make the proper application to my life so that I will be more like Jesus.

### III. The Application Is Poor

- A. The preacher might be preaching well, the listeners might pay attention and take in every word...yet if there is still not growth, then it might be because there is a lack of proper application of the Biblical truths to the lives and circumstances of the hearer.
1. Listeners might not be making proper application because they aren't willing to listen to someone encourage them to do better in this life. No one can tell them to do something that they don't want to do, so they fail to make the proper application of Biblical truths.
  2. Or it might be that they hear the truths, they see where they could be applied, yet they can only apply to other people. They see where these truths can help someone else way more than they can help themselves.
  3. Maybe the most frustrating of all...the listeners hear the Biblical truths, they know how they can help, but they won't apply them to their own lives because they are totally blind to their own faults.
  4. Listening closely and hearing the sound words of Biblical truth is good for the Christian, but this does not good if he/she won't apply them to his/her life.
- B. We must give every effort to not just hear but also apply the truths of God's Word where we need to in this life.
1. To ignore the sound words of reproof and correction is foolish in the eyes of God. **(Prov. 15:32 "He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.")** Our failure to heed admonishment will certainly lead to more troubles down the road.
  2. Our foremost duty isn't to listen to preaching/teaching and give all of our efforts to fixing other people. Our first duty is to see how these truths can make us more like Jesus. We cannot know how we can be more like Jesus if we give all of our efforts figuring out who else can be make better by these teachings.
  3. This is especially disastrous when we have glaring issues that we are ignoring so that we can focus on the issues of others. **(Matt. 7:3-5)**
  4. We all have our weaknesses, and we must give effort to hear the truths that come from God's Word and do what we can to take those truths and make ourselves more like Jesus Christ.

Often, when things are not working out, we try to lay all of the blame on one particular person. Its either all his fault... or it is all her fault, but the truth usually lies somewhere in the middle. When it comes to a lack of edification (building up to be like Jesus), sometimes it might be the preacher's fault. Sometimes it might be the listener's fault. Regardless of who is doing the poor job, bother sides must give every effort to do what they must do in order to have Biblical truths presented, heard, and applied so that disciples of Christ are able to be more like that Perfect One whom they follow. May God help us to do our part to be built up more like His Son, so that this question doesn't have to be asked.