

# Preaching & Worship

We live in a multi media communication age.  
Is preaching still relevant today ?

## "Preach the Word..."

2 Tim 4 v 1 - 5

### Examining the place of preaching in public worship

*"Among so many excellent gifts with which God has adorned mankind, it is a peculiar privilege that he deigns to consecrate men's lips & tongues to His service that His voice may be heard in them"*

(Calvin - Institutes)



John Calvin preaching in St Peters Church Geneva in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

*"Christian saw the picture of a very grave (serious) person hanging upon the wall... he had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written on his lips, the world was behind his back. He stood as if he pleaded with men and a crown of gold did hang over his head."*

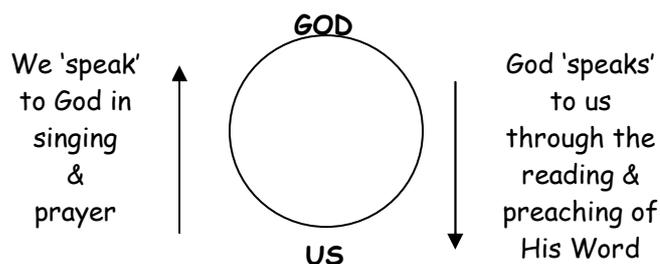
(John Bunyan's description of The Preacher in 'Pilgrim's Progress')

*"I can find no record of church assemblies in the New Testament in which preaching and teaching orally does not occupy a most prominent position."*

(J C Ryle - Knots Untied)

## Introduction

A visual picture to help us to understand the interactive & relational nature of worship is a circle, where there is a 'dual speaking' of us to God and God to us.



Reading the Bible & Preaching are therefore essential ingredients to public worship - as we 'hear' we worship, just as much as when we sing & pray.

## The Preacher (2 Tim 4v1)

In the NT we are given the example of Timothy as a 'model' of the preacher:

### 1. The preacher is a called man

He has evident gifts & abilities which are recognised by the church, causing him to be set apart for this task. In Timothy's case, the confirmation of this was through 'prophecy' (1 Tim 4v14). Today we have the completed Bible containing instructions & examples of the criteria to be used to recognise such a calling. (Note: a preacher's task in public worship is not the calling of every man & never the calling of a woman - 1 Tim 2 v 12). There are many Bible examples of men who's 'life calling' was changed by God to that of 'preacher' - eg Amos 7 v14/15.

In the context of public worship, the preacher illustrated by Timothy is a 'pastor/teacher' (some preachers may have a specific role in the church as an 'evangelist' (See Eph 4 v 11/12). It is a truly awesome responsibility to lead & preach in public worship - 2 Tim 4v1.

Preachers are sometimes men who have secular work (The Apostle Paul was at times a 'tentmaker') but where possible he is to be separated out to do his work 'full time' (1 Tim 5 v17/18 & 1 Cor 9v14). Whatever the case may be, the preacher needs the constant prayer support of the church. (Heb 13v7)

### 2. The preacher is a word communicator

He is to **read** the word - 1 Tim 4 v 13 refers to public reading

He is to **preach** the word - 2 Tim 4v2

There is a place for other means of communication in church life & outreach but in public worship, despite pragmatic thinking about how little people learn from simple oral communication, God has ordained preaching - it is His way!

But preaching is not simply the power of oratory - Power in preaching comes from the aid & application of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who guides us into the truth, convicts & convinces us & applies the word preached to our hearts & lives (John 16v3 + 1 Cor 2 v4/5). He makes all the difference!

*"The best preaching in the world, without the Spirit's touch is nothing!"* (Stuart Olyott)

This has always been the case! Back in 1885, Owen Jones wrote, *"The decay of preaching does not arise from any plurality of causes but from one great cause, the want of the Spirit of God... learning, discipline & training, whatever effect they may have... cannot in any way... dispense with the Spirit."*

### 3. The preacher is the King's Herald

The Greek word in 2 Tim 4 v 2 (& in over 60 other references in the NT) to preaching, is 'kerrusso' which means 'herald'. It brings before us the picture of times before modern communication methods, when the king would send out his herald to 'cry out' in public, the message that he had given him authority to declare. Preaching carries the authority of the King of Kings!

(Note: Other Greek words are used also - for example Eph 4 v 11 refers to the 'teaching' role of the preacher & Acts 16v10, refers to his 'evangelism' role).

*The preacher is involved in corporate worship in order that God's word, accompanied by God's Spirit, may enable God's people to hear God's voice, obey God's commands & do God's will in their lives. By doing this, the preacher gets smaller & smaller as the things of God get bigger & bigger!*

## The Content of Preaching (2 Tim 4v1)

### 1. The "Word" - (ie the Scriptures) 2 Tim 3 v14-16 + 1 v13/14

Only the word / Always the word / All of the word (Acts 20 v20/21/25-27)

Preaching in worship is to be Bible centric

### 2. The Gospel - (ie all matters relating to our salvation) Mark 16v15

Preaching in worship is to be Gospel centric

### 3. Jesus Christ (ie the Living Word) (Luke 24 v25-27 & refs all thru Acts)

Preaching in worship is to be Christ centric

## The Manner of Preaching (2 Tim 4v2/5)

Note the strong words relating to how the preacher is to preach:

- *Be ready* - military term - always on 'stand by' (1 Tim 4v15)
- *In season & out of season* - even when he (& his hearers) don't feel like it !
- *Convince* - '*preach to bring forth conviction & confession*' (ESV)
- *Rebuke* - '*sharply*' & sometimes '*severely*' *Exhort* - pleadingly, with love, deep feeling & passion
- *All longsuffering* - with patience & restraint
- *Teaching* - *with the most painstaking instruction*
- *Watchful* - a military term 'on watch' - of sober & sound mind
- *Endure afflictions* - the preacher is a particular target of Satan
- *Do the work of an Evangelist* - always part of the Pastor/Teacher's task
- *Fulfill your ministry* - fill it up to the brim !

The preacher must first have heard his sermon preached in his study!

*"The only message that reaches the heart of the hearer must come from the heart of the preacher."* (S Olyott)

## The Hearers of Preaching

*The desire of the hearer to hear must match that of the preacher to preach!* We are to prepare & be ready to hear God's word in worship - Jesus said "*Take heed how you hear*" (Luke 8v18) His description of the 'good ground hearer' in the Parable of the Sower in Luke 18v15 is, "*those who having heard the word with a noble (honest & right) heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience*" (ie over a period of time as the truth of the word takes effect in the life). Even in listening to preaching - which goes first to the mind - worship is first a 'heart matter' - *our worship can never be right if our heart is wrong!*

These notes accompany a sermon preached on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - see sermons page of this website.