

Church Unity/Building (2)

The Foundation of a Healthy Church: the Preaching of the Word of God

2 Timothy 4:1-5

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- **He was in the words of one writer: “A bow always strung!”**
- **John Calvin, the French Reformer** was born on July 10, 1509 & as a young man when God converted Him, he saw the ‘majesty of God in the Scriptures.’
 - This profound & gripping reality led to an inevitable conclusion for Calvin. Since the Scriptures are the very voice of God and since they are therefore self-authenticating in revealing the majesty of God... it follows that his own life must be marked by unstoppable constancy in the exposition of Scripture.
 - Calvin was a relentless writer, commentator, lecturer. And he preached 10 sermons every 2 weeks & all of it was exposition of the Word of God.
 - He preached steadily & faithfully through books of the Bible. For instance:
 - In Geneva, he preached 5 years thru Acts, 46 sermons thru Thessalonians, 186 sermons through the Corinthians, 86 sermons thru the Pastorals, 43 sermons on Galatians, 48 sermons on Ephesians. He preached 159 sermons on Job, 200 on Deuteronomy, 353 on Isaiah, & 123 on Genesis.
 - Calvin thought: How might I best show forth for all of Geneva and all of Europe and all of history the divine majesty of God? He answered with a life of continuous expository preaching. [And that’s true today also!]
- Steve Lawson is right: **"In this hour, pastors must see their pulpits again marked by sequential exposition, doctrinal clarity, and a sense of gravity regarding eternal matters"**
 - It would be a terrible & a crafty ploy of Satan for CHURCHES to be bulging at the seams & growing -- but NO proclamation of Christ and Him crucified from the written Word of God. What a victory for Satan.

It's true. Mohler rightly assesses the dangerously ill state of the church today.

- **Mohler writes:** Traditional norms of worship are now subordinated to a demand for relevance and creativity. A media-driven culture of images has replaced the Word-centered culture that gave birth to the Reformation churches.

- *So - what is to be done? Are we to keep up with society, culture, the arts, media, graphics, technology to win, entertain, keep & satisfy churchgoers?*

Did God Say...

Form a committee!

Take a survey of the community!

Spend yourself visiting people!

Seek to engage the culture!

Read the latest book!

Make the people laugh! Entertain the crowds!

> NO! He said: "**Preach the Word!**"

> the great task of the preacher is to HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE to people who need it for their souls! (Dever, 53)

- **I would argue that the task remains the same today as it did in the early church (as given in the NT) -- to PREACH THE WORD.**

ALL this presupposes...

- ➔the centrality of the Word
- ➔the understandability of the Word
- ➔the power of the Word
- ➔the sufficiency of the Word

****READ THE TEXT****

THESIS — this is the clear mandate for every minister of the gospel - every pastor. Let's look at this foundational text to understand what we can about PREACHING THE WORD.

This text teaches about the foundational necessity to preach the Word

I. THE SOLEMNITY OF THE FOUNDATION TO PREACH THE WORD (v1)

- Paul's layering upon layering those who say: "I second that; I third that; I affirm that"
- It's the seriousness, the solemnity, the clarity, the unambiguity of this CALLING
- a solemn, a serious, a sober, a sacred, a sovereign CALL.

A.V.1 - to solemnly charge - shows the forceful order; the solemn directive.

1. In the presence of God
2. of Christ Jesus
3. Judge of living & dead - *Christ will judge.*
4. By his appearing - *He'll come back & reward!*
5. His Kingdom - *by the King's authority*

B. The man who preaches is under obligation to do so by the GOD OF HEAVEN.

C. The man whose called & commissioned & compelled to preach **cannot NOT** preach.

1.V.1 shows the solemn accountability of the preacher - not to a group, a leadership board, a church, a denomination, or anything or anyone else -- but to the Triune God who has placed him under divine orders to *solemnly declare a message.*

II. THE SUPREMACY OF THE FOUNDATION TO PREACH THE WORD! (v2)

*it is this verse that **MacArthur** affirms: "In this **single verse**, the apostle defined the primary mandate for God-honoring church ministry, not only for Timothy, but for ALL who would come after him. The minister of the gospel is called to preach the Word".*

1. This is the **MAIN** calling of the **minister** of the gospel.
 - a) John the Baptist came preaching (Matt 3)
 - b) Jesus said he was sent to preach (Luke 4.43)
 - c) Paul said: "We proclaim Him (Christ) (Col 1.28)
 - d) Paul says it in **1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 2:15; Titus 2:1, 15**
2. This is the main event. This is the main course. This is the non-negotiable.
3. It's clear, it's compelling, it's comprehensive, it's binding, it's timeless; it's inexhaustible.
4. NOTE the supreme foundation to preach. It's essential!

5 imperatives here!

1. PREACH THE WORD!

- **So what is it to preach the word?** We don't just need more *speaking, talking, dialoguing, lecturing, or 'preaching'* -- we need the right **KIND** of preaching.
 - **To preach** [herald] - a messenger, an ambassador, a truth-teller, an envoy of the King. one who proclaims critical news. In the ancient Roman empire, a herald was a town-messenger of news from the emperor to the citizens.
 - **biblically**, a preacher is one who heralds Christ & His work with passion & with a binding sense of authority. He doesn't create the message; he conveys the message. He doesn't design the message; he delivers the message.

- **To preach EXPOSITIONALLY** - we mean that we *expose* the meaning of the text out to the hearers. It is preaching in a way that the meaning of the Bible is presented entirely and exactly as it was intended by God.

❖ Expository Preaching is the PROCLAMATION OF THE TRUTH OF GOD AS MEDIATED THRU THE PREACHER

- **The Puritans believed: "The preaching of the Word is the window where Christ looks forth and shows Himself to His saints"**
- Preaching is: **"a visual demonstration of God ruling his church."** (Murray Campbell)

SO -- your pastor's foremost job is to preach. And he...

is a messenger, not an originator
 is a sower, not the source
 is a herald, not the entertainer
 is a steward, not the owner
 is a guide, not the centerpoint
 is the server of food, not the chef who made the meal

a) Preach **The WORD** - the word of God is the substance & content of the preacher's message (what Word? See context of 3:15-17).

b) **The preacher, Calvin believed, "has nothing to say apart from Scripture."**

c) **The preacher has no weapon "but the Word of God".**

2. **be ready** - vigilant, ready, courageous, undeterred, focused.

3. **Reprove** - to correct misbehavior or false doctrine.

4. **Rebuke** - seems to imply a stern, biblical warning to bring guilt and then repentance and change.

5. **Exhort** - to admonish, instruct, plead, beg. >***with patience**

a) 4 more imperatives in v.5 = 9 total! **The Man who is a Minister is on Mission from the Master!** Preach! Preach! Preach!

b) Robert Traill wrote: "An unpreaching minister is a sort of contradiction!"

B. NOTE there is nothing here about numbers, results, stats, conversions, decisions, fruitfulness.

C. "Preachers must never stop being faithful even when it seems that they're not being fruitful" (HB Charles)

1. So whatever comes and whatever happens -- Preach Christ crucified (1 Cor 1.23). **Preach the WORD** concerning: the **WICKEDNESS** of man's transgressions, the **inability** of man's nature, the **everlasting** doom that awaits every sinner, the **virgin** birth & obedient life of Christ, the **rejection** & scorning by sinners, the **crucifixion** of the Son of God, the **wrath-bearing**, wrath-satisfying atonement that Jesus accomplished, the **burial** & resurrection of Christ, the **enthronement** at the Father's right hand & **soon-coming** of Christ to judge. Preach Christ's demand to repent & believe & follow Him!

Do you thank God for the **supreme blessing of having a man who preaches the Word?

III. THE SPURNING OF THE FOUNDATION TO PREACH THE WORD! (v3-4)

A. Preachers MUST resist the temptation to be shaped by the cultural whims/mandates/desires of a godless society. Carnal ears will always want to be charmed and not confronted, captivated but not challenged. **True preachers must not cave in to this!**

B. These verses underscore the sureness & severity & travesty of those who SPURN and REJECT and REPLACE the Word.

1. False prophets came & God's people loved it so (Jer 5.30-31)

C. the certainty - the time will come

1. the era, the epoch, the kairos (the season)

D. the rejection -- they will not endure...

1. they will not endure 'healthy/sound teaching/doctrine -- "BUT" (alla)

E. the replacement -- they will accumulate for themselves

1. emphasis on word order: according to their own desires/lusts/passions/wills they'll accumulate teachers. *they pursue what they want & what makes them feel better.

F. the severity - turn from the TRUTH (what a tragedy!)

G. What is a man to do?

1. what happens when people leave? when people want the hip, the latest, the entertainer, the charismatic/winsome/cool/trendy/popular speaker?

2. what if your numbers drop? what if membership tanks? what if people that were once on board now jump ship?

>> *Even when the preaching is spurned, the preacher MUST be faithful.*

IV. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE FOUNDATION TO PREACH THE WORD! (v5)

A. ***BUT YOU*** = Like a Father grabbing his son by the shirt w/ serious love! A serious Word! An urgent word.

1. it's personal, it's unmistakable, it's crucial. It must be heard

B. **Be sober** (1 Pet 1.13) - level headed, clear thinking, balanced, control yourself, be self-controlled. Be alert. Be on the watch! Be controlled.

C. **Endure hardship** (2 Tim 2.3) - expect it; 3:12 & 2:3

D. **Do the work of an evangelist** (gospel teller, a gospel speaker, a gospel lover, a gospel declarer) - go after the lost; go to the highways, preach Christ in the pulpit & outside the church. Go to the lost & let Christ be your theme, your message, your joy & your thunder.

E. **Fulfill your ministry.**

1. many people start well; but can you END well?

2. it's easy to start out strong; but can you end faithfully? Pray for him!

9 compelling reasons...

I. PREACHING ALLOWS GOD TO AUTHORITATIVELY SPEAK TO HIS CHURCH!

II. PREACHING IS THE PRIMARY MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE SPIRIT SAVES PEOPLE!

III. PREACHING IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE FAMINE IN THE LAND TODAY!

IV. PREACHING THAT IS BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL GLORIFIES THE TRIUNE GOD AND HIS WORK OF REDEMPTION!

V. PREACHING URGENTLY COMPELS AND INTENTIONALLY PERSUADES SINNERS TO REPENT & BELIEVE!

VI. PREACHING REMINDS BELIEVERS OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTION AND HOW GOD'S WORD PROVIDES CHANGE

VII. PREACHING IS COMMANDED BY GOD

VIII. PREACHING SANCTIFIES THE PREACHER AND, BY EXTENSION, THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION!

IX. PREACHING ALLOWS GOD TO RECEIVE ALL THE GLORY DUE HIS NAME!

What does this mean for you at SLCCC?

1. **Expect, pray for & earnestly desire** that the faithful, expository preaching of the Word of God always take central place & priority.

2. **Pray** for your preachers and teachers (your teachers) regularly!

3. Understand what God demands of a **faithful church** regardless of what thrives in culture around us.

4. **Hunger** for the preached Word by preparing well, praying hard & being ready to hear & apply the Word diligently, specifically. Go from your knees to the sermon & from the sermon to your knees.

5. **Pray** for God to bring a revival of expository preaching to our land (there's a famine in our day)

CONCL

Concluding Illustration

- Isn't it amazing that a man could be the mouthpiece and ambassador of the almighty, Triune GOD?

- every sermon has 2 ministers preaching --- the **EXTERNAL** minister who holds forth the vocal word and it is received by the ears (Pastor Aaron) and THE **INTERNAL** minister -- who is the Holy Spirit and who truly communicates the glory & grace & gospel of Christ.

- Dear congregation: bless God that you have a minister who: **preaches** Jesus Christ & his grace sufficient for sinners & his atoning work that satisfied the Father's wrath & His righteousness that is reckoned to you -- all by grace alone thru faith alone in Christ alone!