

Preaching, Teaching, and Shepherding

PREACHING

Mark 16:15

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Acts 8:4

“Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”

The Greek word for preaching is evangelizo, which is almost always used of the ‘good news’ concerning the Son of God as proclaimed in the gospel. It is to bring (or declare) good (or glad) tidings.

GOOD NEWS

The Bible tells us that God is both loving (1 John 4:8) and just (Deut. 32:4). God in His love desires a right relationship with everyone, but God in His justice cannot ignore sin. Man, by his nature and deeds, is a sinner (Romans 3:23). Sin results in separation (Isaiah 59:2) and death (Romans 6:23). Man, because of his sin, is separated from a right relationship with God; man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). Unless this condition of spiritual death is remedied in this life, it will lead to eternal death (Heb. 9:27, 2 Thess. 1:8,9), eternal separation from God.

The good news is that God sent his Son Jesus to save us from death and separation and provide the way for us to have eternal life. Jesus is God the Son (John 1:1,14,17) and is the only way to God the Father

(John 14:6). Jesus is our Creator (Col. 1:13-16) and Lord (Acts 10:36), and will one day return to establish an eternal kingdom (Dan. 7:13,14, Rev. 11:15). Jesus Christ came to die for our sins and provide the way back to God (1 Peter 3:18). Eternal life (salvation) is a free gift (Romans 6:23) offered to anyone who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Acts 4:12, John 8:24).

How can a person become a Christian? Many have expressed their faith in Jesus Christ through a prayer, such as the following: “Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I cannot be right with God through my own efforts. But I believe that You died for me and paid the penalty for my sin. I now ask You to come into my life as my Lord and Savior. I now place my trust in You alone, Lord Jesus, for my salvation. Help me to follow and obey You as Lord of my life.”

The Bible says, “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). We can’t live the Christian life in our own strength, but God has provided all the resources we need--such as His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), His promises (2 Peter 1:4), and His grace (2 Corinthians 9:8)--to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Jesus promises an abundant, eternal life for all who put their trust in Him (John 10:10, John 5:24).

BRIDGES TO THE GOSPEL

Sometimes it is helpful to use topics of interest to lead into a presentation of the gospel. Perhaps the most important “bridge” is your personal testimony.

Your Personal Testimony

Among the most powerful resources available to you in sharing the gospel is your personal testimony. A well-presented account of what God has done in your life can help people to relate to the good news with interest and understanding, instead of immediate rejection of “religious talk.”

By writing your testimony, you will become more familiar with it so that you can more readily share it with others. You will also have a useful and personal tool that can be easily reproduced for giving to others. Consider the following verses:

1 Peter 3:15 -always ready...give an account

Mark 5:19--report to them what great things the Lord has done for you

1 Timothy 1:13-16, Acts 22:1-21, 26:1-29, Titus 3:3-7--Paul's example

1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 4:9--imitate Paul

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10--the Thessalonians

Guidelines:

1. Make it personal; don't preach or use Christian jargon that is hard to understand.
2. Make it short--200 to 500 words or less.
3. Keep Christ central--highlight what He has done.
4. Use one or two verses to add power to your message.

Steps:

1. Past Life--Before Salvation

What were you living for? What were your past circumstances, philosophies, goals, fears, weaknesses, or struggles? (Of course, you will want to leave out unnecessary or inappropriate details.) What things helped to make salvation a desirable thing for you?

2. How It Happened

What events led up to your conversion? How was the gospel communicated to you? What Bible verses affected you the most? What was your response? How did you trust Christ?

3. New Life

How has your life truly changed as a result of your relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Write a first draft, then a second in which you try to improve the flow and logic of your story. Let someone read your second draft to critique it. Then write a final draft. By writing your personal testimony you can let others know what great things the Lord has done for you!

Other Bridges to the Gospel

Satisfaction--Is. 55:1,2, Jer. 2:13, Jn. 7:37-39, 10:10

Prophecy--Is. 46:9,10

Creation--Gen. 1:1, Acts 17:22-34

Resurrection--Acts 13:34-37

Christianity is Unique

Sacred Writings--2 Tim. 3:16,17, 2 Pet. 1:21

Founder--John 1:1,14, 14:9, 10:30

Message--Eph. 2:8-10

Christianity & Society--Is. 48:18, Pro. 8:33-36, 14:34

Gospel & Benefits--Ps. 103:2

Eternal life--John 5:24

Complete--Col. 2:9,10

Forgiveness--Acts 10:43

Purpose--Eph. 2:10

Family--Eph. 2:19

TEACHING

In Ephesians 4:11-13 we read, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,

to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”

One of the ways leaders in the church can equip believers for the work of service is to faithfully teach God’s word. The Bible declares, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Everything we need to know in order to live the Christian life can be found in the pages of the Bible.

P.E.A. is an acrostic that can be helpful in teaching the Scriptures:

P: Principle--the central truth of the passage being considered

E: Example--illustrations used to clarify the truths being presented.

Illustrations can assist argument, help the hearer to remember, stimulate the imagination, bridge difficult places, and enforce the truth. Sources of illustrations can be from the Scriptures, history, nature, magazine or newspaper articles, poetry, fiction, or personal experience.

A: Application--how this truth can be applied in our personal lives.

The goal of teaching is to understand and apply God’s word. “And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading” (Neh 8:8). “But prove yourselves

doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves”
(Js. 1:22).

Messages may be topical, biographical, or expository. A topical message tells what the Bible says about a particular subject. A biographical message tells about the biblical account of the life of a particular individual, and the lessons to be learned from it. And an expository message consists of the opening up (unfolding and explaining) of a portion of Scripture.

Preparing a Topical Message

The goal of a topical study is to draw together what the Bible says about a given subject. It should serve to reveal the key truths of Scripture about your topic and point out what you need to know and do about it.

1. Choose a topic, such as the Holy Spirit, humility, faith, etc.
2. Select the 10 or 12 best passages on the topic. Use a concordance or topical index or cross-references to find relevant verses. List the 10 or 12 references with a key thought beside each one for quick identification.
3. Make a summary or an outline based on the passages you have selected.
4. Choose a key verse, one which seems to contain the kernel of what

the Bible teaches on your topic.

5. List illustrations—from the Bible, from your life, from nature, or from the experiences of others that help to demonstrate the truth of the topic.

6. Application—write down a specific and practical way you can apply the topic's truth to your life.

Preparing a Biographical Message

The Bible is filled with accounts of the lives of individuals, and we can read about their relationships, both to God and to each other. There is much to learn by studying how these lives were touched by God, how they responded to Him, what kind of persons they became, and what mark they left on their times.

1. Choose a person from the Bible to study, such as David, Daniel, Ruth, Elijah, Saul, or others.

2. Choose and list the passages of the Bible that will be used for your study. Use a concordance or a Bible dictionary to find relevant passages.

3. Write a brief biographical sketch of the person, based on the passages you have chosen. Include a description of that person's character

qualities that should be imitated, and which should be avoided.

4. Choose a key verse--one that seems to sum up the person's life.

5. Determine what the leading lesson of that person's life is.

6. List a principle that you should apply or a characteristic you need to build or avoid in your own life, in light of what you have learned.

Preparing an Expository Message

An expository message concentrates on a portion of Scripture.

The passage of Scripture itself is the theme of the message; expository preaching is presenting the truths of the passage in the context of the book in which the passage occurs. To understand the context, the book itself must be studied.

Here are some steps for studying a book of the Bible:

1. Read the book all the way through at least once.

2. Use a study Bible, Bible handbook, or Bible dictionary to determine who wrote the book, when and where was it written, to whom it was written, and why. What information do the Gospels or Acts give on the book? What are the key words that are emphasized or frequently

repeated?

3. Study the book chapter by chapter, using the following steps:

a. Re-read the chapter.

b. Write a chapter title that describes what the chapter is about.

c. List the key verse.

d. Make a summary or outline of the chapter:

(1) For each verse or groups of related verses write down a brief summary of what the verse says.

(2) List cross-references that help to explain the verses.

(3) Write down relevant definitions, questions, etc.

(4) Write illustrations and applications for the chapter.

4. Make a summary of the entire book:

a. List chapter titles, key verses, and a brief summary of each chapter.

b. Write a title for the book.

c. List main lessons and challenges, and applications.

SHEPHERDING

Knowing the Sheep (Visitation)

Elders are undershepherds for the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4).

As shepherds they should know well the conditions of their flock (Proverbs 27:23), and keep watch over their souls (Hebrews 13:17).

Questions for discerning needs

Do you understand and believe the gospel? Do you know you have eternal life? Have you been baptized? Do you have consistent quiet times? Do you regularly fellowship with other Christians? Can you present your personal testimony? Can you share with others a gospel presentation? Do you understand basic Christian doctrines? Do you have a basic grasp of the Scriptures? Do you memorize verses? Can you preach? Can you teach? Are there people that you spiritually shepherd?

Praying for the Sheep

An important function of shepherding is praying for individuals.

“But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the

good and right way” (1 Sam 12:23).

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:14-16).

Feeding the Sheep

Shepherds lead sheep to food and water (Ezek. 34:23, John 21:15).
Spiritual nourishment is found in God’s word (1 Peter 2:2).

Leading the Sheep

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

The chief way shepherds should lead is by the example of their lives, not by “lording it over” people.

There may be times when counsel is sought for a particular situation. In such cases, it is the Bible that should be our guide.

Protecting the Flock

Jesus is the good shepherd who gave himself for the sheep (John 10:11-15). We are to lay our lives down for the brethren (1 John 3:16-18). As undershepherds, elders should work to protect the flock.

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:28-32).