

**GOSPEL TEACHING SUMMARY FOUR:
GOD-CENTRED PREACHING AND WITNESSING**

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1 Corinthians 2:4

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

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Aims

By the end of this study the reader should be able to: -

- 1) Appreciate the purpose of Gospel sharing.
- 2) Distinguish between Gospel preaching and witnessing.
- 3) Perceive the effect that the Gospel should have on a person.
- 4) Understand the methods used in preaching and witnessing.
- 5) Know whether they are effective or ineffective in their witness.
- 6) Discern whether the Gospel is having any influence on a person
- 7) Witness to Jesus – should they so wish.

Definitions

1) GOSPEL PREACHING: the orderly, verbal proclamation of the Gospel, which is designed to illicit a whole-hearted response from those who hear it. It is an activity conducted by those with a gift of Evangelism.

2) GOSPEL WITNESSING: the informal, spontaneous sharing of the Gospel, which is designed to help people become more responsive to the claims of Jesus Christ. Such witnessing may either be done verbally (through word of mouth) or it may occur silently by personal example or through benevolent deeds. It is an activity ALL followers of Jesus are called to engage in.

3) GOSPEL SHARING: the attempt to share the Gospel through either preaching and/or witnessing. It is a broad term encompassing both the above, previous two definitions.

Section One: Purpose

The overall purpose of any attempt to share the Gospel should be to glorify God by enabling people to effectively relate to, serve and worship Him, (2 Corinthians 9.13).

It could be likened to a form of “*spiritual brokering*” whereby God and people are brought into first-hand contact with one another, (2 Corinthians 2.4). Once again, the emphasis is upon establishing relationships, (John 17.3).

Section Two: Aims

Aims to be followed in any sharing of the Gospel are to help people be: -

- 2.1** God-fearing in their hearts, (Proverbs 1.7).
- 2.2** God-respecting in their thoughts, (Job 28.28).
- 2.3** God-centred in their decision-making, (James 4.13-16).
- 2.4** Fruitful in their lives, (John 15.8).
- 2.5** Effective in their service, (Romans 12.1).
- 2.6** People can only respond to the Gospel if the Holy Spirit is already working in their hearts to counteract the effects of sin, (John 6.63).

In short, the Gospel is shared with a view to helping people become friends of God, (John 15.13-14). It is this friendship, which brings about the kind of transformed lives that please him.

Section Three: Method in Preaching

Main methods to be used in Gospel preaching are: -

- 3.1** To combine preaching with teaching supported by well-structured sermons, and relevant visual aids, (Acts 17.22-31).
- 3.2** The employment of Scripture exposition in order to present divine attributes, (Acts 17.11).
- 3.3** To place a person under the moral law before stressing divine Grace,⁽¹⁾ (Romans 3.19-20).
- 3.4** To appeal to a person’s intellect as well as their emotions, (Isaiah 1.18-20).
- 3.5** To work through small or large Christian group, (Matthew 18.20).

To prevent any unnecessary rigidity in approach, the above-mentioned methods could be adopted to meet particular local needs. For instance, the complexity of any Bible exposition would, to a large extent, be determined by the educational standard of the audience a preacher was addressing.

⁽¹⁾ Briefly, this word means ‘*unmerited favour*.’

Section Four: Methods in Witnessing

Main methods in Gospel witnessing are: -

- 4.1** Building-up of relationships before a witness actually takes place, (1 Peter 3.15). This often happens on a 'one to one' basis.
- 4.2** It is often brief, chatty and spontaneous. The opportunity to witness may appear to have come from nowhere, (Revelations 3.8).
- 4.3** A simple application of Scripture, which may be directly relevant to an individual situation, (Matthew 8.4).
- 4.4** The believer's personal testimony in which she/he shares what Jesus has done for her/him.
- 4.5** Its ability to take place in unlikely situations, and even with the most unlikely people, (2 Corinthians 1.12).

As with preaching, the previously mentioned methods can be applied in different ways and in different situations. In this area, there are very few hard and fast rules except for the one, which states, "*Any verbal witness must be backed up by the appropriate personal example,*" (Matthew 5.16). However, flexibility does appear to be important.

Sometimes an effective personal witness can encourage receptivity to formal Gospel preaching. Consequently, a person's heart might already be open before the preacher begins to speak. Indeed, it's often the case that a successful preaching ministry is often built up on the witness of many unknown Christian's, (Acts 18.24-28).

Ideally, both preaching and witnessing should go together in any attempt to propagate the Gospel. The words of the preacher must be reinforced by the godly lifestyle of the congregation.

Section Five: Effects of Gospel Sharing

Once shared, the main effects of the Gospel should be: - ⁽²⁾

5.1 To encourage self-honesty – people are prompted to face up to the corruption in their own nature, and to admit their spiritual bankruptcy before God, (Luke 18.13). Present is a conviction of sin⁽³⁾ as human self – interest is confronted.

5.2 To provoke a sense of realism. The world is shown for what it really is, (Ecclesiastes 1.11).

5.3 To drive sinners to despair – so that they can then turn to Jesus Christ, (Mark 9.24).

5.4 To bring about salvation through a repentant faith that “locks onto” Jesus and His work upon the cross, (Acts 3.9)

5.5 To encourage assurance by stressing eternal security⁽⁴⁾ and perseverance, (Philippians 1.6).

5.6 To foster God-fearing humility, one that manifests itself in prayer, praise and worship, (I Peter 5.5-6).

5.7 To encourage a detachment from, and a compassionate involvement in, the world, (Romans 13.1-10).

5.8 To nurture personal holiness and Christian maturity, (Hebrews 12.14).

5.9 To build up local Christian groups, (Titus 1.5-9).

5.10 To provoke human opposition as well as acceptance, (Acts 22.18).

5.11 To bring deliverance from all kinds of spiritual bondages, (Mark 1.22-28).

5.12 To initially provoke and then to restrain the power of darkness, (Luke 4.40-41).

Beyond these effects, sharing the Gospel should also help to accomplish the aims listed in 2.1 – 2.6 along with the purpose mentioned under 1.

Section Six: Concluding Comments

If Gospel preaching is the vocation of only a FEW Christians, then Gospel witnessing is the obligation of ALL non-disabled believers in Jesus (1 Peter 3.15). Without it, even the most fervent preaching of the Gospel is unlikely to produce much effect (Matthew 10.33). Such a fact implies that every single believer has his or her part in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to other people, (Titus 2:12).

(For further Bible references on ‘Gospel Preaching’ please refer to Appendix One.)

⁽²⁾ These two words recognise that although the Gospel is always adequate, man's attempts to present it are not. Therefore, it doesn't always produce the desired effect.

⁽³⁾ This means a strong, uncomfortable awareness of sin. It is this conviction that provides a motive for any act of repentance.

⁽⁴⁾ This term refers to the fact that God will finish the work He has begun in us, (Philippians 1.6)

Appendix One

Biblical Summary on 'Gospel Preaching'

The following main themes emerge from Scripture concerning the preaching of the Gospel, (GP) These are: -

- 1) An anointing of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary in order to preach the Gospel effectively, (Isaiah 61.1)
- 2) The Gospel testifies both to God's mercy and His judgement, (Isaiah 61.2)
- 3) GP is proclaimed both to glorify God and to benefit humankind, (Isaiah 61.3)
- 4) GP stresses the objective work God accomplished at a particular period of human history, (Mark 1.1)
- 5) GP can take place following a wilderness experience, which has resulted in a refilling of the Holy Spirit, (Mark 1.15)
- 6) GP demands the death of selfishness, (Mark 8.35)
- 7) GP demands total self-sacrifice, (Mark 10.29)
- 8) GP must influence people from all nations, (Mark 13.10)
- 9) GP cannot be restricted to particular groups, (Acts 15.7)
- 10) GP is an act of divine mercy, (Acts 20.24)
- 11) GP requires a certain amount of separation from the world, (Romans 1.1)
- 12) GP demands much prayer and close involvement with local churches, (Romans 1.9)
- 13) GP warns people concerning God's judgement, (Romans 2.16)
- 14) Salvation rarely comes about by direct revelation alone – the preaching of the Gospel is usually most definitely required, (Romans 10.15)
- 15) GP often meets with unbelief, (Romans 10.16)
- 16) GP can provoke a sense of violent hostility from Jewish people, (Romans 11.28)
- 17) GP is a priestly service, designed to encourage holiness, (Romans 15.16)
- 18) GP brings about many blessings, (Romans 15.29)
- 19) GP reveals the secret mystery of Jesus Christ, (Romans 16.25)
- 20) GP results from God's determination to fulfil Scripture by revealing Jesus to all nations, (Romans 16.26)
- 21) GP should provoke close *'family'* relationships within the church, (1 Corinthians 4.15)
- 22) Unbelievers should not be charged to hear the Gospel, (1 Corinthians 9.18)
- 23) GP requires a willingness to identify with different types of people, (1 Corinthians 9.22)
- 24) GP requires a self-sacrificial enthusiasm, (1 Corinthians 9.23)
- 25) The credibility of GP is reinforced by honest evangelistic methods and a good personal/moral example, (2 Corinthians 4.2)
- 26) GP is not comprehensible to reprobate unbelievers, (2 Corinthians 4.3)
- 27) GP must show the glory of Christ, (2 Corinthians 4.4)

- 28) GP should build up the local church – not simply *'puff up'* the pride of a preacher, (2 Corinthians 4.5)
- 29) GP should encourage practical giving by believers, (2 Corinthians 9.13)
- 30) GP can bring about a sense of conflict within unruly churches, (2 Corinthians 11.4)
- 31) GP refutes all opposing Gospels, (Galatians 1.6)
- 32) GP shows Jesus for who He really is, (Galatians 1.7)
- 33) GP demands an utterly uncompromising intransigent stance, (Galatians 2.5)
- 34) GP can be focused upon particular groups, (Galatians 2.7)
- 35) GP sometimes leads to a direct confrontation with religious hypocrisy, (Galatians 2.14)
- 36) GP opens people up to the Holy Spirit, (Ephesians 1.13)
- 37) GP should unite Jews and Gentiles, (Ephesians 3.6)
- 38) Prayer must support GP, (Ephesians 6.19)
- 39) Local churches must support GP, (Philippians. 1.5)
- 40) GP must confirm and defend the Biblical portrayal of Jesus, (Philippians. 1.7)
- 41) GP can be done for the wrong motives, (Philippians. 1.16)
- 42) GP should be motivated by a sincere love of Jesus Christ, (Philippians. 1.17)
- 43) GP can unite churches by instilling in them a sense of common purpose, (Philippians. 1.21)
- 44) GP can unite different generations of Christians, (Philippians. 2.22)
- 45) GP enables the names of believers to be inserted in the book of life, (Philippians. 4.3)
- 46) GP can be hampered by a lack of local church support, (Philippians. 4.15)
- 47) GP tells people about the blessings which are reserved for them in Heaven, (Colossians 1.13)
- 48) GP cuts across any gender, national, or class barrier, (Colossians 1.23)
- 49) GP shows how the revelation of Jesus had been kept hidden in previous ages, (Colossians 1.26)
- 50) GP is only really effective when done in the power of the Holy Spirit, (1 Thessalonians 1.5)
- 51) GP demands a humble willingness to turn to God and gain courage from him, (1 Thessalonians 2.2)
- 52) GP must be unaccompanied by any trace of manipulative guile, (1 Thessalonians 2.3)
- 53) GP must be motivated by a desire to please God rather than men, (1 Thessalonians 2.4)
- 54) GP should be free from any flattery or financial greed, (1 Thessalonians 2.5)
- 55) GP places the preacher in a position of responsibility, (1 Thessalonians 2.6)
- 56) GP doesn't preclude gentleness, (1 Thessalonians 2.7)
- 57) GP requires a great deal of hard work, (1 Thessalonians 2.9)
- 58) GP is backed up by the individual holiness of the preacher, (1 Thessalonians 2.10)
- 59) GP encourages believers to lead a Godly lifestyle, (1 Thessalonians 2.11)
- 60) GP employs the word of God in order to provoke people to accept Jesus, (1 Thessalonians 2.13)

- 61)** Good teaching must consolidate GP, (1 Thessalonians 3.2)
- 62)** GP acts as a sentence of death to those who reject it, (2 Thessalonians 1.8)
- 63)** GP helps people to obtain the glory of Jesus, (2 Thessalonians 2.14)
- 64)** GP points to Jesus both as a present Saviour and a future hope, (1 Timothy 1.1)
- 65)** GP exposes the preacher to suffering, (2 Timothy 1.8)
- 66)** GP shows what God does in the "*here and now*" as well as the remote future, (2 Timothy 1.10)
- 67)** GP has to be combined with good teaching in order to be effective, (2 Timothy 1.11)
- 68)** GP links the old with the new covenant, (2 Timothy 2.8)
- 69)** GP should allow for the preacher to minister to individual needs, as well as for larger gatherings, (Philemon 12)
- 70)** GP warns of a judgement coming upon the Church, (1 Peter 4.17)
- 71)** GP warns of a judgement on disobedient sinners, (1 Peter 4.18)
- 72)** GP points to the second coming of Jesus, (2 Peter 3.10)
- 73)** GP shows how people can become children of God, (1 John 5.1)
- 74)** GP stresses the gift of eternal life, (1 John 5.11)
- 75)** GP may involve contending against error (Jude 3)
- 76)** GP may lead to imprisonment, (Revelations 1.9)
- 77)** GP may give an awesome picture of Jesus in all His heavenly glory, (Revelations 5.9)
- 78)** GP inspires worship by directing people's attention towards the work Jesus did on the cross, (Revelations 14.6)
- 79)** Angels can do GP, (Revelations 14.6)
- 80)** GP should create a sense of reverent awe, (Revelations 14.7)
- 81)** Divine judgement doesn't always make people respond favourably to the Gospel, (Revelations 16.11)
- 82)** GP may contain a definite prophetic element, (Revelations 19.10)
- 83)** GP may describe the joys of paradise as well as the terrors of Hell, (Revelations 21.4)

In order to fully benefit from these notes, it will be helpful to look up and reflect upon all cited bible verses.