

GOSPEL TEACHING SUMMARY FIVE: EFFECTIVE GOSPEL SHARING

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1 Peter 3:15

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

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Aims

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

- 1) Define Gospel preaching.
- 2) Know when such preaching is being effective.
- 3) See the purpose of Gospel preaching.
- 4) List the characteristics of effective Gospel preaching.
- 5) Appreciate the Trinitarian nature of the Gospel.
- 6) Preach the Gospel effectively should they wish to do so.
- 7) Value the importance of having the right God-centred motives in Gospel preaching.

Definitions

1) EFFECTIVE GOSPEL PREACHING: the type of Gospel preaching used by God to make disciples. By its very nature, such preaching brings glory to God and honour to Jesus.

2) GOSPEL PREACHING: the verbal proclamation that God became man to die for sinners. It is designed to provoke a whole-hearted response, which goes beyond simple intellectual consent or emotional enthusiasm.

3) REPENTANCE: a God given, two stage process which involves people turning away from sin and then turning towards Jesus in order to receive the forgiveness of sins along with the many other blessings of Salvation. It involves a drastic and sometimes emotionally traumatic change of mind about one's standing before **God**. Repentance is not to be confused with superficial regret or a destructive self-condemnation; it may either come before or after '*saving faith*.'

Section One: Source

The source of all effective Gospel preaching is the Holy Spirit. It is also assumed that: -

1.1 Preaching represents God's method of applying His elect decrees, (Romans 10.14-16). This means that a *"let's not bother about evangelism as God will do it all,"* approach is ruled out.

1.2 The main role of preaching is to honour God, (Philippians 1.18). It's not there simply to provide cheap entertainment.

Section Two: Aims

By acting as a channel through which the Holy Spirit can work, Gospel preaching hopes to: -

2.1 Inform people of the person and work of Jesus, (Acts 2.36).

2.2 Present people with the choice of accepting or rejecting the claims of Jesus, (Joshua 24.15).

2.3 Persuade people of the truthfulness of those claims, (Acts 17.22-34).

2.4 Bring people to a point where they are willing to turn away from sins and become effective disciples of Jesus, (Mark 1.15).

2.5 Encourage and build up the Church in terms of numbers as well as the quality of life led, (Acts 2.41).

2.6 Act as a means of judgement⁽¹⁾ for those who wilfully harden themselves against the truth, (2 Corinthians 2.16).

Section Three: Conditions for Effective Gospel Preaching

To be effective, preaching must be: -

3.1 Centred upon God's word rather than personal testimonies, (Luke 24.44-47).

3.2 Done in the power of the Holy Spirit, (Acts 2.8).

3.3 Open to a *'maximal'* rather than a *'minimal'* approach. This means: -

3.3-1 Relating the Gospel to other Biblical doctrines, *i.e.* election and the incarnation, (John 3.16).

3.3-2 Ensuring that good teaching precedes good preaching,⁽²⁾ (Acts 19.9).

3.3-3 Emphasising God's wrath as well as His love, (Romans 1.18-32).

3.3-4 Focusing upon law and sin as well as grace and forgiveness, (Psalms 14.1-5).

3.3-5 Avoiding *"watering down"* key Biblical teaching, (Revelations 22.19).

3.3-6 Not indulging in *"vague waffle,"* (1 Corinthians 14.33).

⁽¹⁾ It does this by giving hardened sinners an opportunity to harden themselves still further against the truth.

⁽²⁾ This is especially necessary in an age where there's widespread ignorance about even the very basics of Christianity.

Section Four: Characteristics of Effective Gospel Preaching

To be effective, preaching must be thoroughly: -

- 4.1** Absolutist, – this means taking the notion of absolute revealed truth seriously, (Galatians 1.6-10).
- 4.2** Analytical, – in exploring the condition of fallen sinners, (Romans 10.1-13).
- 4.3** Applicatory – to all people at all times, (Matthew 28.18-20).
- 4.4** Balanced – focusing upon certain Biblical truths – but NOT at the expense of others, (Acts 20.27).
- 4.5** Clearly presented, (Ecclesiastes 12.9-11).
- 4.6** Detailed and precise, (Romans 4.1-25).
- 4.7** Doctrinal, (Jude 3).
- 4.8** Expository, (Hebrews 8.7-13).
- 4.9** Given in the power of the Holy Spirit, (Luke 24.49).
- 4.10** God-centred, (Acts 7.1-50).
- 4.11** Mono-Salvationist – that is Jesus must be seen as the only true way to God, (John 14.6).
- 4.12** Open to the appropriate use of visual aids,⁽³⁾ (Luke 20.24).
- 4.13** Practical and realistic, (James 1.21-27).
- 4.14** Relevant to human needs – this means that pressing questions ought to be asked, (Acts 16.30; Appendix One).
- 4.15** Ruthless in exposing divine wrath and human sin, (Romans 3.9-20).
- 4.16** Willing to refute popular prejudices, which may turn people away from God, (Mark 7.1-23).

In addition, effective preaching must adhere to high ethical standards in that it must ALWAYS BE decent, honest and truthful.

⁽³⁾ This is particularly the case among people who have only little education. Christ's parables were a classic example of visual preaching.

Section Five: Main Points in Effective Gospel Preaching

- 5.1** A token decision for Christ may NOT ALWAYS be a sign of regeneration, (Matthew 13.20-21).
- 5.2** Assessing the FRUIT in a person's life is the only way to decide whether a person is regenerate or not, (Galatians 5.22).
- 5.3** Evangelism is a long-term endeavour inclusive of both teaching and practical instruction from the Bible, (Acts 28.30-31).
- 5.4** Evangelists cannot force, pressurise or manipulate people to turn to God, (Zechariah 4.6).
- 5.5** Fallen people can't turn to God of their own volition, (Ephesians 2.1).
- 5.6** God's Spirit is best left to draw people to faith in Christ, in HIS way and in HIS time, (John 6.44).
- 5.7** Receiving the Gospel involves a radical change of heart, (Jeremiah 31.33).

Section Six: Particular Points in Effective Gospel Preaching

The particular points in effective Gospel preaching are to state that: -

- 6.1** Sin is a serious in-born disorder that justifiably provokes God's wrath. It is therefore right to despair of our ability to please the Lord, (Psalms. 51.5).
- 6.2** God's holiness demands a wrathful, eternal judgement of sin. Consequently there is an utterly hostile relationship between Him and humanity, (Exodus 19.21-23).
- 6.3** Jesus offered Himself freely upon the cross to deal with man's sinfulness and thus appease the wrath of God. The hostile relationship could then become one of love, forgiveness and acceptance, (1 John 2.2, 4.10)
- 6.4** The love that was involved in sending Jesus to freely offer Himself to needy, helpless man, (John 3.16).
- 6.5** The perfect adequacy of Christ and His work upon the cross. As God's offer to sinners, nothing else can be added because nothing else is needed, (Hebrews 2.3).
- 6.6** Faith is a gift given by God – it provides the key to repentance,⁽⁴⁾ (Ephesians 2.8).
- 6.7** There is a need to trust in the person of Jesus and not some theory of the atonement – although such theories may perform an invaluable function in helping people to understand the nature of Christ's redemptive work upon the cross, (Acts 20.21).
- 6.8** Faith is NOT a merit worthy work of man but rather a self-despairing laying hold of Jesus, (Mark 9.24).
- 6.9** God draws people to Himself through a process of humbling and a loss of self-esteem. This can happen in various ways,⁽⁵⁾ (Job 42.1-6).
- 6.10** Preaching is for ALL available sinners (1 Timothy 2.1-7) – not just those who are already showing signs of spirit inspired conviction⁽⁶⁾. It therefore covers the whole spectrum of humanity⁽⁷⁾ (Matthew 28.19).

⁽⁴⁾ Which is also a gift

⁽⁵⁾ Including major disaster, a failure in some relationship or quite simple some prolonged disillusionment with life.

⁽⁶⁾ Or awareness of sin, in old world terminology these were known as "*sensible*" sinners.

⁽⁷⁾ So no distinction can be made on grounds of class, race or religion.

Section Seven: The Trinitarian Nature of the Gospel

The Gospel must be seen as fully comprehensive. All three person of the Trinity must be regarded as playing a part. In other words A TRINITARIAN GOSPEL IS PREACHED, (Ephesians 1.3-14) in which: -

7.1 As '*Creator*,' the Father planned salvation and send Jesus down to Earth, (Colossians 1.12-13).

7.2 As '*redeemer*,' Jesus left his heavenly glory, took flesh, fulfilled the law and died for our redemption (Galatians 3.13) before rising again three days afterwards, (Revelation 5.9).

7.3 As '*Sustainer*,' the Spirit comes to apply all that Jesus did and taught, in the lives of all believers, (John 6.63).

While stressing such points it is often helpful to recognise that even salvation is only a means to an end – that end being the glorification of God, (Romans 15.7-12).

Section Eight: Concluding Comments

In outline, effective Gospel preaching stresses that: -

8.1 ALL people are helpless and unable to save themselves, (Isaiah 64.6).

8.2 Jesus is a complete saviour – even for the worst of sinners, (John 4.42).

8.3 ALL we must do is put our faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, this may either precede, accompany or follow a repentance of our sins – depending on the Holy Spirit's leading, (Acts 24.24.).

8.4 If such a faith is lacking, the seeker has a responsibility to ask for it, (Mark 9.24; Luke 11.9-10).

8.5 Christ's role as Saviour is equally balanced by His role as Lord, (2 Peter 2.20).

8.6 No-one can claim the slightest credit for accepting Jesus as Saviour. In fact the marvel is that He can ever accept us in the first place, (Ephesians 2.8-9).

8.7 Jesus represents the ONLY way to salvation, (Acts 4.12).

Finally, the preacher must acknowledge that God's glory and Christ's honour are of far greater importance than any spectacular preaching success (Jude 25) – even if that should be a large "*harvest of souls*." This means that Gospel preaching must be faithfully continued (2 Timothy 4.2) – in order to honour God – even though the results may appear to be very meagre.

Appendix One

Showing How Effective Gospel Preaching Can Answer Key Questions

Key

Q: = Question

A: = Answer

Q1: *“What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16.30)*

A1: *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” (Acts 16.31)*

Q2: *“What does this belief consist of?”*

A2: *“It consists of seven aspects,”*

Q3: *“What are these seven aspects?”*

A3: *“They are:*

Firstly, knowing that you are a helpless sinner, (1 John 1.8-10)

Secondly, Recognising that out of love, Christ died for sinners, (Romans 4.6-8)

Thirdly, abandoning all self-righteous pride and belief that we can earn our way into a relationship with God, (Job 22.29)

Fourthly, casting oneself upon Christ and trusting in His mercy, (Mark 9.24)

Fifthly, believing that Christ is the Saviour who died upon the cross to deal with sin, by taking the punishment we deserved for our sin, (Isaiah 53.5-7)

Sixthly, being willing to allow Him to take the central position in one’s life – as Lord as well as Saviour, (John.20.28)

Seventhly, deciding to trust in nothing else but Christ alone as a basis for justification,” (Acts 4.12).

Q4: *“If I have no natural ability to respond to God, how can I be saved?”*

A4: *“By confessing your sin, speaking to Christ and calling HIM to give you His gift of salvation (Joel 2.32). Throw yourself upon His mercy, read God’s word, talk with mature Christians and acknowledge your total inability. (Luke 18.13-14). Then give yourself in faith and repentance to Jesus,” (John 6.29).*

Q5: *“How can I display faith and repentance when I have no innate capacity to create these qualities?”*

A5: *“Again, call out God, ask for the gift of faith and repentance, (Luke 11.9-10). In particular, ask your Heavenly Father to send His Holy Spirit to come into and give you those qualities, (Matthew 6.33). Take care to allow them come naturally, don’t try and drum them up for yourself.”*