

# The Primacy of Preaching

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Have you ever wondered, “Why preaching?” Or perhaps “What value is there in preaching?” Why did God choose preaching instead of, say, drama skits? What is it about preaching that makes it so necessary to the world and to Lord’s church? As one writer put it, “What good is preaching? And What is *good* preaching?”

In Romans 10:14 Paul asked a very powerful question. “How can they hear without a preacher?” When we consider the context we realize that Paul is talking about getting men to obey the gospel of Christ. Notice the whole verse. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” This is recognized as an evangelistic context and helps us to realize that we must present the gospel to a lost world.

However, in Acts 20 we see the apostle Paul preaching to the brethren. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” In the latter portion of the chapter we even have the words recorded that were preached to the elders of Ephesus.

In this article we have as our goal to answer the questions stated above. “What good is preaching? and What is *good* preaching?”

**What good is preaching?** Is there any value in preaching? In Mark 1 we learn that our Lord rose up a great while before day so that he could go to a solitary place and pray. The passage goes on to say, “And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.” Jesus’ response is revealing. “And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may **preach** there also: **for therefore came I forth.**” (Mark 1:38). The fact that God chose preaching to be a significant medium by which Christ would present His message is telling. It places a grand premium upon it. When we study the book of Acts, we see preaching and then conversion, preaching and then conversion. These two facts (many more examples could be presented) should, for the honest heart, answer the question, “What good is preaching?”

**What is *good* preaching?** This second question may not be as simple to answer. By what do you measure so as to determine the grade for a sermon or for preaching? Does the number of responses determine it? Is it determined by the various comments received by the preacher at the end of the message? Is preaching “good” because it fills a pew or a building? To be honest, these are really superficial standards of measuring. Don’t misunderstand. Responses, comments and even audiences are not bad things. But can we use these as a barometer in evaluating a sermon? Not necessarily. It seems that there are two factors that we can mention concerning the determination of the value of a sermon. Many points could be made, but we, for space sake, will highlight these two.

First, a sermon must be Bible based. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). A good sermon will allow the word of God to work in the lives of the hearers. It will penetrate the heart and convict it. A good sermon will allow the word of God to reprove, rebuke and exhort those

that hear the message. A good preacher will strive to allow the word of God to be the focus and he will work at not being a distraction to the message preached. If he has done his job properly and successfully, he would be noticed if he were not present, but he is not noticed when he is there. An illustration of this point would be a good picture frame. A masterpiece without a frame is lacking something. However, a masterpiece that is framed by a gaudy frame distracts from the beauty of the painting. When the frame is what it should be it directs the attention to the painting itself. If it were gone, it would be missed, but when present it really is not noticed. That is what preachers should strive for. Good preaching is that which puts the focus of the audience upon the word of God.

Secondly, good preaching is preaching that is obeyed by the ones who hear it. When Jesus came to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, He made this statement. "Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, **and doeth** them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24). James shows the import of application in James 1. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was (Jas. 1:22-24). Therefore, good preaching is preaching that is heard and obeyed.

Preaching is an action of worship. As gospel preachers, men need to realize the seriousness of this action. We want to offer the very best to the Lord, realizing the brethren deserve nothing less. As brethren who hear the sermon we must be ready to receive the word and do the word. If sermons are only heard on our part and not applied, can we truly say we have worshipped properly?

Jehovah chose preaching, along with teaching, to be the medium by which His word would be spread. There must be some value to it. May we each do our part to see that the preaching is good, for we know it is good to preach.