

The Kind of Preaching That We Need

People may have various views about preachers and their work, but the Bible plainly states the kind of preaching that is needed in the world today. We need preaching that is:

1) Bible based - The Lord told Jonah to "preach the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). Some preaching is pleasant to hear and it entertains people, but it leaves them sadly uninformed about what God really wants.

2) Doctrinal - Paul urged Timothy to "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:16). Doctrine is distasteful to some folks, but it is essential to the saving of the soul.

3) Direct & Personal - Preaching that doesn't deal with the real problems and sins of people is of little value. We should not be unkind, but we have to "get to the point." John the Baptist set a wonderful example, and lost his head for doing so (Mark 6:18).

4) Motivated by love - We won't succeed in reaching people if they can't see that we truly care about them. But, when we "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) we will be able to help people deal with the toughest problems.

5) Full of conviction - You have to have deep faith in the message you proclaim. As Paul said, "I believed, and therefore did I speak" (2 Corinthians 4:13).

6) Bold - Some men check to "see which way the wind is blowing" before they speak. Instead of this, we should speak "with all boldness" (Acts 4:29).

7) Balanced - We need both positive and negative instruction. If we omit either one, we will not be effective in this important work. Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Timothy 4:2), and in doing so he emphasized the need for both positive and negative teaching.

The work of preaching is vital in God's plan for the salvation of lost sinners (1 Corinthians 1:21). We need to do it, and do it well.

- by Greg Gwin

What Kind of Church?

A woman called recently, indicating she and her husband had just moved to town and were looking for a church to identify with. She asked if we had an attended nursery for her two-year-old. When I told her we did not, she thanked me and hung up.

I have thought a lot about what that woman did not ask. She did not ask if we had spirited singing. She did not want to know whether we had simple, truthful preaching. She expressed no interest in whether we had faithful overseers to watch for her soul. She did not inquire about our Bible study program, nor did she seem anxious to see what opportunities for work in the Lord's cause might be available. Apparently these things were not nearly as important as someone to relieve her maternal responsibilities during the worship hour.

Another woman told me recently, "I don't like a church that tells me what to do. It's none of their business." I agree that churches have no right to make their own rules. However, we do have a God-given obligation to uphold the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) and expose sin and error (Eph. 5:11). I confess that I do not know how to preach repentance without exposing sin and warning people to turn from it.

What kind of church do you like? What features are important to you? A dynamic speaker, special activities for the kids, recreational programs, physical facilities, location, family ties, and a host of other things have been given as reasons for choosing a particular church. Whatever your taste, there is likely a church to suit. However, you should be asking another question: What kind of church does God like? He does not like them all. Some are so disgusting He spits them out (read Revelation 2 and 3, and notice that the rejected ones include some that are conservative in belief).

The only assurance of God's approval anyone can have is what He says in His revealed word. Will you submit your will to God's and become a member of the church of His choice?

- by Frank Himmel

Church or Social Club?

The church is not a social club. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). The Son of God did not die for a social organization, but for a "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). We are not a glorified social center in competition with country clubs and the YMCA. We are the church. We worship God "*in spirit and in truth*" (Jn. 4:24), not in food, fun, and frolic.

Let the YMCA be the YMCA. Let the Country Club be the Country Club. Let the boy scouts and girl scouts be the boy scouts and girl scouts. And please, let the church be the church!

- by David McPherson