

# Back To Basics

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## SPECIAL ISSUE:

## PREACHING AND PREACHERS

*Johnie Edwards*

**T**he Bible has much to say about preaching and preachers. God has always used preaching to get His message before man. Paul wrote the Corinthians, "...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

1) **PREACHING IS OLD AS MAN.** God did the first preaching as He instructed Adam in the garden of Eden. "And the Lord commanded the man, saying..." (Gen. 2:16-17). Noah was called a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5) as he prepared the ark (Heb. 11:7).

2) **PREACHING IS TEACHING.** To preach is but to teach. The concept of preaching is that of proclaiming or to publish (Mk. 1:45). Religion of the Bible is teaching religion. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me" (Jn. 6:45; Is. 54:13).

3) **PREACHING IS RESTRICTED.** It has not been left up to preachers to decide God's message. God has already spoken His will to man. The Hebrew writer penned, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake

in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2). This is the reason Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Pet. 4:11).

4) **PREACHING AMONG THE CHANNELS OF WORSHIP.** New Testament worship consisted of preaching apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42). A good example can be found in Acts 20:7: "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."

5) **PREACHING INVOLVED IN CONVERSION.** No preaching, no conversions; it's that simple. Every case of conversion from Acts 2 through 19 involved gospel preaching. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words..." (Acts 2:22) was the beginning of gospel preaching under the new covenant. Preaching continued as "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5). "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him (the eunuch) Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

## SCRIPTURAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PREACHERS

David Eldridge

In the religious world, you will find a number of descriptions being used for the preacher. However, how should one refer to the preacher? How is a preacher described in Scripture? Let us consider the answer to these questions.

1) **UNSCRIPTURAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PREACHERS.** There are a number of unscriptural descriptions of preachers that are commonly used in the religious world today. A preacher should not be called “Rabbi” as the Lord has said, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren” (Mt. 23:8). Others will call the preacher “Father,” yet the Lord again says, “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Mt. 23:9). Many ascribe the title of “Reverend” to the preacher. To refer to a man as a reverend is to give a man a title which is only ascribed to God – “holy and reverend is His name” (Ps. 111:9). Perhaps, the most common title used for preachers in the denominational world is that of “Pastor.” The term “pastors” is used in Ephesians 4:11. This is not describing a preacher, but rather an elder who meets the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. To refer to a preacher by any of these terms is unscriptural.

2) **SCRIPTURAL DESCRIPTIONS OF A PREACHER.** The Bible describes a preacher by a number of terms. He is a *preacher*. In 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul said, “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher.” The preacher description denotes one who is a “herald or proclaimer of the Divine word” (*Thayer’s Lexicon*). The Bible also describes a preacher as an *evangelist* (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5), which is “a bearer of good tidings” (*ibid.*). A preacher is also described in Scripture as a *minister* (Rom. 15:16). The term “minister” simply means a servant. It should be noted that these are simply descriptions of a preacher and are not titles of distinction.

The best we can do in referring to a preacher is to do what the men of the Bible did (1 Pet. 4:11). As Paul wrote of Peter, he said, “Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter...” (Gal. 1:18). As Peter wrote concerning Paul, he penned, “our beloved brother Paul” (2 Pet. 3:15). When a Bible writer referred to another preacher, he simply called him by his name. This is the best practice for saints today. As a preacher of the gospel of Christ, you can simply call me David as your brother in the Lord.

Carmel, IN  
david@davidceldridge.com

### Back To Basics

P.O. Box 251  
Ellettsville, IN 47429  
1-800-889-0338  
mail@bcktobscs.com

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING SEEN

John Isaac Edwards

**P**reaching has always had a vital place in God's scheme of things. The first preaching was done by God Himself to the first people when "the Lord God commanded the man, saying..." (Gen. 2:16-17). Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:19). The prophets were God-appointed preachers. Jonah is a good example as God commissioned him, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2). John, the immerser, came preaching (Mk. 1:4, 7). The Son of God was anointed to preach (Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18-19; Mt. 11:5), and came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mk. 1:14). The Lord charged others to go preach (Lk. 9:60). The apostles were sent out to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). Disciples went every where preaching the word (Acts 8:4-5, 12; 11:19-20). John saw a vision about preaching (Rev. 14:6). The importance of preaching is seen several ways:

*Preaching is the means by which the word of faith is planted in the hearts and mouths of men and women (Rom. 10:8).*

*Preaching is required for one to hear, believe, and obey the gospel (Rom. 10:14-15).*

*Preaching is the power of God to stablish (Rom. 16:25).*

*Preaching is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 15:1-2).*

*Preaching is the way God chose to manifest His word (Ti. 1:3).*

*Preaching is heaven's way of reporting*

*to men things angels desired to look into (1 Pet. 1:12).*

*Preaching is designed for the express purpose that men might live (1 Pet. 4:6).*

This special issue of *Back To Basics* takes a Biblical look at the preacher and his work. All that we need to know about preaching and preachers is revealed in the Bible. As you read these basic Bible articles, be impressed with the appeal to Scripture that is lacking in the writings of so many these days.

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## THE PREACHER'S WIFE

Melba Edwards

The Bible does not give requirements for a preacher's wife as it does for elder's and deacon's wives. The wife of a preacher can best understand her role when she understands the work of her husband as a preacher. There are some characteristics of a preacher's wife that will help her husband fulfill his work as a preacher. The wife of a gospel preacher...

**1) ENCOURAGES HER HUSBAND IN HIS WORK.** A preacher's wife needs to be a helper to her husband as he is commanded to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2). She needs to be supportive of her husband's work. He is doing one of the greatest works that can ever be done for the Lord; preaching the gospel. Sometimes he may get discouraged. She needs to offer words of encouragement. He needs time to do his work. She needs to allow him that time.

**2) IS WILLING TO BE A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.** Many times others in the church have needs. Sometimes those needs must come first. The preacher's wife may be asked to help in those times. Nonetheless, she is willing to do whatever is needful for her to do. I think of Phoebe who was a servant of the church (Rom. 16:1-2). Paul also said of her, "indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also." The wife of a preacher must be ready to prepare food at any given moment, visit, sit with the sick, and many countless other tasks. Some may come to her when they have troubles. She needs to be ready to listen, but able to keep things to herself.

**3) IS A GOOD EXAMPLE.** Just as her husband is to "be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12), the preacher's wife needs to be an example in these areas too. Others are looking to her as an example to follow.

**4) SEEKS TO PLEASE GOD.** Sometimes the wife of a preacher may be overly concerned about what others think. Paul wrote, in 1 Thessalonians 4:1, "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God." Striving to please God, rather than others, will relieve some of those needless pressures.

**5) IS GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY.** This command is given to all (Rom. 12:13). Many times the wife of a preacher will need to be given to hospitality. Practicing hospitality is a good way to get to know other members when they come into your home. Visiting preachers may need a place to stay. Peter said, "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling" (1 Pet. 4:9). She needs to have the right attitude toward being hospitable.

In all of this, the preacher's wife does not neglect her family. She involves her children so they will learn how to be good examples and servants of the church. Her work is endless, but it will be worth it all when the Lord will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Mt. 25:21-23).

## SOME THINGS PREACHERS SHOULD BE

*Johnie Paul Edwards*

All those who preach the gospel are charged with the same responsibility – “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). There are some things every preacher should be. Let’s notice some.

1) **ENTHUSIASTIC.** Someone has said that “enthusiasm is contagious.” If that be the case, we need a good epidemic of it! God told Ezekiel, “Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot...” (Ezek. 6:11). Paul told the evangelist Titus that Christ gave himself to redeem a “peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Ti. 2:14). Philip’s passion for preaching the word can be seen in the fact that he “ran” to teach the man of Ethiopia (Acts 8:30). Preachers need to learn to be enthusiastic in their preaching.

2) **ORGANIZED.** One thing that can’t be stressed enough is getting and staying organized! Preachers, to be effective in their work, must learn the art of organization for their sermons, time, class material and other areas of their work. You might think of this as “Redeeming the time” (Eph. 5:16). It is good to make a list of things, in order of importance, you need to do and work on them.

3) **NEAT.** Many books have been written about dressing for success. It would seem that one’s dress says something about his attitude toward his work. Preachers can make good use of a blue blazer as it goes well with lots of things. Shoes must be kept cleaned and shined.

4) **STUDIOUS.** To be studious is to be given to study. Paul told the evangelist Timothy to “Study to shew thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Preach-

ers need to be given to Bible reading and study. Your preaching will reflect the amount of time you put into studying God’s word. You don’t have to tell the brethren that you didn’t have time to study your lesson – they will already know!

5) **CAUTIOUS.** Be sure to exercise caution when it comes to the young ladies. We all know of preachers who have ruined their good reputation because they could not keep their hands off the ladies. When it becomes necessary to visit with a sister in the Lord, take someone with you (perhaps your wife or one of the men). Paul told Timothy to treat “the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim. 5:2). Give no ground for suspicion, no shadow or pretext to those who wish to slander.

6) **ABLE TO TAKE CRITICISM.** Be able to use constructive criticism by well meaning brethren. Listen to it, use what you can, and discard the rest. You will profit.

7) **PROMPT IN PAYING BILLS.** It is easy for preachers and their families to over extend their finances and spend more than they should. Don’t allow yourself to get into a financial pinch. Set a reasonable budget and then stick with it. Be sure to set aside some money each week for savings. There will always be unexpected expenses. Don’t try to live like everyone else; just learn, as Paul did, “in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11). When you make a debt, pay it! Be sure to “lay by in store” for the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

8) **FRIENDLY.** Solomon said, “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and

there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). A lot of churches build a reputation for being unfriendly. Preachers need to learn to shake hands with folks and be friendly with all. The example that you set, as a gospel preacher, will help others to see the value of being friendly and may help the church to grow.

9) **HUMBLE.** Peter exhorted, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5:6). It’s easy for preachers to be lifted up with pride and have an air of arrogance about themselves. Learn to be “clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5).

10) **PUNCTUAL AND TACTFUL.** Some are late to everything! It’s important to be on time. If you tell someone that you will be there at 7:00 pm, then be there at 7:00 pm! Tact has to do with a person knowing how to say a thing properly. Some are so blunt that they scare people away before they ever get their “foot in the door.” It is important that preachers have some tact about how to say and do things. Use wisdom in your speech. Jesus said to the twelve, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Mt. 10:16).

Hopefully these things will benefit young and older preachers alike.

## As I OUGHT TO SPEAK

*Cecil Willis, “Dead Yet Speaketh”*

**I** have been asked to present a few thoughts concerning Paul’s earnest plea to the Ephesian brethren that they remember to pray that he might “speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:20). Consider with me a few points included in preaching “as I ought to speak.”

1) **FAITHFULLY.** As in every realm, the “Lord of glory” is our example in faithfulness to the Father’s will. He once said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me” (Jn. 4:34; 6:38; 8:29; Lk. 22:42; Heb. 10:7). When I was yet in my teens, and doing my best to fill Sunday appointments at four different churches here in Trinity County, Texas (where I was born and now live once again), the beloved Luther Blackmon once felt the need to caution me after I had preached here in Groveton: “Get one thing forever settled in your mind, if you are going to preach: ‘Who am I trying to please?’” (Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:4). I have never forgotten the advice, nor ever shall I forget it! Preacher, if you

want to hear the “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Mt. 25:21), remember to preach the word *faithfully*. The powerful preacher Jeremiah said it like this: “...he that hath my word, let him speak it faithfully” (Jer. 23:28). I have often said that all the qualifications of a gospel preacher are encompassed in 2 Timothy 2:2: “faithful and able.” Peter expressed our duty as preachers in 1 Peter 4:10-11: “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God...speaking as the oracles of God.” Paul expressed this duty in 1 Corinthians 4:2: “that a man be found faithful.” Faithful preaching entails the recognition that the message, “preach the word,” the manner, “reprove, rebuke, and exhort,” and the moment, “in season and out of season” are all prescribed (2 Tim. 4:1-2). The preacher therefore must avoid hobbies, obscurities, oddities, speculations and pointless eloquence (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

2) **FULLY.** Another requisite of preaching as one *ought* is recognition that the gospel

must be fully proclaimed. To do otherwise is to subvert and pervert the powerful message (Gal. 1:6-7). Six hundred years before the Messiah's birth, God told the preacher Jeremiah, "all the words which I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word" (Jer. 26:2). Moses had already been told not to "add to or diminish from it" (Dt. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). Paul was free from the blood of all men because he had declared to them "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). He had "fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19). Since man does not "live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4), the Master instructed, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Mt. 28:20).

3) **FORCEFULLY.** The man who preaches the gospel wields great power, but he must be certain that he remembers that the power is in the gospel; not in the preacher (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:15). God put His power in His word! The gospel is the only power on earth that can turn a sinner into a saint (Heb. 4:12). Declare it (Is. 58:1). Apollos was "mighty in the scriptures, taught diligently, spoke boldly and mightily convinced the Jews" (Acts 18:24-28). To change men, we must do cut to the heart preaching and blast them out of their deadly complacency, if we are to do them any lasting good.

4) **FERVENTLY.** One must also preach fervently. In fact, everything one does as a Christian should be done fervently. Paul expressed it like this: "whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23). Remember that Apollos was "fervent in spirit" (Acts 28:25), and in Romans 12:11 Paul added that every Christian must likewise be "fervent in spirit." Because of the importance of our work, there must be urgency in it. Brethren, there must be fire in the pulpit! All attentive brethren will admit that we are becoming woefully short of

it. I have heard men preach with all the enthusiasm that one could muster if he were reading *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, or an ancient *Sears and Roebuck Catalog*. And that is a shameful disgrace.

5) **FEARLESSLY.** It takes a man of considerable courage to be a faithful gospel preacher. His very work is the duty to tell men what they really do not like to hear. In order for a Christian to grow, their shortcomings must be made clear to them. The sin of King Saul lay in the fact that "he feared the people and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24). The parents of the man born blind were reticent to acknowledge Christ as healer "because they feared the Jews" (Jn. 9:22). A warning is sounded for all would-be servants of Christ: "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28). Paul stirs up Timothy's courage by telling him: "For God gave us not a spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:7). The fearful preacher must remember Revelation 21:8.

Preacher friend, if you are having difficulty preaching "as you ought to preach," do as Paul did; enlist close friends to pray to God that you might preach as you ought, or give up preaching altogether.

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# THE WORK OF A PREACHER

Dorris V. Rader

**T**he work of a preacher is the most vitally important work in all the world. Other fields of endeavor may pertain simply to time, but a preacher's work has to do with both time and eternity.

1) **HE IS TO PREACH THE WORD (2 TIM. 4:2).** Paul directed Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul was ordained or appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles (2 Tim. 1:11). His primary work is preaching the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14:6). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). His work is to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27). There is no substitute for preaching the word, if one intends to build strong Christians and strong churches.

2) **HE IS TO REPROVE, REBUKE, AND EXHORT (2 TIM. 4:2).** He is to do this with all longsuffering and doctrine. These terms emphasize three different actions in a preacher. It takes all of these at some time or another. *Reprove* involves milder correction than does the term *rebuke*. *Exhort* means to encourage and admonish. A preacher must not spend all his time on one of the above to the neglect of the others. A preacher can easily slip into a habit of meeting every problem with a rebuke. Or, he may become extreme in only encouraging. There is a time for each of these actions.

3) **HE SHOULD KEEP THE TRUST (1 TH. 2:4).** Paul said, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men but God which trieth our hearts" (1 Th. 2:4). Trust is confidence or reliance. Paul was given the gospel as a trust. He would not betray that trust to please any man. The preacher is responsible to God for what he preaches, not to any man. The

preacher is duty bound to deliver the message of God, unaltered and untainted just like a telegraph boy. The Bible places the emphasis on the feet not the head of a gospel preacher (Rom. 10:15).

4) **HE IS TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVER (1 TIM. 4:12).** Whether it should be that way or not, people do look at the preacher as representative of the church. In some cases, the church gets an undeserved black eye because a preacher is such a bad example. He may set a bad example in morals. He may be dishonest in his dealings. One who is going to give the church a bad rap would do better plowing than preaching.

5) **HE IS TO TAKE HEED TO HIMSELF (1 TIM. 4:16).** This is also required of every Christian (2 Cor. 13:5). The preacher's life and message must harmonize as much as possible. Each preacher should be able to say with Paul, that "you know how holily and justly and unblameably we have behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Th. 2:10). Paul told Timothy to commit the things he had heard from Paul to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). These two points, faithful and able, are vital to his work.

6) **HE IS TO TAKE HEED TO THE DOCTRINE – TEACHING (1 TIM. 4:16).** He is to speak sound doctrine (Ti. 2:1). That is teaching that is true and Scriptural. His sermons must be Scripture filled. He is to teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3). He is nowhere given the role of being an entertainer or a comedian. His work deals with souls of men, his and others.

**Columbia, TN**  
dorrisrader@yahoo.com

# THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

Donnie V. Rader

God chose the “foolishness of preaching” to save man (1 Cor. 1:18, 21). Why is the gospel called *foolishness*? It is not the *proclamation*, but the *message* itself that is thought to be foolish. Notice the wording of the NKJV, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (v. 21). The gospel is called *foolishness* because it is viewed by some as foolish and ridiculous.

Who views it as foolish? Those who are “perishing” (1 Cor. 1:18) have that view of the gospel. “The significance of the present tense in this verse is that it denotes continuous action or linear action. Thus the usage describes the wicked as in a way of life which is destroying them, here and now and, ultimately and finally, will lead to everlasting destruction. It is like contracting a fatal disease that is in the process of ultimately destroying the body” (Mike Willis, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, 34).

In contrast to those who are being saved it is more than just wisdom (which would be the contrast to foolishness) it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18).

**1) WHY THE MESSAGE IS THOUGHT TO BE FOOLISH.** Some think the gospel is foolish because *it does not fit what they think*. The Jews rejected Jesus as the Christ, for they thought the Christ would not die (Jn. 12:33-34). Often people run the gospel through the process of human reasoning to see if it agrees with what they think. The Proverb writer warned that the way that seems right could be wrong (Prov. 16:25).

Some say the gospel is foolish because *it is not what they have always been taught*. They base their acceptance on what they have always heard. Paul said that it is possible to be deceived and believe a lie (2 Th. 2:10-12).

Since the gospel is *unpopular*, it is thought to be foolish (Mt. 7:13-14). For others, it is *too simple* as Naaman viewed the command to dip in the River Jordan (2 Ki. 5:10-15).

Some *don't like the consequences* and thus reject the message as ridiculous. The disciples had some question about Jesus' teaching on marriage saying, “it is good not to marry” (Mt. 19:9-12).

**2) THE MESSAGE THAT IS THOUGHT TO BE FOOLISH.** Our text (1 Cor. 1:18-25) is dealing with the view that ridiculed the idea of salvation coming by a man who was crucified (a shameful death).

*Baptism being essential to salvation* is ridiculed by many (Mk. 16:16).

*A six day creation* is foolish to those who listen to the prevalent thinking of the day (Gen. 1; Ex. 31:15-17).

*One church* (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:24) is absurd to those who think it makes no difference what one believes.

The *need for Bible authority* for all that we do in religion is laughable to many (Col. 3:17).

*Obedying civil law* is a matter of personal choice to many, even some Christians (Rom. 13:1-7).

Preaching on *the necessity of attending all the services* (Heb. 10:25) is ignored by many.

Requirements for *modesty* (1 Tim. 2:9-10) are thought to be silly as evidenced by the attire that many wear.

**3) OUR REACTION.** Even though the world thinks the gospel is foolishness, we should preach it anyway (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Shelbyville, TN  
dvrader@hughes.net

## KIND OF PREACHING NEEDED

Johnie Edwards

**T**he New Testament is the textbook as to the kind of preaching needed today. Every gospel preacher ought to study the sermons by the men of God to see the kind of preaching they did. The kind of preaching they did in the first century is still needed today. So, we take a basic look at the kind of preaching gospel preachers did in the New Testament.

1) **CUT TO THE HEART PREACHING.** It is said at the preaching of Stephen, “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart” (Acts 7:51-60). His sermon accused them of being “stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,” resisting “the Holy Spirit,” having “persecuted the prophets,” being “betrayers and murderers,” and as having “not kept the law” (Acts 7:51-53). They didn’t like this kind of preaching that was heart-cutting, so they killed the man of God (Acts 7:59). This was the kind of preaching done on the day of Pentecost that brought about “pricked hearts” (Acts 2:22-37). We just must get back to this kind of preaching.

2) **WORLD-TURNING PREACHING.** A reading of Acts 17:1-6 will find Paul and Silas preaching “Christ.” This kind of preaching upset the Jews and accused the men of God as, “these that have turned the world upside down.” We could use some men like this today.

3) **BOLD PREACHING.** Too much preaching today is characterized as speaking softly and treading lightly, lest it ruffle some feathers! Paul desired “that utterance be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:20-21). We must be “bold to speak the word without fear” (Phil.

1:14). The “boldness of Peter and John” caused men to know “that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). It would do a lot of preachers good to spend a little time with the Lord!

4) **IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON PREACHING.** Gospel preaching knows no season. Paul’s charge to Timothy was, “Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:1-2). This means to preach it when they like it and when they don’t like it!

5) **CHRIST-CENTERED PREACHING.** Gospel preaching puts Christ in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. Study the preaching of men like Philip and it can be seen: “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:5). This kind of preaching brought “great joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). Now notice how effective this kind of preaching was: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12). Baptized many men and women where you are a member, lately? Might ought to check out the kind of preaching being done!

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## DISTINCTIVE PREACHING

W. Curtis Porter, "Dead Yet Speaketh"

I cannot conceive of there having ever been a time in all the history of the church that distinctive preaching was not needed. Perhaps there have been periods of that history in which such preaching was more sorely needed than at other times; but, if so, the failure of some to preach a distinctive gospel was responsible for the increase of the need for it. And it may be that there was never a time when the need of distinctive preaching was more imperative than now. We have entirely too much preaching that means nothing, and the need of the hour is for men who have the courage to preach a distinctive message.

To me it is no compliment to a speaker for the audience to be unable to place him. I have heard it said of preachers: "He has preached in our community for two weeks, but people could not tell by his preaching to what church he belonged; he was an orthodox preacher." While such things have been said by way of *compliment*, to me they shout their *criticism* and are not complimentary words at all. Whenever a man is so vague, indefinite, or general in his preaching that his auditors cannot place him, or identify him, there is something seriously wrong. A preacher is certainly not filling his mission as a preacher when his pulpit proclamations are characterized by such vagueness. I am talking, of course, about a preacher who stands identified with the church of the Lord. I am not so much concerned about how other preachers preach. If they are preaching the doctrines of men, there is nothing vital to the soul lost if they never become definite about it.

And yet if I were a member of some human church, I would want my preacher to preach the things for which the church stands. If I were a member of the Baptist Church, I would want my

preacher to preach a Baptist; and if I belonged to the Methodist Church, I would want my preacher to preach a doctrine that would be distinctively Methodist; and the same goes for any other denomination. In any case I would expect my preacher to preach definitely the doctrines of that denomination. Then since I am a member of the church of Christ, should I expect less of the preachers of that institution? The world will lose nothing of importance if denominationalism is not distinctively preached; *but if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached in a distinctive manner, a great loss is incurred.*

1) **WHO PREACHES WHAT.** There is a vast difference between the truth of the gospel and the theories of denominationalism, and that difference ought to be held up to the people who hear. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Mt. 15:13). Why, then, make any compromise with such plants? Or why fail to show that human institutions are not growth from a heavenly planting? I am just certain of the fact that it often becomes necessary to tell who preaches what. This would not be so necessary if denominational preachers would preach the doctrines of their churches, but they are like some of my brethren would be if they listened to the clamor of the audience for "soft preaching." They have no distinctive message to proclaim. Consequently the average member of denominations does not know the doctrines of his church. You may preach ever so strongly upon some point of error, but he does not know you are talking about his doctrine, for his preacher has not preached it; such things have been kept from him. To this there are some exceptions, but the condition is very general.

In order for a member of the Baptist Church to know that you are contrasting the truth with Baptist error it becomes necessary to state that the error is taught by the Baptist Church. Otherwise he may not discover that you have taken his doctrine apart. The need of this was very forcibly impressed upon me as a result of one of my own sermons. I was engaged in a mission meeting near where I was laboring for the church. At one service I preached on the subject, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" I contrasted truth with error and showed plainly what the Bible teaches about that subject. When the service had been concluded, a stranger came to me, took me by the hand, and complimented very highly that sermon, stating that he believed every bit of it. Upon later inquiry I found that he was the main leader of the Baptist Church of that community. And yet I had been preaching things that were in direct conflict with the doctrines of the church to which he belonged! The next day a conversation was heard over the telephone in which one lady told another that she should have been at meeting last night, for she would have heard one of the best Baptist sermons that she ever heard. And yet I had not failed to preach the truth! However they did not know the teaching of the Baptist Church; and if I had told who preaches what, they would have seen the difference. At least, they would not have accused me of preaching Baptist doctrine!

I know that harm can be done by mentioning denominations in the spirit of sarcasm. There is a difference between exposing error and abusing the adherent of the error. We may show kindness to the man and yet expose the error which he holds. *Therefore, I do not hesitate, when I feel that conditions demand, to call denominations by name and show the error of the denominations.* This is exactly what Jesus did while He was on earth, and, judging from what He did then, it is exactly what He would do now!

**2) MAKE PEOPLE KNOW THEY ARE LOST.**  
Preaching that is not distinctive enough to make

the lost realize they are lost is not the kind of preaching it takes to save men. Whenever an unfaithful brother, one guilty of sins against the high heaven, or with an ungodly attitude toward the work of the Lord can sit under a man's preaching without feeling any discomfort or alarm, there is probably something wrong with the preaching. The man needs to be blasted with gospel dynamite till he can see his lost condition. As long as your preaching allows him to feel secure in his sins he will not likely be redeemed from his sinful state. Just so it is with the members of sectarian churches. If my preaching allows them to feel safe in denominationalism, there is not much chance to rescue them from its meshes. *My preaching must be distinctive enough to make them see the sinfulness of denominationalism; then I can have some hope of saving them.*

Just remember that in order to save a man you must make him know that he is lost. By your following some other method he might decide to "change churches" because he likes the preacher, or that he might be with some other friends he especially likes, or something of that kind; but "changing churches" for any such reason is not conversion. What we want to do is to convert the man that his change may be the result of conviction.

Jesus Christ and the apostles did not hesitate to let men know they were lost. Paul called Elymas a "child of the devil," an "enemy of all righteousness" (Acts 13:10). There was no reason for Elymas to think that Paul considered him in a safe condition. Peter plainly told Simon to repent and pray that God might forgive him (Acts 8:20-23). He let him know that he stood condemned. And Jesus said the Pharisees were children of hell (Mt. 23:15). With such worthy examples before us, why should we fail to preach so that men in sin and sectarianism can see that they need to be saved?

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## **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR PREACHERS**

*Ashley S. Johnson, "Dead Yet Speaketh"*

Don't preach without preparation; it indicates that you are wanting in appreciation of the responsibility that rests upon you.

Don't assume in the pulpit or anywhere else that you are Sir Oracle; better informed men than yourself will be disgusted with you and your pretensions.

Don't hide behind the multitudinous "we;" speak for God and for yourself.

Don't emphasize everything you say; sensible people will think you are trying to hide your lack of sense by making a great noise.

Don't draw on your imagination for facts; preach what you learn from the Bible.

Don't attempt to prove what you preach; preach the gospel as it is written and it will need no proof.

Don't fish for compliments by belittling your work; let praise come spontaneously.

Don't put yourself forward for greater positions; fill your humble station well and greater places will seek you.

Don't try to drive people to heaven; sheep will follow if the shepherd calls them kindly.

Don't use big words for show; make the weakest understand you.

Don't feel called upon to answer every little two by four infidel who comes along; preach the gospel by word of mouth and enforce it by holy living and infidelity will not need to be answered.

Don't be discourteous to those who disagree with you; others are perhaps as sincere as you are.

Don't preach too long; the true worth of a sermon is as often in its brevity as in its length.

Don't preach from a manuscript; imagine Paul on Mar's Hill, preaching to the cultured men of Greece with one eye on a pile of manuscripts and the other on the people.

Don't expect the people to do any more of what you preach than what you do yourself; be an example as well as a preacher.

Don't chew or smoke; keep clean and save your money for better purposes.

Don't say anything under any circumstances that will compromise your dignity as a man and a preacher; control your tongue.

Don't be seen in a company of doubtful propriety; stand aloof from all evil.

Don't be too familiar with the people in reference to your personal matters; learn to keep your own counsels.

Don't be in a hurry to marry; hundreds of young men have been ruined by thoughtless and premature marriages.

Don't trifle your time away in idle gossip; give yourself to study and prayer.

Don't enter into controversy with every person who doubts your conclusions; a still tongue is proof of a wise head.

Don't be haughty; be a man of the people.

# Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

## Some Things To Know About Preachers



### What They Do

Fill in the blanks to see the work of a preacher:  
"\_\_\_\_\_ the word; be instant in season, out of season; \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). This tells what preachers do (preach the word), when they do it (in season, out of season), and how they do it (with all longsuffering and doctrine).

### What They Are Called

Read the Scripture and write down the word that describes preachers.

2 Timothy 4:5: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 2:7: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 4:6: \_\_\_\_\_

Preachers in the Bible didn't wear any special titles, but referred to each other by their proper name, like Peter and Paul (Gal. 1:18; 2 Pet. 3:15). If the preacher's name is John, just call him John.

### Your Responsibility Toward Them

(1) **Show them respect.** What happened to the young people in 2 Kings 2:23-24 who failed to show respect to Elisha? \_\_\_\_\_

(2) **Listen to them.** Proverbs 1:5 says a wise person will \_\_\_\_\_. When a preacher is preaching, we need to be quiet and listen. It's good to take notes.

(3) **See whether the things are so.** Why did the Bereans search the Scriptures daily? \_\_\_\_\_

We have to read the Bible for ourselves to make sure what the preacher is telling us is the truth. If the preacher says what the Bible says, then it is so.

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,  
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

# OLD TESTAMENT ADVICE FOR NEW TESTAMENT PREACHERS

Johnie Edwards

**P**aul told the Romans, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). Among the things “written aforetime” is good advice for today’s gospel preachers. So, we take a look.

1) **“WHAT THE LORD SAITH, THAT WILL I SPEAK.”** Micaiah uttered, “As the Lord liveth, What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak” (1 Ki. 22:14). Wouldn’t it be great if every gospel preacher and every Bible class teacher had this disposition toward their preaching and teaching? It would prevent “adding to or diminishing from” the word of God (Dt. 4:2). It would keep all of us “speaking as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

2) **“SPEAK; FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH.”** This is how Samuel responded when the Lord called on him as He said, “Samuel, Samuel” (1 Sam. 3:10). Had God called on you like this, how would you have responded? We must realize, as servants of God, we must be ready to hear what the Lord has to say. The advice of the wise man gets right down to the nitty-gritty of it, “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools” (Eccl. 5:1). Our ears must be open to a “thus saith the Lord,” as these words can be found in 413 verses from Exodus 4:22 through Malachi 1:4.

3) **“KNOW THAT A PROPHET HAS BEEN AMONG THEM.”** After the men of God finish their message, they need to know that “a prophet hath been among them” (Ezek. 33:33). When a gospel preacher finishes his sermon, folks need to know

that they have heard the word of God. This is not always the case. We need to preach in such a way that the word spoken can be understood (Neh. 8:8), due to its simplicity (2 Cor. 11:3).

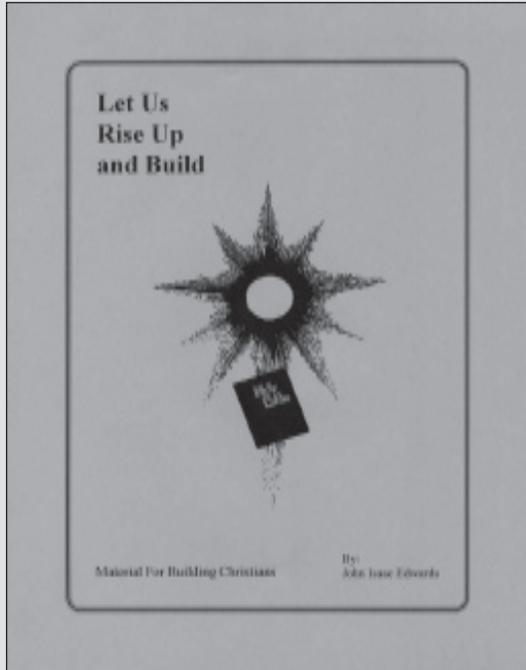
4) **“SMITE AND STAMP.”** God’s advice to Ezekiel was, “Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say...” (Ezek. 6:11). God was telling Ezekiel, put some enthusiasm in your preaching. We are getting away from hell fire and brimstone preaching. Some men hardly raise their voice as they preach. No wonder there is so little zeal in many churches today.

## GOOD ADVICE FOR GOSPEL PREACHERS FROM J. W. MCGARVEY

“I adopted at the beginning of my ministry, a systematic preparation of sermons by studying the subject carefully until it took shape in my mind and then by making brief notes of its divisions and subdivisions which I committed to memory. But I left these written notes at home when I started to church to preach the sermon. These skeletons, each of which filled a single page of note paper, I preserved until they were burned in the fire which destroyed my home in 1887. I made it a rule to repeat several times, as opportunity offers, every sermon that I considered good, but restudying and often reconstructing it before repeating it. I seldom repeated one before the same audience and never until after a considerable length of time, and usually when I did so it was recognized by some of my hearers who often complimented it on the improvement made.... my sermons were always made of Scriptural material, and the most effective of them were either historical or biographical, though I was personally inclined strongly to the argumentative.”

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