

Preaching



*God's Method for
Saving Souls*

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«Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.» Acts 8:5



One of the most erroneous patterns of thought that has wormed its way into the church in the latter part of the last century, and that continues full throttle into the 21st century, is the concept that we Christians must find new and improved ways to be relevant to modern humanity in order to win them to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This world-view twist has so infiltrated present day Bible interpretation and application that this disturbing and spiritually dangerous, if insidious and subtle, doctrinal aberration is undermining historical and eternal scriptural truth about how souls are won to Jesus Christ and transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son, Jesus Christ's kingdom of light!

It is important to understand this: deception of the most lethal and dangerous type is that which is never voiced out loud and named for what it really is, but instead sneaks into the sub conscious, if you will, and therefore the underlying foundation of concepts and beliefs that fuel actual conscious and volitional beliefs and subsequent actions. What am I saying exactly? Simply this: most Christians currently operating under the subtle deceptive influence of these "devil-deposited micro-doctrines" never realize it! In fact, they would be shocked to know what they are unknowingly subscribing to if it was spelled out to them in unmistakable terms.

That is my mission here in two primary and inter-related areas. Number one: the preaching of the written word of God as recorded in the Holy Bible, and number two: The power of the Holy Spirit.

First I will summarize the erroneous “got-to-be-relevant” deception that, for our purposes, I will call "Bad Micro-Doctrines.”

Bad Micro-Doctrine number one: The preaching of the Word of God is not the best way of reaching and winning souls to God. In fact, not only is it an inferior method, but in this modern techno-pagan world it is not even effective by itself!

Bad Micro-Doctrine number two: The power of the Holy Spirit is insufficient and inefficient for the work of drawing, preparing, and winning souls to saving faith in Christ. At the very least, we must help the Holy Spirit by utilizing user-friendly programs in our churches and evangelism, both to lure in worldly, self-absorbed believers and to attract the lost, and we must cater to the “felt” needs, regardless if they are real needs or not, of our perspective spiritual customers.

What I have just briefly described is the exact mindset of all too many who populate our local churches; sitting in the pews, singing in the choirs, holding positions of local church leadership, and even preaching and teaching from the pulpits! I point no fingers! You ask yourself if you fit the bill. Better still, ask God, "Do I fit this description"? If so, you are deceived, no matter how long you've been a Christian or how well you know the Bible. Let this be your wake-up call, my friend! You can turn it around in and through your life and your spiritual realm of influence, beginning right now.

Let me make it clear in such a way that no misunderstanding is possible:

Truth Doctrine number one: God, by the Holy Spirit and by the example of John the Baptist, Jesus himself, and all the

apostles and those who came after, clearly proclaims that salvation comes to mankind through the foolishness of the preaching of Christ's death on the cross and His following resurrection from the dead!

«For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;» 1 Corinthians 1:21-23

Further, all the apostles preached and taught - often in hostile environments where they were not wanted - and were thrown in the common prison, the equivalent of today's city or county jails for their trouble! But, when an angel engineered a "Holy Ghost jailbreak" in the night, supernaturally opening the prison doors, did Jesus' disciples hit the road and "get out of Dodge"? Nope! As crazy as it might seem to our natural sense of self-preservation, they went right back where they had gotten arrested "early in the morning" and did exactly what they had been thrown in prison for: preaching and teaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! Why? Because the angel of God told them to. What happened? Yep! They were arrested again and taken before the Jewish Council. How about you, my friend? Who are you obeying concerning the preaching and teaching of God's Word to a lost and dying, hell-bound world?

«And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to

have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.» Acts 5:18-29

Well, this time the apostles were beaten and you can well be assured these were not “love taps” they received from those who hated Christ and the messengers of CHRIST!

«And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.» Acts 5:40

A good question would be what happened next? Simple. They obeyed Christ's instructions and command. Can it be any clearer? Our mandate from Christ today, in this modern age, remains the very same because people are still saved through preaching and teaching Jesus Christ!

«And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.» Matthew 28:18-20

«And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.» Mark 16:15

«And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.» Acts 5:41-42

It is to be expected that the unsaved, natural-minded and spiritually blind would see preaching of the gospel as foolishness and stupidity. The tragic thing is that much of the church, in practice regardless of what their official, mental, intellectual, doctrinal stand may be, by what they do and do not do, also believes that preaching is, if not totally foolish, at best, insufficient or almost worthless in these times, in and of itself! But hear me, oh people of God! That's not God's position as revealed in his authoritative Word, the Holy Bible.

«But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.» I Corinthians 2:14

Still, after all these centuries, the preaching of the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection to redeem from sin and save from our due punishment of eternal hell all who receive and place their faith/trust in Him; and in His return one day soon to take us home to be with Him in Heaven,

forever, is God's method of saving mankind, one by one! Who will you believe? The latest popularity poll and human generated statistic or the revealed will and method of God?

Truth Doctrine number two: The Holy Spirit's job description, as revealed in God's word, is found in John 16:8. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict unsaved souls of their sin and need for Jesus Christ, to draw them and encourage them to respond to His call to saving faith in Christ and to plant them into the true body of Christ, and in Christ Himself, as they take the surrendered step of faith in Christ. A special note here: genuine spiritual surrender is not an intellectual reasoning but a "giving up" of the heart to Jesus Christ. Absolutely necessary, no genuine salvation, no true spiritual rebirth can take place without the transfer of the heart into the hand and will of God in Christ Jesus. Oh, that we would learn this lesson in the modern church today! The Holy Spirit does neither need nor desire the assistance of fleshly human marketing ploys and methods of crowd manipulation garnered from Madison Avenue and Hollywood success seminars.

«And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:» John 16:8

Two things are needed for souls to be saved in any age, century, or decade of time: number one, the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified!"

«But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;» 1 Corinthians 1:23

«For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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?» Romans 10:13-14

«So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.» Romans 10:17

Number two is the power of the Holy Spirit to take and apply God's Word to woo, draw, convict, convince and save "Whosoever will" from their sins as it is preached through and by willing human vessels of clay empowered by Him.

«But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:» John 15:26

I have heard it said again and again, from both lay-person and pastors, "Don't preach to people!" Say what? I ask you, find that anywhere in the Bible and especially anywhere in the New Testament record! You won't! Why not? Because no matter what those who say that "mean" by that statement, it's ungodly, devil-inspired and propagated counsel!

On the other hand, we are "counseled" and commanded over and over again in God's Word to preach! My brothers and sisters, as you are Holy Spirit-inspired and helped (the Holy Spirit is the Comforter and the One who comes along side to help: the "Helper,") to share/preach the gospel, do so! You don't need to go to bible college, though certainly a good thing, or be ordained (for all believers are ordained to the work of God's kingdom) by a church body to preach the gospel. Nor do you need to be behind a pulpit or in a church building! You do not need to be a professional speaker or a great talker. Understand: preaching the Word of God is not limited to any particular vocal style, no matter what is commonly accepted as preaching in your particular church! It is not limited to a specific tone or loudness of voice or rhythmic pattern of presentation. All you need is to be genuinely saved, to know Jesus in the forgiveness and cleansing of your sins and growing by prayerful study/meditation in God's Holy Word which the Holy Spirit will use to teach you how and what to share (preach) in outreach to the lost! The style of your sharing is merely an incidental.

«Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.» Romans 8:26

«For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.» Ephesians 2:10

Preaching the Word of God is just that: find the lost and proclaim God's solution and salvation in His one and only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Know this. It is the Holy Spirit's job to draw and save souls as we, God's people, preach the clear, plain gospel of Jesus Christ. No gimmicks, no tricks, no song and dance routines to draw and appease the flesh. Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ! Speak from what your heart knows to be the truth! Preach it wherever and whenever you get the opportunity. That's God's method, not man's.

Let what the early church did - common, ordinary Christian people of every age and gender - be our example, model and mandate to follow! Stephen had just been stoned to death and...

«...Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.» Acts 8:1

and...

«Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.» Acts 8:4

Let us do the same!



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