
Words of Truth

They Are Professional Speakers, Not Gospel Preachers

By: Brian A. Yeager

Many of us have heard sermons that have been very well delivered. We have heard men speak who have a wonderful command of the English language. I have heard men deliver sermons that had great illustrations and were very easy to listen to. In fact, I have found some sermons I have heard to be down right entertaining. Is that what preaching is all about?

Does a Gospel preacher have to be a good public speaker to carry out the work of preaching? Does a Gospel preacher have to be easy to listen to? Is eloquent speech a necessity for carrying out the work of preaching?

I aim to prove in this article that the questions above can be loudly answered with a, “NO”! In fact, many times the message of the Gospel is lost when the sermon becomes about the speaker rather than the message. Many sermons end with the audience being “amazed”, “entertained”, and “impressed”; but not being taught. Today, men spend much time in preparing for the delivery of the message rather than the content. Men spend time assembling charts and eye-catching graphics on their computers rather than sermons that will save the particular audience they will have at their feet. Brethren, we must not allow preaching here to turn into professional speaking rather than Gospel preaching. To do so, we have to understand what is important about preaching.

Excellency Of Speech Is Not The Key To Good Preaching

Notice what the INSPIRED Apostle Paul said on this subject: *“And I, brethren, when **I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. **And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **Which*****

things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:1-13).

That which the Holy Spirit had Paul write, that you just read, flies in the face of modern thinking concerning Gospel preaching. The emphasis God wants on preaching is not about delivery, but about content. Preach the word is what God wants (II Timothy 4:2). Good words and fair speeches are signs of false teachers that are to be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18). Real preachers are not concerned about sounding good, but about being sure the message is delivered clearly and understandably. Such is hard to accomplish if a preacher is trying to show his knowledge of big words.

Teaching Is Useless If It Is Not Understandable

When spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1-11) were being used in the work of God, men and women could speak in miraculous tongues (Acts 2:1-11). Not all of those miraculous tongues were understandable without an interpreter (I Corinthians 14:27). If there was no interpreter present, that man was to remain silent in the church (I Corinthians 14:28) because no one could understand what he was saying (I Corinthians 14:2). I know that these things do not occur today (I Corinthians 13:8-13), but there is a point to learn from this. If a preacher is speaking just to be impressive and nothing is being learned, his speaking is useless. He has essentially become a noisemaker. In the context of speaking in tongues, Paul made the point that his teaching would be useless if no one could learn from it (I Corinthians 14:6-11). The focus of preaching is not being impressive, but to teach in an understandable manner (Nehemiah 8:8).

When preaching turns into sounding good rather than saving souls the purpose of preaching is lost (Romans 1:16, Romans 10:14-17, and Colossians 1:5-6). God has revealed eternal life to the world through preaching (Titus 1:2-3). When men focus on sounding good rather than getting that message across to the hearer, that man has lost the point of preaching. Having thought these things through, ask yourself if you'd sit and listen to a bad speaker preach the Gospel.

A Man Can Be Rude In Speech And Still Preach

The Apostle Paul was unlearned in regard to his speech. Notice: *"But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things"* (II Corinthians 11:6). In fact, Paul was known to have contemptible [less esteemed] speech (II Corinthians 10:10). Yet, he was a chosen vessel of God for the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 9:10-15). On the other hand, Apollos was an eloquent man (Acts 18:24). Yet, he was ignorant to the truth in regard to baptism (Acts 18:25-28). Think about that! God's choice in preachers has nothing to do with the ability he has in public speaking (Exodus 4:10-17). Why would our choice be different?

Conclusion

Here at Sunrise we have to be sure that the focus here on preaching is about the message more than the messenger. We have to make sure the sermons are about the word of God rather than the delivery. We have to be sure the power rests in God's word not the teacher (Psalms 19:7)!