

Audio – Lessons and Preaching

The Value of Preaching

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. (*1 Corinthians 1:21*)

It is interesting that the LORD God chose a method of delivering His message to man that the world considers foolishness. After all, aren't there more effective ways of getting the message across? Surely dramas, movies, and songs all are more effective at influencing people to believe in something?

Well, that depends upon what you are trying to achieve. More importantly, it depends upon what you can perceive about a person, versus what LORD God actually knows about man, and particularly about a specific person. Fundamentally, the method used to reach and influence people does depend upon what you can perceive about them, and their true motivations. In this regard, man is at a significant disadvantage, versus the LORD. The LORD made this very plain to the prophet Samuel, when Samuel went to anoint a king to replace Saul.

And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed *is* before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. (*1 Samuel 16:6-7*)

By the above, it is quite plain that Samuel misjudged what the LORD was looking for. After all, Eliab apparently was quite a handsome fellow, and strongly built. However, the LORD was looking for something entirely different – the composition (if you will) of the heart. Now, in all fairness to the prophet

Samuel, he made the very same mistake that we all make: we see the outward appearance and behavior, and have no ability to evaluate the heart of another individual. In fact, we have no ability to evaluate our own heart, as it is deceitful.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (*Jeremiah 17:9*)

However, the LORD God does have the ability to evaluate our hearts, and does so continually:

I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:10*)

So it is that fundamentally, what we see and evaluate about a person is not at all what the LORD God sees and evaluates. This is what drives the divergence in thinking about what the messages ought to be, and how they ought to be delivered. Where we would choose a dramatic, eye-catching presentation that would pull and tug on the emotions, the LORD chooses the plain preaching of His word.

The difference lies in the ability to actually penetrate into the heart, and there accomplish the work the LORD intends for it. On the other hand, when individuals are emotionally swayed by a dramatic and moving presentation, it does not penetrate the heart, and does not accomplish any long term purpose. Worse yet, many people realize when their emotions are being manipulated and reject everything associated with the message that attempted to sway them.

The LORD God is not interested in manipulating the emotions of His creatures. Rather, His interest is in imparting to them knowledge and understanding of things spiritual. To accomplish this end, He promised to grant the instrument of faith to anyone who hears His word preached and truly considers it. Why? So He can reason with that person concerning who they are, who the Lord Jesus Christ is, and why that person must

partake of the salvation offered through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. The LORD is very express about this, as He made clear to both the children of Israel and the woman at the well in Sychar.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (*Isaiah 1:18*)

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. (*John 4:10*)

With that, allow the plain preaching of the word of God to work in your heart. I pray you are blessed by it, and it accomplishes the purpose the LORD God has for it.

For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. (*Isaiah 55:8-11*)

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Note: All files are mp3 format. Also note that message and lesson length varies greatly, depending upon the service and the lesson or message.

<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Messages</i>
<p><u>What Kind of War, Part 1</u> This is the first part of a series on the nature of the Spiritual War we are all engaged in.</p>	<p><u>Unacknowledged Sins</u> This addresses the sins no Christian really wants to talk about – those sins of the flesh that involve anger, envy, hatred and other forms of maliciousness we like to cover up and pretend we don't have, but are nonetheless there.</p>
<p><u>The Problems of Assuming</u> This lesson addresses the dangers of assuming you know the intent of someone else. As the Scripture plainly demonstrates, we cannot know the heart of another – only the LORD God can know the true intent of someone's heart.</p>	<p><u>Faith and the Lack Thereof</u> This message is about how tenuous our usage of the faith we have is. It is very easy to be pulled away from what faith shows us, and allow what we see in the physical to overwhelm what we know by faith.</p>

<p>The Fourth Horseman This lesson is from Article 5 of our Statement of Faith and concentrates on the fourth horseman in Revelation, Chapter 6, but touches on the other three horsemen and what they mean, as it is necessary to understanding the Fourth Horseman and the reason Death and Hell exist.</p>	<p>The Most Important Relationship The single most important relationship for any person is their relationship to the LORD God, and specifically their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Just what is your most important relationship?</p>
<p>The Functioning of the Body: The NT Church – Pt. 1 This lesson can be found on Ebenezer Baptist Church’s Messages and Lessons page, or by clicking the link above.</p>	<p>A Means or An End Is the Lord Jesus Christ a means to an end, or is He the end of all things to you? It makes a very great difference how you view the Lord Jesus Christ as to whether your motivation for coming to Christ for salvation is right or not.</p>
<p>The Functioning of the Body: The NT Church – Pt. 2 This lesson can be found on Ebenezer Baptist Church’s Messages and Lessons page, or by clicking the link above.</p>	<p>Changing Our Thinking This addresses the spiritual war we are involved in and where is it primarily fought. The message focuses on an area that is frequently ignored in this war, and is crucial to fighting it effectively.</p>
	<p>How Did Noah Know? Addresses Noah’s use of faith to perceive the truth of what the LORD God told him about the coming deluge.</p>

	<p><u>Our Motivation</u> Looks at what our real motivation for serving the LORD God is.</p>
	<p><u>A Heart Toward Our Enemies</u> One of the more difficult (and less taught) doctrines of Scripture is the doctrine of loving your enemies. It is not popular, as it flies directly in the face of what our flesh thinks ought to be. Moreover, for Baptists, the doctrine comes a little too close to the doctrine of pacifism espoused by the Amish and Mennonites. Hence, in all the years I have been in fundamental Baptist churches, I have never heard it preached on or taught. However, if you ask, you will be told "Of course we love our enemies." but in reality, they stay angry and/or bitter at them almost continually.</p>
	<p><u>Beyond Our Design</u> The Sunday following Jackson's death, I was moved to bring a lesson on the design of man, and how it is that the likes of Michael Jackson (and many others) violated that design, and it led to their destruction.</p>

	<p><u>The Nature of Christ in the Believer</u> This addresses the nature of Christ in the believer and how we often ignore what that really means.</p>
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