



Publishing Peace

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“Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!...” (Nahum 1:15)

Is Preaching Really that Important?

by John Keith

A minister was greeting people as they left the church building following services one morning when a gentleman approached him, shaking his head and smiling. He said to the preacher, “I don’t know how you do it, preacher; but you always find something to fill up the time”. Although amusing, this sadly illustrates what many think about listening to a sermon.

Even the word “preach” has been given a negative connotation, as people will say to somebody who is nagging them about something, “Don’t preach to me”! It is unfortunate that a man trying to convince sinners to repent, and Christians to grow, is thought to be nagging. Do they not know what God has said?

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? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!" (Rom 10:14-15, emphasis mine, JK).

Preaching is how people hear; preaching the Gospel is how people hear the saving message.

“Preach” is translated from the Greek word, *kérussó*, and it means “to herald” (proclaim); to preach (announce) a message publicly and with conviction (persuasion). That is exactly what the disciples were commanded (Mark 16:15) and it is exactly what they did (Acts).

Does preaching take time? It sure does. It takes time to learn what to proclaim; it takes time to prepare the lessons; it takes time to deliver the lessons. Gospel preachers worth their salt do not simply “work up” lessons to fill a time allotment. Rather, they say what needs saying from the Bible based upon observation of self, others, the church, and society. Yes, preaching really is that important for it is the way God designed the Message to spread and the church to grow.

Directed to Cooperate

by David Deagel

Editor's Note: This good article is a summation of a lecture David Deagel presented last year at the Victory Lectures.

Lecture Reflection – Directed to Cooperate

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). Our goal as Christians is not only to wear His name, but to adopt His mind; how He thought, how He responded, and how He treated others. That becomes especially important when Christians disagree.

As Paul closes the letter to the Philippians, he offers a final set of exhortations, and he begins with unity (Philippians 4:1–3). We do not know the nature of the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche, nor do we know the identity of the “true companion” or much about Clement. Scripture does not satisfy our every curiosity, but it does give us direction. God’s people still face misunderstandings, personality clashes, and differing judgments. Here, Paul deals with the difficult question of “What do we do when Christians disagree?”

Be Standing Fast in the Lord

Paul begins with affection: “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved” (Philippians 4:1). He does not write as some disconnected detractor, but as a spiritual father who loves the saint. The Philippians were once pagan and lost, but the gospel had made them “brethren.” Paul calls them his “joy and crown.”

Then comes the charge: “Stand fast in the Lord.” Unity does not exist by accident. It takes concerted effort. Trouble will move in, whether from false doctrine, worldly pressure, or internal strife. Most congregations do not fall because of persecution from outside, but because of division from within. Standing fast includes guarding relationships as well as guarding doctrine.

Be of the Same Mind in the Lord

Paul addresses the conflict plainly: “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord” (Philippians 4:2). He pleads with both. He does not take sides. He does not shame them. He urges them toward the same goal: “the same mind.”

This phrase does not mean that Christians must share identical preferences on every area of opinion. God did not create us with identical personalities, backgrounds, or tastes. Even faithful brethren may differ on judgments, methods, and matters of opinion. Scripture recognizes that (Romans 14:1–6). Unity is not uniformity.

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However, the Bible is equally clear that division is dangerous. Paul begged Corinth, “that you all speak the same thing...that there be no divisions among you...that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Jesus prayed that His followers “may be one...that the world may believe” (John 17:20–23). When Christians cannot walk together, the world learns the wrong lesson. The gospel is not helped by quarrels over personal preference, wounded pride, or party spirit. Unchecked conflict spreads like leaven (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6).

We cannot miss this truth. Paul’s wording is extremely important: “in the Lord.” The Lord is the foundation and boundary of unity. We cannot purchase peace by surrendering truth. We do not achieve unity by ignoring Scripture. Real unity is anchored in Christ and His revealed will (Ephesians 4:3–6). It is within that obedience that Christians must learn to treat one another with patience, humility, and love.

Help One Another Pursue Peace

Paul adds a third instruction: “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women...with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life” (Philippians 4:3). The congregation had a role to play. Problems between believers are not always private. When discord begins to affect the whole body, the whole body has a responsibility to seek healing.

This does not mean to stir the conflict, spread rumors, or choose sides. It means doing the hard work of peacemaking. Jesus taught a pathway toward reconciliation (Matthew 18:15–17). Paul’s approach here shows urgency and gentleness as he addresses it early, addresses it fairly, and aims for restoration.

Practical Application for Churches Today

Some conflicts are unavoidable; So what do we do when disagreement arises?

1. Don’t look for a fight & Don’t allow the attitude of others control the way you respond. (Romans 14:19; 2 Timothy 2:23–24).
2. Pursue peace without surrendering truth (Ephesians 4:3; Jude 3).
3. Remember the soul is the goal...yours and your brother’s (Hebrews 12:14).
4. When sin is involved, follow God’s process for restoration (Matthew 18:15–17).

The mind of Christ moves toward reconciliation. It prays, forgives, and seeks the good of others. If we stand fast in the Lord, learn to be of the same mind in the Lord, and help one another in the Lord, we will protect the unity of the Spirit and strengthen the bond of the church.

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