

# 3 Churches Preach the Word

---

The Word of God is given a place of preeminence or honor in churches that recognize its authority. Pastors of these churches faithfully preach the message of God's Word to the people. Their sermons are full of its truths.

Paul, the experienced evangelist and church-planter, placed strong emphasis on preaching. He urged Timothy, his young assistant, to preach the message (2 Timothy 4:2) and also wrote about elders who work hard at preaching (1 Timothy 5:17–18).

There is no substitute for preaching the Word of God. Its message must be given both to believers in the church and to nonbelievers outside the church. The opinions and beliefs of all people must be corrected and judged by its teachings.

In this lesson you will learn about the message that is preached. You will also discover why this message is preached and the effects it has on the lives of those who respond to it.

## ***The Plan***

---

- A. The Message Must Be Preached
- B. Preaching Strengthens Believers

## ***The Goals***

---

1. Explain the importance of preaching God's message.
2. Discuss how preaching the Word strengthens believers.

### **A. THE MESSAGE MUST BE PREACHED**

**Goal 1.** Explain the importance of preaching God's message.

"Someday I would like to be a preacher like our pastor," said Timothy to Mary after a Sunday morning service.

"Why?"

"Because I think it would be great to have God give me a message from His Word to give to people. Besides, there was a Timothy in the Bible who was a preacher."

"You can!" Mary encouraged. "I know you can because I heard someone say that we must all preach or tell people about Jesus."

Preaching is proclaiming a message in such a way that it commands a hearing. Its purpose is to persuade people to trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. The apostle Paul emphasized both the basic need of humankind and the grace of God to meet that need. His Christ-centered message proclaimed the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. Thus, to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote:

Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand . . . For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3–4)

The preached message must also be Bible-centered, including Scripture to meet the needs of the whole person. It offers salvation for people's souls, healing for their bodies and minds, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit to revive their spirits. Added to this, the gospel offers the glorious hope of the second coming of Christ. What a message!

Such a message includes not only the life of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, but the action of the book of Acts. When we preach Christ risen, we remember His promise to send the Helper. (See John 14:16.) This promise was fulfilled at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. A Bible-centered message includes the whole Bible.

Preaching this message is not just for full-time pastors or evangelists. Millions of believers share the gospel in an informal way. For instance, the early church did this. Scattered by terrible persecution, laymen fled to Antioch in Syria. There they preached the gospel to Gentiles (non-Jews), telling them the good news about Jesus. As a result, a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. These lay folks caused the founding of a new church, the first among the Gentiles. (Read Acts 11:19–21.)

A more modern example of lay preaching comes from Ivory Coast, West Africa. Spirit-filled farmers and teachers, during their off season from work, gave several days a week to evangelism. Under the direction of their African pastors, groups went to various outposts. Dividing into small teams, they shared the good news with families sitting under shade trees. Villagers hearing the gospel from lay people like themselves accepted Jesus as Savior. As a result, many new churches were started.

Churches preach this message not only in their sanctuaries, but also in homes, in marketplaces, in evangelistic campaigns held in tents or halls, in prisons and hospitals, and in homes

for the aged or for the mentally ill. We have also preached in services held on board ocean freighters, inside stone houses in mountain villages, in booths along crowded streets, and in high-rise apartment buildings.

### ***Application***

---

**1** Which three words below would describe the message about Christ that Paul preached (according to 1 Corinthians 15:3–4)?

- a) Born
- b) Crucified
- c) Buried
- d) Risen
- e) Ascended

**2** Circle the letter in front of the correct completion of the sentence. A Bible-centered message is one that

- a) begins with a passage of Scripture.
- b) branches out from a Bible story or parable.
- c) applies the truth of Scripture to people’s needs.

**3** What are some of the places believers should preach the good news?

.....

.....



## **B. PREACHING STRENGTHENS BELIEVERS**

**Goal 2.** Discuss how preaching the Word strengthens believers.

Look at Paul’s church-planting ministry in Corinth: “Many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). First they had to hear the Word of God. The hearing of the Word then created faith in their hearts, and through faith in Jesus Christ they were converted. Paul writes, “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

The apostle John wrote his gospel for the specific purpose that his readers might believe, and that through their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, they might have life (John 20:31).

After preaching a gospel message, an African invited his listeners to accept Christ. Several were converted. One man, however, seemed very distressed. The minister talked kindly to him, then read from Isaiah 53:6: “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

The man exclaimed, “That’s me! I’ve led a terrible life. I’m only fit to be lost!”

“Don’t despair,” the preacher said. “Listen to the remaining part of the verse.” He then read, “‘But the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.’ Did you understand that? God laid the punishment for your sins upon Jesus the Savior who died on Calvary in your place. Do you believe it?”

“That’s what it says.”

“Then where is the punishment for your sins?” the preacher asked.

“It has fallen on Jesus.” And with these words the man raised his face and exclaimed with joy, “O thank God, I’m set free! Jesus bore my punishment!”

Saving faith for this man rose out of hearing and then believing the Word of God.

***Application***

---

**4** In your own words describe the relationship between faith and God’s Word.

.....  
.....



When Jesus faced temptation, He used Scripture as a weapon with which to defeat His enemy. For us, too, God's Word serves as the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17) to win the victory. One of the temptations our Lord faced after fasting came in this form:

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3-4)

With that statement Jesus defeated the devil. And with that statement we are told how important God's Word is—more important than our daily food.

We must eat if we are to grow and to keep up our physical strength. We must feed on the Word of God if we are to grow spiritually and to have strength to withstand temptation. The psalmist put it this way: "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103). Acts 8:8 tells us that after Philip preached in Samaria there was "great joy in that city."

Joy does more than make us feel good. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). And the source of this joy is in His Word. God's Word gives us the message of God's grace, His divine favor. When Paul was leaving Ephesus after three years of ministry there, he knew that the people would be facing new problems, so he comforted them with these words:

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

### Application

---

**5** Circle the letter in front of the correct completions to the sentence. God's Word is spiritual food that

- a)** we need for spiritual growth.
- b)** is good but not necessary.
- c)** we should be sharing.

**6** Why did Jesus say we need God's Word as well as bread?

.....

.....

**7** Paul said that the message of God's grace would

.....

.....



## Check Your Answers

---

- 1 **b)** Crucified  
**c)** Buried  
**d)** Risen
- 4 Faith comes from hearing and believing God's Word.
- 2 **c)** applies the truth of Scripture to people's needs.
- 5 **a)** we need for spiritual growth.  
**c)** we should be sharing with others.
- 6 Bread only nourishes our physical bodies; we also need spiritual nourishment.
- 3 Your answer. You might have listed jails, rest homes, public parks, or your own homes and communities. As you look for opportunities you will find them.
- 7 build us up and give us God's blessings.