

Session 3: What is the Church's Authority?

Expository Preaching

Key Passages:

- **2 Timothy 4:1-5**
- **Nehemiah 8:8-12**

Introduction: A few stats

- From 1940-2000 70+% of Americans belonged to a religious institution. In 2021, that number fell to 47%.
- Amongst Millennials, the number is 36%
- A survey in 2022 found that only 20% of Americans say they attend a religious service on a weekly basis.

Part 1: How should we respond to these obvious challenges developing in our times?

- **Paul's instruction to Timothy: 2 Timothy 4:1-5**
 - You cannot control the environment in which God has planted you.
 - People in the last days will be calloused to the truth.
 - God's method today is the same.
 - Preach the word in season and out of season.
 - Endure affliction and remain faithful.
- **In the Words of Martyn Lloyd Jones:** "The decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching had declined? What is it that always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching. Not only a new interest in preaching but a new kind of preaching. A revival of true preaching has always heralded these great movements in the history of the Church. And, of course, when the Reformation and the Revival come, they have always led to great and notable periods of the greatest preaching that the Church has ever known..."

Part 2: What is preaching?

- **κηρύσσω:** "To officiate as a herald...always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed...to publish, proclaim openly something which has been done..."
-Strong's
 - **John the Baptist: Matthew 3:1**
 - **Jesus: Matthew 4:17**
 - **The Twelve: Matthew 10:7**
 - **Disciples waiting for Pentecost: Luke 24:47**
 - **Philip in Samaria: Acts 8:5**
 - **Paul: Acts 28:30-31**
 - **The foundation of Faith: Romans 10:14**

- **Preaching is not...**
 - Entertaining people through humor or intellectual stimulation.
 - An academic lecture or commentary.
 - Simply telling people what a given text says.
 - A roundtable discussion.
 - Sharing our personal viewpoints about a given text.
- **Preaching is...**
 - Teaching...
 - From a point of authority...
 - With the intent to persuade...
 - With a call to action.

Part 3: How should we view scripture when we preach?

- **We need to have a Pauline conviction regarding the nature of scripture: 2 Timothy 3:15-17**
 - **He believed in its absolute authority:** The Scriptures are God's word, not simply man's words.
 - **He believed in its absolute purity:** The Scriptures are without error in everything they describe and affirm.
 - **He believed in its absolute clarity:** The problems we encounter when interpreting the Scriptures are never on God's side.
 - **He believed in its absolute sufficiency:** The Scriptures alone are enough to enable us to walk with God and faithfully fulfill our God-given duties.

Part 4: How should a correct view of these questions shape our preaching and teaching practices?

- **A convictional commitment:** Our view of scripture should compel us to have an unwavering commitment to Biblical preaching.
- **A convictional distaste for substitutes:** It is both illogical and disobedient to neglect and replace the preaching of scripture with some cheap and unsanctioned substitute.
- **A convictional boldness:** Preaching is by nature confrontational and necessary for our growth into Christlikeness.
- **A convictional confidence:** Those who minister in the word need to have a long-term view of its effectiveness.
- **A convictional approach to expositional teaching and preaching:**

Part 5: What is expositional teaching and preaching?

Key Components:

- We start with a text in its own context, rather than our own ideas being shaped by our own context.

- The text determines the focus of the sermon, rather than our own context.
- The arguments being made in the sermon, are the arguments God made in the text.
- The emphasis being presented in the sermon, is the emphasis God made in the text.
- The preacher is silent where the text is silent rather than where his context compels him to be silent.
- The preacher speaks plainly and boldly where the text speaks plainly and boldly, rather than where his context compels him to be silent and elusive.
- The background, flow of thought, and issues addressed in the book are all essential components to properly interpreting and applying each individual text.

A classic Biblical example: Nehemiah 8:8-12

- **Read the scriptures plainly:** They read the text, so people would hear God's word.
- **Give the sense:** They translated what was read for those who did not speak Hebrew and explained nuances in the passage being read.
- **Cause the people to understand:** They took what they read and interpreted it in a practical way that was consistent with a correct understanding of the text.
- **Apply what has been read:** They used this correct understanding to exhort the listeners to make necessary, personal, and specific changes.
- **Focused follow-up:** They helped the confused or conflicted work through starting new patterns of thinking and behavior.
- **Worship centered on truth:** Biblical exposition produced repentant worship leading to praise, gratitude, and godly resolve.

Some Concluding Thoughts:

- God's word must be preached not just read and discussed.
- Every generation will one day pass the mantle of responsibility to the next generation.
- It is critical that the next generation senses and embraces the seriousness of this transfer of responsibility.
- Each generation of Christians must hold fast to the practice of preaching the scriptures.
- We must stay the course even when the environment that we are called to serve deteriorates.
- We cannot give in to the temptation to embrace cheap substitutes because the times and culture have changed.
- Bible preaching must continue to be the central focus of our ministries.
- We must preach the gospel and diligently labor to complete the mission God has called us to perform.