

Preaching that Exalts Christ: Lessons from the Pulpit Ministry of Steve Fernandez

Introduction

In 19th Century England, no preacher held a greater reputation than Charles Spurgeon of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. He left behind a legacy of over 3,500 sermons, a pastor's college, and an orphanage. The crowd on Sunday averaged 6,000 and over his lifetime, he preached to over 10 million people. In fact, he had preached over 600 times before he was 20! Even in today's culture, he would be considered a mega-church pastor with an extensive personal platform and an enduring legacy, and yet his driving passion in the pulpit was to exalt Christ.

In his very first sermon after the church moved into the Metropolitan Tabernacle, he began with a desire to preach Christ:

I would propose that the subject of the ministry of this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ.¹

After explaining in detail what it means to preach Christ, he then explained that it is important because it suits all sorts of people:

Are there rebels present? Preach Christ; it will suit them. Are there pardoned sinners present? What is better, to melt their hearts than the blood of the Lord Jesus. Are there doubting Christians? What can cheer them better than the name of Christ. Are there strong believers? What is stronger meat than Jesus crucified? Are there learned, polite, intellectual hearers? If they are not satisfied with Christ, they ought to be. Are there poor, ignorant, unlettered men? Jesus Christ is just the thing to preach to them—a naked Christ to their simple ears. Jesus Christ is a topic that will keep in all climates.²

He then concluded:

I must even frankly admit the truth of many a criticism that has been uttered on my ministry, but I know it has been successful, and under God it has been, because I have sought to preach Christ. I say that without boasting or egotism, because if I had not done so I had no right to be a minister of Christ at all, and as I claim to be God's minister, I will and must declare it, whatever I have not preached, I have preached Christ, and into whatever mistakes I have fallen, I have sought to point to his cross, and say, "Behold the way to God."³

Remarkably, it was no less true in his final sermon thirty years later:

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, "The First Sermon in the Tabernacle," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 169.

² Spurgeon, "The First Sermon in the Tabernacle," 174.

³ Spurgeon, "The First Sermon in the Tabernacle," 176.

Young men, if you could see our Captain, you would [fall] down on your knees and beg him to let you enter the ranks of those who follow him. It is heaven to serve Jesus. . . . These forty years and more have I served him, blessed be his name! and I have had nothing but love from him. I would be glad to continue yet another forty years in the same dear service here below if so it pleased him. His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus even this day! Amen.⁴

Because of Christ's supremacy, Spurgeon knew that there is a beauty a majestic glory to him that stuns and captivates. As Spurgeon said, "Christ is his own attraction."⁵ When people come to Christ, they then find he is the glorious all-sufficient Savior who delivers from the bondage and brokenness of sin.

In this seminar, I want to convince you that the ministry of preaching is an act of worship.

In the doxology of Romans (Rom 16:25–27), Paul connects preaching with worship, "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the *preaching* of Jesus Christ . . . to the only wise God be *glory* forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen [emphasis mine]."

If it is the preaching of Christ that strengthens the church and brings glory to God, then we must make every effort to exalt Christ in the pulpit. For, when Christ is replaced, his supremacy and sufficiency proclaimed in the gospel is replaced as well. The end result is people are not delivered or helped, which means our Triune God is not glorified and exalted.

So what does a theology or preaching as worship look like? I want to examine five distinguishing characteristics of pulpit worship from the life and ministry of Steve Fernandez:

- 1) A determination to behold the Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious supremacy and all-sufficiency.
- 2) A remembrance of the Triune God's eternal, infinite love revealed in the gospel.
- 3) A commitment to Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered exposition of the Scriptures.
- 4) A loving shepherd's heart for the people under our care.
- 5) A passion to spread the glory of Christ to all peoples.

I am convinced that this reality of preaching as an act of worship is the kind of preaching that delivers, convicts, comforts, encourages and transforms its listeners by the Spirit through the gospel to the glory of God the Father in the face of Jesus Christ.

A Definition of Worship

In my theology of worship class, I begin by asking, "What is worship?" Most often, I hear that worship is a response. The astute Hebrew or Greek student will answer that worship is "submission," or worship is "service."⁶ Then I will ask, "Why don't people in your church submit to God or serve his people?" They are not worshipping, I argue, because they are not remembering the gospel: the person and work of Christ. I then give them my definition of worship:

Worship is the Spirit-illuminated calling of the saints to *remember* the greatness and goodness

⁴ Spurgeon, "The Statute of David for the Sharing of the Spoil," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 37 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1891), 323–324.

⁵ Spurgeon, "Christ Lifted Up," in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 3 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1857), 261.

⁶ Both the Hebrew and Greek words "submission" and "service" are at times translated "worship" in English.

of God the Father in the face of Jesus Christ so that they will cultivate Spirit-wrought *submission* in their hearts that draws near to the Father through the lordship of the Son and then in turn be commissioned to use their lives in Spirit-empowered *service* for the glory of Christ, to the praise of the Father.

- **Remembrance**

What is Remembrance?

- Remembrance is a key theme in worship: not just mental, but always has an appropriate external response.
- The concept of remembrance is reflected in the biblical words “meditate,” “know,” “lay something upon the heart,” and “do not forget.”
- A God who is not known cannot be worshipped. Every act of worship is triggered by and depends upon remembrance.

If we look at it from another angle, genuine worship of and communion with the Father can only happen through the Spirit’s work of uniting us to Christ at salvation, and is why Paul teaches the Ephesians: “**For through him [Christ] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father**” (Eph 2:18).

- **Submission**

Submission is one of the main word groups from both the Old and New Testaments that are translated as “worship.”

- From these words come a heart attitude of adoration and homage to God the Father as king (John 4:24).
- More than the physical posture of bowing down, this heart attitude is one that approaches the king and says, “**I am yours, and do with me what you want.**”

Submission to the Lordship of the Son in the gospel, then, is a high privilege that results in communion with the Father in such a way that believers are dear to the Father as part of his family (Eph 2:19) and they are secure in Christ (Eph 2:20), who is the cornerstone of a new “place of worship.”

It is why Paul writes: “**In him [Christ] you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God [the Father] by the Spirit**” (Eph 2:22). Paul explains that the church is the “**holy temple in the Lord [Jesus]**” (Eph 2:21) where communion with the Triune God takes place.

Peter has the same thought when he writes: “**you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**” (1 Pet 2:5).

By the Spirit, this holy house is a spiritual house and a family house, which will bring glory to the Father as his adopted children draw near to him through submission to his Son. When we draw near, we are now the new priesthood that offers worship, not through bulls and goats, but through singing and prayer, through baptism and the Lord’s table, through Scripture reading and preaching.

- **Service**

The biblical words for *service* are often translated worship when in reference to God.

In Romans, Paul takes this picture and applies it to us. He writes, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship [reasonable service]” (Rom 12:1). Paul is not simply “spiritualizing” the job description of the Old Testament. Instead Paul’s “spiritual act of worship” or “reasonable service” means the offering is no longer a slain animal but rather our whole life as a sacrifice to the Father. Paul concludes that this kind of service is “reasonable” since it is the appropriate response to the mercies of God the Father revealed in the gospel.

What About Preaching?

By now it should be obvious that worship is more than the slow songs right before the sermon. As the church, everything we place into our order of service should be informed by the gospel as an explanation of our New Covenant standing in Christ, and our New Covenant obligation to live out who we are in him.

I. A determination to behold the Lord Jesus Christ in his glorious supremacy and all-sufficiency.

Our worship is shaped by a Christ-centered Trinitarianism: from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit back to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

The person, offices, and work of Christ in his supremacy and sufficiency must be our great, all-encompassing theme, for this is what the Father and Spirit will honor, and this is what the pastor must preach.

Steve often spoke of two parts to Christ-centered preaching: 1) preaching Christ in his supremacy, 2) preaching Christ in his all-sufficiency.

A. Fernandez on the supremacy of Christ (John 16:14–15):

There is simply no substitute for preaching Christ. Christ possesses, in His person and work an infinite beauty and glory. He possesses a glory that the Spirit of God is impassioned to exalt and magnify.

The Spirit’s passion is to exalt and glorify Christ. There is not a more Christ-centered, Christ-exalting person in the universe than the Spirit. The Spirit came into the world for this very purpose.⁷

B. Fernandez on Christ’s all-sufficiency (2 Cor 4:4)

He was convinced as a pastor that his people needed to have their confidence restored in Christ’s ability to deliver and make whole, regardless of the degree that sin has wrecked a life. He was adamant that the integration of psychology and the deliverance model of spiritual warfare are issues central to the Gospel, because they were concerned with matters of how people are delivered. Since they undermine the Gospel, they diminish the sufficiency, and therefore the glory, of Christ.

A sermon on 2 Corinthians 2:14–4:6 is exemplary.⁸ Commenting on “light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor 4:4), Steve says, “What we do see in conversion is the

⁷Steve Fernandez, *Exalting Christ: Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World* (Vallejo, CA: Exalting Christ Publishing, 2011), 14–15.

⁸Steve Fernandez, “Christ Glorified in His All-Sufficiency” (Sermon presented at the Exalting Christ

light of the gospel, it's the glory of Christ... We see the full spectrum of all of the glorious perfections of God in conversion. They are emblazoned upon us." And later:

This sight of the sufficiency of Christ through the word preached is the only thing that converts, and according to Paul here, it is the only thing that sanctifies and transforms. This is why you can preach principles all day long, steps all day long without Christ, and your church doesn't ever seem to mature. It is the sight of Christ that matures people."

II. A remembrance of the Triune God's eternal, infinite love revealed in the gospel.

The Trinitarian shape of divine love in the Gospel: 1) that initiated salvation, 2) that empowers the preacher to proclaim Christ with freedom and passion, 3) that is an act of loving worship of both God and man, causes the church to rest in their identity in Christ and work out their salvation based upon who they are in him.

Steve believed Christ's work was rooted in the doctrines of God's sovereign grace, and was manifested in two major doctrines: justification (what God's done for us) and regeneration (what God's done in us).

Steve loved the theology of the Reformers and the Puritans. He also loved the manner in which they conveyed their theology to the flock, and believed that "heart religion" rooted in the eternal love of the Father was the only foundation for true revival preaching.

"The fact that election so abases man and exalts God's love and mercy may account for the fact that in nearly every great movement of God, unconditional election and God's free mercy was at the center of what was preached."⁹

At the Cornerstone Seminary, it was one of the presuppositions of "soul-piercing" preaching:

Preaching is to be done with an awareness of the deadness and hardness of the unregenerated human heart... it is to be done with an awareness that God must move on the heart (2 Thessalonians 2:17; 3:4-5). It must be done with the understanding that even in Christians God must work for 'it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). The preacher must consciously aim to go beyond the head to the heart.¹⁰

A. Fernandez on Justification

Steve believed that one of the greatest demonstrations of God's love is displayed in the doctrine of justification. He taught that a believer's understanding of justification affects their concept of God's grace and mercy, their concept of assurance, and most importantly their understanding of the glory of Christ.

"A person's understanding of how God, by Christ's blood and obedience justifies an ill-deserving sinner determines the degree that Christ is glorified. If our works are entirely excluded from justification, then Christ is entirely and rightly glorified... and if He is

Conference, Vallejo, CA, September 10, 2009), accessed November 3, 2013, <http://www.exaltingchristministries.org/downloads/2009-Session-3.mp3>.

⁹Steven Fernandez, "Election: God's Unchanging Love for His People," ed. John H. Armstrong, *Reformation and Revival Spring 1998* (April 1, 1998), 89.

¹⁰Steve Fernandez, "Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit: A Biblical Theology of Christ-Centered Expository Preaching," Unpublished Class Notes (The Cornerstone Seminary, 2012), 93.

rightly glorified, He will be rightly worshipped with a heart-affection and a soul-adoration that He alone deserves.”¹¹

For Steve, the positional truth of “Christ for us” was a non-negotiable of faithful preaching. He called it the “objective work of Christ,” and expected that the forensic aspects of Christ’s atonement would produce real life change in the heart of a Christian as they live out who they are in Christ.

“There is no greater incentive to obedience than the realization that, though we are totally ill-deserving, we are fully and forever accepted because of God’s free mercy and infinite love. In other words, there is no greater incentive to loving obedience than love itself.”¹²

B. Fernandez on Regeneration

Because Steve saw how a faulty view of regeneration had adversely affected life and ministry in the church, he was committed to preaching monergistic regeneration.

“Regeneration [is] the radical transformation of a person’s nature, accomplished by the direct and immediate exertion of God’s creative power, in conjunction with the gospel truth, by which the fundamental disposition, impulses and desires of the heart are made holy, so that the new tendency and life direction of the heart is away from self and sin and toward God and holiness.”¹³

Teaching on **2 Corinthians 4:3–6**, Steve tied the consequences of regeneration not only to a new conduct, but also to an illuminated mind that sees the beauty and glory of Christ. A nature is given which now sees glory and beauty where it saw none before, and then delights in the moral excellencies of Christ.¹⁴

Steve taught his preaching class that those whom the Spirit uses are those who are clear on the content and committed to message of the Gospel. They must be “clear-headed” about sin and grace and justification.¹⁵ To him, the dominant theme of preaching needs to be the freedom of God’s sovereign grace in the cross.

“That which is perhaps the greatest source of assurance that the child of God is loved with an eternal and unchanging love must be freely proclaimed. God honored such preaching in the past. He will honor it again.”¹⁶

¹¹Steve Fernandez, *Free Justification: The Glorification of Christ in the Justification of a Sinner* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2008), 6.

¹²Fernandez, *Free Justification*, 32.

¹³Steve Fernandez, *Once Saved Always Changed: What Does It Really Mean to Be Born Again?* (Vallejo, CA: Exalting Christ Publishing, 2001), 47.

¹⁴Steve Fernandez, “Grace and Power: The Glories of Salvation in Christ,” Unpublished Class Notes (The Cornerstone Seminary, 2006), 34–35.

¹⁵Fernandez, “Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit,” 32.

¹⁶Steven Fernandez, “Election: God’s Unchanging Love for His People,” ed. John H. Armstrong, *Reformation and Revival Spring 1998* (April 1, 1998), 102.

III. A commitment to Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered exposition of the Scriptures.

Through belief in Jesus as the Messiah (and by implication, a submission to him as Lord), “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:23). Jesus here, is teaching a Trinitarian shape to worship.

Those who worship the Father will do so by a regenerated human “spirit” that has experienced the “living water” (John 4:10–14) of the Holy Spirit,¹⁷ and will worship the Father through the truth that is only found in Christ Jesus.

Thus, submission to the Lordship of Christ in the power of the Spirit is the only means possible for true worship of God the Father.

For Steve, the three marks of preaching from 1 Cor 1:18–25 that God uses to the impact the world are:

- (1) A conviction that God honors a ministry centered around the preaching of Christ and him crucified,
- (2) A confidence that God has promised to exercise his power through Christ-centered, cross-centered preaching, and
- (3) A commitment to preach Christ in spite of pressures to change to a more culturally accepted method.¹⁸

Steve assumed that Biblical preaching by its very nature is proclamation. As such, it demands passion and earnestness in the delivery. To him, it is not only what is preached that is important, but the manner in which the message is preached as well. His preaching has been affectionately labeled “explository preaching.” In Steve’s mind, passion wasn’t mere volume or emotion.

It was “a zeal for God and the good of souls that is self-evident, an overwhelming weight of argument, a fervency of spirit, blood-earnestness in every part of the sermon, a pervading solemnity, a seriousness without being somber.”¹⁹

A. Fernandez on Christ-Centered Preaching

Steve was clear on the nature of Christ-centered preaching:

What Christ-centered expository preaching is not: An attempt to force Christ into texts when He is not there, an approach to Scripture that undermines a literal grammatical historical interpretation of Scripture: It is not a new hermeneutic.²⁰

What Christ-centered expository preaching is: A recognition in doing the work of expository preaching that divine revelation, of which Scripture consists, is progressive and telic in nature. That is, it is accumulative, and its goal is Christ. This in turn means that earlier revelation is only understood or applied by the latter, fuller revelation of Christ, a recognition of the central role of the entire broad, biblical

¹⁷In John 7:38–39, the Apostle gives us the key to understanding “living water” as the “Holy Spirit.”

¹⁸Steve Fernandez, “Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit,” 49–59.

¹⁹Steve Fernandez, “Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit,” 90.

²⁰Steve Fernandez, “Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit,” 13.

context in interpretation. That the broad, biblical context is vital in the understanding and application of Scripture, a recognition of Christ's own assertion that He is the theme and goal of revelation (Luke 24:27, 44- 47; John 1:45, 5:39; Acts 3:18, 24, 10:43), a recognition that any interpretation and/or application without Christ is sub-Christian.²¹

In Steve's mind, Christ-centered preaching is simply keeping with God's commitment to magnify his own name and glory through the Lord Jesus Christ. Since all of the Scriptures testify about him, the focus of expository preaching must necessarily point to the reality of Christ's glorious person and saving work.

B. Fernandez on Spirit-Empowered Preaching

Steve's instruction to his students is also useful:

God, through the Spirit, always honors Christ-centered, cross-saturated preaching (John 16:14–15). If the Spirit is to work, Christ must be "placarded." He must be proclaimed to believers (Colossians 1:27–29) and set forth to non-believers (Galatians 3:1). If Christ is not set forth, there is no basis for the hearing of faith for the non-believer (Romans 10:17) and no object of faith and basis of transformation for the believer (2 Corinthians 3:18). There is no basis of conviction and heart-work by which the Spirit works. In other words, we are to placard Christ to the nonbeliever, and proclaim Christ to the believer, confident that Christ has His own irresistible power of attraction and that the Spirit was sent to manifest this very thing.²²

Steve understood that the ministry of preaching to be critical to the life of the church, "There is, of course, much more to the ministry of a local church than preaching. But preaching — and therefore Christ in and through the preaching— is what fuels and sustains all these other ministries of a church."²³

For him, it was a very specific method of preaching, "I mean a prayer-saturated, earnest, biblical, soul-gripping, Spirit-empowered, proclamation of Christ and His matchless glories. I mean Christ-exalting, Spirit-inflamed preaching. In short, I mean preaching where Christ is exalted in the glory of His person and work."²⁴

IV. A loving shepherd's heart for the people under our care.

Preaching is a manifestation of the pastor's love for the flock, and as a priestly duty, an act of worship to God as the preacher uses his spiritual gifts to serve the church.

Steve loved the flock. Though he was not known for application in his sermons or imperatives in his outlines, he had a masterful way of relating the sufficiency of Christ to real life situations.

Preaching on Colossians 1:28–29, he assures the flock, "When you are in a bad way and a bad time, you need people, not steps and principles. How much truer when it comes down to

²¹Steve Fernandez, "Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit," 14–15.

²²Steve Fernandez, "Preaching Christ in the Power of the Spirit," 8.

²³Steve Fernandez, *Exalting Christ: Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World*, 12.

²⁴Steve Fernandez, *Exalting Christ: Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World*, 31.

trouble no one can sustain you in. You need Christ... You don't need principles you need Christ. *He* is powerful and *he* gives peace."²⁵

He was never half-hearted or uncertain in his burden to apply the truths of Scripture to the hearts of his flock, and he would regularly plead for sinners to "Come to Christ!"

Steve staunchly held that Christ-centered expository preaching is relevant to personal needs, because it is preaching that points to the all-sufficiency of Christ:

In many churches, biblical preaching has been replaced, and with it Christ. And when Christ is replaced, His glorious all-sufficiency, by which He delivers and liberates men, is replaced as well. The one is necessarily bound up with the other. The end result is people are not delivered or helped which means – and this is my whole concern – Christ is not glorified and exalted. The whole matter has to do with the glory and exaltation of Christ.²⁶

V. A passion to spread the glory of Christ to all peoples.

Christ, proclaimed and exalted in the preached Word, is the primary means of equipping of the saints. As the saints gather and are equipped for the "work of ministry" (Eph 4:12), they scatter for the purpose of mission as an act of worship as ambassadors of the Father.

As ambassadors for God's kingdom, we are calling a lost world to join in the kingdom of priests who will serve God forever in worship. Missions exist because worship doesn't (Piper).²⁷

This means that those sent will see their priestly service extending beyond the walls of the corporate gathering, calling the lost to be reconciled to the Father (2 Cor 5:18) and join his royal priesthood, so that both now and for all eternity they will serve him.

Fernandez on preaching in missions:

So with that in mind we ask the question: Is true biblical preaching ineffective in today's postmodern world? I am convinced it is not. The Scriptures (and church history as well, I might add) declare that Christ, proclaimed and exalted in the preached Word, is the primary means of God's culture-impacting power. They affirm that God has ordained that Christ-centered, Christ-exalting, biblical preaching is the primary way that the Spirit's power is released for the spread of the gospel in the world.²⁸

Over the many years of his ministry, culminating in the establishment of the Cornerstone Seminary, Community Bible Church trained up and sent out dozens of men into preaching ministries around the world. Steve was clear on the kinds of men God uses to spread the Gospel and plant other churches. In one of his seminary classes on world missions, he gave a list of distinguishing marks from Acts 11:19–30:²⁹

1. They have a passion for disciplemaking through evangelism (vv. 19-21, 26).
2. They are men of ordinary ability used in an extraordinary way (v. 20).
3. They proclaim Christ (v. 20b).

²⁵Steve Fernandez, "Preaching Christ for Maturity and Growth"

²⁶Steve Fernandez, *Exalting Christ: Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World*, 6.

²⁷ John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, 15.

²⁸Steve Fernandez, *Exalting Christ: Preaching Christ in a Postmodern World*, 8–9.

²⁹Steve Fernandez, "Church Planting and the Spread of God's Glory to All Peoples," Unpublished Class Notes (The Cornerstone Seminary, 2012), 57.

4. They depend on the power of God and it is evident in conspicuous ways (v. 21b).
5. They prepare and train others in order to multiply the ministry. They encourage and instruct (vv. 23, 26).
6. They partner with other ministries (vv. 27-30).
7. They are men of faith, trusting Christ to provide for their basic needs, undiverted from their primary call of preaching, teaching and multiplying (vv. 19- 20).

Conclusion

I would like to return to Spurgeon:

Remember, dear Christian friends, that preaching is not a result, it is a means to an end, and that end is the worship of God. The design of our solemn assemblies is adoration; that also is the aim and result of salvation, that the saved ones may fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb in his glory. Preaching and praying are like the stalks of the wheat, but hearty worship is the ear itself. If God has filled your cup, worship him in the solemn silence of your soul. Let every power, passion, thought, emotion, ability, and capacity, in lowest reverence adore the Lord of all, the Fountain whence flow the streams which have filled us to the brim.³⁰

For the pastor, preaching is an act of worship, calling others to remember the person and work of Christ, and for the audience, the hearing of the sermon is an act of worship as well. Spurgeon explains:

The fact is, the sermon reverently heard, and earnestly delivered, is the highest act of worship; and the preaching of the gospel is, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, the grandest instrumentality for the salvation of men. Though all the liturgies that were ever said or sung had remained unwritten; though all the notes of pealing organs had been silent; though every morning celebration and evening chant had been unknown; though every “performing of service” had been foresworn; the world might have been all the better for the loss, but the gospel faithfully proclaimed is God’s gate of mercy—the preaching of his word by earnest lips, touched with the consecrating fire, is the power of God unto salvation.³¹

Steve has left a legacy of exalting Christ.

May God the Father continue to give pastors to the church that will be faithful to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in the power of the Spirit, and may they never get over the “amazing” and “incredible” all-sufficiency of Christ. God uses crooked sticks to draw straight lines.

May the Spirit of God fill our pulpits with preachers who desire to exalt Christ, calling others to remember the greatness and goodness of God the Father, draw near through the finished work of his Son in the gospel, and be sent out on mission in Spirit-empowered service for the sake of Christ’s name.

³⁰ Spurgeon, “The Overflowing Cup,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 21 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1875), 154.

³¹ Spurgeon, “Broken Bones,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 15 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869), 165.