

Last branch on our tree: Practice of Ministry

Could include a handful of items in here, but we'll cover these two, preaching & counseling, in two separate lessons.

### **Preaching**

- Like all other ministry disciplines, preaching sits atop the trunk of your theology
- Foundational theological assumption: the Bible is God's Word: inerrant, authoritative, sufficient
  - o These next two lessons will focus especially on the Bible's *sufficiency*
  - o 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  - o Apostolic pattern: Ministry based primarily on the Scriptures, not primarily on experience
    - Paul: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
    - Peter: 2 Peter 1:16-17

“Primacy of preaching”: preaching God's Word as the primary, foundational method of ministry in the church.

Three responsibilities of the church, best accomplished through preaching the Word of God:

- Worship God
  - o Matt 4:10 – worshipping God alone is a command
  - o Matt 22:37 / Deut 6:13 – love Him with all our minds...
  - o John 4:24 – worship Him in Spirit and in truth
  - o James 1:18 – Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of truth
- Evangelize the Lost
  - o 1 Peter 1:23 – we have been born again through the living and abiding Word of God
  - o 2 Timothy 3:15 – Scriptures are able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ

- Romans 10:14, 17 – How are they to hear without a preacher? Faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.
  
- Equip / perfect the saints
  - Ephesians 4:11-12, 14
  - Colossians 1:28 – “Him we proclaim...that we may present everyone mature in Christ”

### Pinnacle of Preaching – Expository Preaching

We need God’s Words and God’s thoughts, not merely the preacher’s words / thoughts

- Isaiah 55:8-9
- The Bible is still God’s living Word today: Heb 4:12
- The Bible is the sword of the Spirit: Eph 6:17

Primary method is to preach texts:

- Present the text – read the pericope (1 Timothy 4:13)
- Explain the text – meaning (requires not just hermeneutics & exegesis, but also theology → hermeneutical circle)
- Apply the text – implications & significance
  - \*Preaching is not meant only to inform but also to transform
    - Romans 12:1-2
    - We should never be content with even a doctrinally sound academic lecture from the pulpit.
    - “We have not preached if we have only imparted intellectual knowledge about the authorial intent. After imparting such knowledge, we must exhort the people today based on that knowledge. The unbeliever must be called to repentance. The believer must be called to greater maturity and communion with Christ and with the rest of the body.” [Demme]

### Sequential Expository Preaching

- Beginning a book of the Bible and moving through, pericope by pericope, until the book is complete
- Should be considered the normal mode (though there may be times for exceptions)
- Requires a preacher to preach the hardest and most troublesome passages (as well as passages that may be hard to explain within their theological system)
  - o At the very least, it makes it obvious when they don't address a verse/passage
- Aids in retaining the original context, because you're always progressing from passage to passage in the immediate context
- Makes better use of preacher's (and congregation's) time, because you don't have to devote a ton of time each message to the background and context of that Bible book.
- At the same time, aids in the congregation's ability to learn and retain main themes, because you're addressing the primary themes as they get repeated and recapitulated within a book
- Note: by "Sequential (or Serial) Expository Preaching," I do not necessarily mean that you must start with one book, preach through it, immediately go to the next book in order in the Bible and go through that, etc.
  - o Personally, I think this is less helpful, because you spend too long in one testament and not the other, and you go through too many similar genres sequentially without encountering others.
- It is possible to be expository without being sequential

### Implications of the primacy of expository preaching for ministry in the church:

#### For the pastor:

- Pastor must guard his preparation time
  - o The (maturity & numerical) growth of the church depends significantly on the preaching

- Other important duties in the church may need to be delegated to other competent people in the church. This is especially true in small churches or churches that have only a single pastor/elder.

For other church leaders:

- Must be willing to protect the pastor's preparation time
- Must be willing to handle certain important ministry duties when necessary
- Must ensure the pastor doesn't use the above as an excuse to avoid other areas of ministry
  - avoid ministry challenges, avoid issues at home, avoid responsibilities they don't like

For the congregation:

- Must realize the pastor may not always be at their beck and call
- The worship service itself must allow significant time for the exposition of the Word
  - This may mean allowing for more time for the service overall, or...
  - It may require the streamlining of the rest of the service
    - "greeting times" may be shortened or eliminated
    - Announcements should be limited as well
- The preacher's job is *not* to entertain (remember: present, explain, apply/exhort)
- The congregation is also called to be ministers as well (cf. Eph. 4:11-14)

Suggested Reading:

- Bryan Chapell. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon.*
- Jonathan Griffiths. *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and biblical-theological study.*
- Dennis Johnson. *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures.*