

Sound Doctrine: Teaching vs. Preaching in the NT

Sound doctrine is essential to effective ministry within the church. It is the means by which ministers both nourish the sheep and protect them from the wolves. But what is “doctrine”? Actually, our English word “doctrine” is the translation of the Greek term for “teaching” (διδάσκω). Unfortunately, when many Christians think of “teaching” they think of a sterile academic exercise that merely satisfies intellectual curiosity and fuels pride. It may produce smarter believers, but not Christ-like believers.

This perception of teaching in ministry is both unwarranted and unfortunate. It is a Biblical requirement that elders be “skillful in teaching” (διδασκτικός; 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). Some form of the word “teaching” occurs 220 times in the NT. We find Jesus frequently engaging in a teaching ministry in the Gospels, and the apostles frequently teach in the book of Acts. But on a *per capita* basis, nowhere in the NT is teaching emphasized more than in the Pastoral Epistles where local church ministry and pastoral responsibilities come to the fore. No fewer than 31 times do we find some reference to teaching in these three brief epistles (14% of the total).¹ Additionally, these books contain five references to “instructing/educating/training” (παιδεύω)² and seven references to “learning” (μανθάνω).³

By contrast, some form of the word “preaching” (κηρύσσω) occurs only six times in the Pastoral Epistles.⁴ “Preaching” refers to public proclamation; usually, it involves “heralding the gospel.”⁵ Furthermore, this gospel proclamation is primarily associated with Paul’s own itinerant evangelistic ministry – not the local church ministry of pastors Timothy and Titus to whom he writes. “Evangelism” (εὐαγγελίζω - “announcing the good news”) is certainly a vital aspect of church ministry, but there is only one reference to evangelistic activity in these letters (2 Tim. 4:5). In other words, the Pastoral Epistles speak of “teaching / instructing / learning” about six times as frequently as “preaching” and “evangelism” combined. The obvious conclusion is that

¹ 1 Tim. 1:3,7,10; 2:7,12; 3:2; 4:1,6,11,13,16; 5:17; 6:1,2,3. 2 Tim. 1:11; 2:2,24; 3:10,16; 4:2,3. Titus 1:9,11; 2:1,3,7,10.

² 1 Tim. 1:20. 2 Tim. 2:23,25; 3:16. Titus 2:12.

³ 1 Tim. 2:11; 5:4,13. 2 Tim. 3:7,14. Titus 3:14.

⁴ About 8% of its 73 occurrences in the NT: 1 Tim. 2:7, 3:16. 2 Tim. 1:11; 4:2,17. Titus 1:3.

⁵ Though twice the Pastoral Epistles speak of proclaiming the Word in general, as opposed to the gospel in particular (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:3).

preaching in general and evangelism in particular are both oriented toward the unsaved outside the church, whereas by contrast teaching is directed to Christians within the church.⁶ It is the key vehicle by which we disciple our fellow believers.

A brief survey of the references to teaching in these epistles illustrates both the nature and positive benefits of teaching in the context of church ministry:

1. Saves (1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:24-26, 3:14-15)
2. Nourishes or trains (1 Tim. 4:6)
3. Conforms to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3)
4. Promotes righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16)
5. Convinces (Titus 1:9)
6. Exhorts (1 Tim. 4:13, 6:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9)
7. Reproves (2 Tim. 4:2)
8. Rebukes (2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:9-13)

Of course, teaching achieves these positive outcomes only when properly done. Proper Biblical teaching is that which engages the whole person: mind, heart, and will. We must direct our teaching to the mind of our disciples because a renewed mind and transformed thinking is vital to sanctification. Only when a believer learns to *think* like Christ can he actually *be* like Christ. Our teaching must also focus on the heart because truth that touches us deeply will impact us more effectively. Also, the believer's emotions, affections, and values must be Biblically directed and controlled. Finally, our teaching must address the will because believers are accountable for the truth they have learned; it is the teacher's obligation to challenge the students to respond with appropriate applications of truth to their lives. In this regard, the Pastoral Epistles commend sound teaching as the primary vehicle for exhorting, reproving, and rebuking the disciple.

⁶ Compare the Great Commission wherein Christ commands us to go out into all the world and "preach" the gospel to the unsaved (Mark 16:15) and then disciple the new believers by "teaching" them to observe all the things that Christ had commanded (Matt. 28:19-20).

Analysis of Teaching & Preaching in the Entire NT

	<i>Teaching</i> (διδάσκω)	<i>Education</i> (παιδεύω)	<i>Learning</i> (μανθάνω)	Total	<i>Preaching</i> (κηρύσσω)	<i>Evangelism</i> (εὐαγγελίζω)	Total
Gospels	123	2	10	135	35	11	46
Acts	22	2	2	26	8	15	23
Other Epistles	44	16	12	72	24	31	55
Pastoral Epistles	31	5	7	43	6	1	7
Total	220 (TR = 219)	25	31	276	73 (TR = 74)	58 (TR = 59)	131

List of Greek Terms Utilized in the Foregoing Analysis

Teaching: διδάσκω, διδάσκαλος, διδαχή, διδασκαλία, διδακτός, νομοδιδάσκαλος, διδακτικός, ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, θεοδιδάκτος, καλοδιδάσκαλος

Learning: μανθάνω, μαθητεύω, ἀμαθής, καταμανθάνω (excludes: μαθητής, συμμαθητής, μαθήτρια)

Education / Training / Discipline: παιδεύω, παιδεία, παιδαγωγός, παιδευτής, ἀπαίδευτος (excludes: παιδίον, παῖς, ἐμπαίκτης, ἐμπαιγμονή, ἐμπαιγμός, παιδάριον, παιδιόθεν, παίζω)

Preaching: κηρύσσω, κήρυγμα, κήρυξ, προκηρύσσω

Evangelism: εὐαγγελίζω, εὐαγγελιστής, προεὐαγγελίζομαι (excludes: εὐαγγέλιον)

EXAMPLES OF “TEACHING” IN THE NT

- Matt.** 4:23 Jesus went about all Galilee, *teaching* in their synagogues
5:2 He opened his mouth, and *taught* them
7:29 He *taught* them as one having authority
9:35 Jesus went about all the cities and villages *teaching* in their synagogues
11:1 He departed thence to *teach*
13:54 He *taught* them in their synagogue
21:23 Elders of the people came unto Him as He was *teaching*
22:16 Thou art true, and *teachest* the way of God in truth
26:55 I sat daily with you *teaching* in the temple
- Acts** 4:2 They *taught* the people
5:21 They entered the temple early in the morning and *taught*
5:25 Standing in the temple, and *teaching* the people
11:26 A whole year they assembled themselves with the church and *taught* much people
15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, *teaching*
18:11 He continued there a year & six months *teaching* the Word
18:25 He spake and *taught* diligently the things of the Lord
20:20 I have *taught* you publicly
28:31 *Teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus

The Pastoral Epistles

- 1 Tim. 2:7 I am ordained a . . . *teacher* of the Gentiles
1 Tim. 4:6 Nourished up in the words of faith and of good *teaching*
1 Tim. 4:11 These things command and *teach*.
1 Tim. 4:13 Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to *teaching*.
1 Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the *teaching*
1 Tim. 5:17 Elders . . . who labor in the word and *teaching*
1 Tim. 6:2 These things *teach* and exhort.
1 Tim. 6:3 The *teaching* which is according to godliness
2 Tim. 1:11 I am appointed a . . . *teacher* of the Gentiles
2 Tim. 2:2 The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to *teach* others also
2 Tim. 3:10 Thou hast fully known my *teaching*
2 Tim. 3:16 All scripture is . . . profitable for *teaching*
2 Tim. 4:3 They will not endure sound *teaching*
Titus 1:9 By sound *teaching* both to exhort and to convince the gainsayer
Titus 2:1 Speak the things which become sound *teaching*

EXAMPLES OF “PREACHING” IN THE NT

Both κηρύσσω (“to preach / to proclaim”) and εὐαγγελίζω (“to evangelize / to announce good news”) commonly share one of the following three objects:

1. The kingdom
2. The gospel
3. Christ

Κηρύσσω:

Matt. 4:23	Jesus went about all Galilee . . . preaching <i>the gospel of the kingdom</i>
Matt. 9:35	Jesus went about all the cities & villages, preaching <i>the gospel of the kingdom</i>
Matt. 10:7	Preach, saying, “ <i>The kingdom of heaven</i> is at hand.”
Matt. 24:14	<i>This gospel of the kingdom</i> shall be preached in all the world
Matt. 26:13	This <i>gospel</i> shall be preached
Mark 16:15	Preach <i>the gospel</i> to every creature.
Acts 8:5	Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached <i>Christ</i>
Acts 9:20	Straightway he preached <i>Christ</i> in the synagogues
Acts 19:13	<i>Jesus</i> whom Paul preacheth
Acts 20:25	I have gone preaching <i>the kingdom of God</i>
Acts 28:31	Preaching <i>the kingdom of God</i>
Rom. 16:25	The preaching of <i>Jesus Christ</i>
1 Cor. 1:23	We preach <i>Christ crucified</i>
2 Cor. 1:19	<i>Jesus Christ</i> , who was preached among you by us
2 Cor. 4:5	We preach not ourselves, but <i>Christ Jesus the Lord</i>
Gal. 2:2	The <i>gospel</i> which I preach
Phil. 1:15	Some indeed preach <i>Christ</i>
Col. 1:23	The <i>hope of the gospel</i> , . . . which was preached to every creature
1 Thess. 2:9	We preached unto you <i>the gospel of God</i>

Εὐαγγελίζω:

Luke 4:43	I must preach <i>the kingdom of God</i>
Luke 8:1	He went through every city . . . shewing the glad tidings of <i>the kingdom</i>
Luke 16:16	<i>The kingdom of God</i> is preached
Acts 5:42	They ceased not to . . . preach <i>Jesus Christ</i>
Acts 8:12	Philip preaching . . . <i>the kingdom of God</i> , and <i>the name of Jesus Christ</i>
Acts 8:35	Philip . . . preached unto him <i>Jesus</i>
Acts 10:36	Preaching <i>peace by Jesus Christ</i>
Acts 11:20	Preaching <i>the Lord Jesus</i>
Acts 17:18	He preached unto them <i>Jesus, and the resurrection</i>

1 Cor. 15:1 *The gospel* which I preached unto you
2 Cor. 11:7 Because I have preached to you *the gospel of God*
Gal. 1:16 That I might preach *Him*
Eph. 3:8 That I should preach among the Gentiles *the unsearchable riches of Christ*
Rev. 14:6 Having *the everlasting gospel* to preach

SUMMARY:

PREACHING

By all believers

The gospel

To the lost

In the world

TEACHING

By mature believers & pastors

The whole counsel of God

To the saved

In the church

THE GREAT COMMISSION

I. PREACH: TO MAKE CONVERTS

- A. “Go ye into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)
- B. “Repentance and remission of sins should be **preached** in His name among all nations.” (Luke 24:47)

II. TEACH: TO MAKE DISCIPLES

“Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19-20)