

Session 2

PREACH

Acts 2:14-36; Romans 10:14-15

Memory Verse

And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

– ROMANS 10:15, CSB



Preach

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Preaching is foundational to the church's work and God's plan to reach the world. God's Word instructs believers to be dedicated to preaching the gospel and to value Biblical teaching.

How important is preaching to you? One research study done by Lifeway revealed that the number one reason people switch churches or stay at a church is the doctrine or beliefs of the church. The second most important factor is preaching. When we consider that the doctrine and beliefs of the church are typically reflected in the preaching, we can conclude that preaching is a big deal to most people.¹

This is not new. Since the conception of the church, preaching the Word has been a vital component of the Christian faith. It is a command from the Lord, and the Bible gives much instruction regarding this practice.



What role has preaching played in your life?



Share an instance where a sermon spoke to you directly or affected you in a meaningful way.

Session Summary

The preaching and teaching of the Word of God is vital to the church. To grow in faith, believers need to be exposed to strong biblical teaching and preaching on a regular basis. God emphasized the value of preaching and teaching in His Word. Throughout Scripture we see examples of powerful, bold, sermons that made an impact in the expansion of the gospel and the growth of the early church.

The same is true of the church today. To be healthy, vital, and influential, we must value and appreciate preaching and teaching the Word. Hearing the preached Word is necessary and important for any believer, whether new to the faith or a long time Christ follower. There is never an ending to our need for the Word, which fosters spiritual growth.

1. Preaching is Necessary (Romans 10:14-15)

In Romans Paul stressed the importance of preaching the gospel, and preachers must be sent by God and the Christian community. Most believers would agree that God's goal is for people to hear and believe the gospel. But Paul made the case that if there is no one preaching the Word, people will be inhibited from hearing about Jesus and finding hope in Him.

No one will be saved apart from hearing the gospel and believing in Christ as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. We are God's chosen instrument through which God declares His gospel message to the world. Our friends and family members who do not hear the gospel will not be saved.

If we do not share the gospel with our lost friends, their only hope to be saved is to hear the gospel from someone else. As Christians we possess the best news in the universe that has the power to change the eternal destinies of those we love. Why wouldn't we tell them the good news about Jesus?


It is a privilege that God chooses to use people like us to spread the gospel. He could have accomplished this mission any way He wanted, but He chose us to be His vessels to reach the lost world. In Scripture, there are many miraculous means God used to get people's attention and draw them to Himself. He can still use supernatural means to do His work, but the most common way people will hear and learn about Jesus is through the others' preaching and teaching. That is not only an awesome privilege, but it is also a great responsibility that we should take seriously.

? What role has preaching and teaching of the Word played in your belief in Jesus?

Being a leader of a church carries great weight and is not a responsibility that anyone should take on without being called by God (see James 3:1). Paul described preachers as being sent, meaning the act of preaching is done under God's authority and is not about personal recognition, attention, or glory. Preaching is about bringing glory to the Lord by what is said and taught from His Word. Everything points back to God. The local community of believers has a responsibility to build up and send out preachers who have been called by God.

? How have you seen growth in your spiritual life due to solid biblical teaching and preaching?


It may strike us as odd that Paul described the feet of those who bring the good news as beautiful. But feet are all about movement, action, and progress. The feet of someone who preaches the Word are beautiful because that person is working for the kingdom of God here on earth. This work is about partnering with God in reaching the lost and discipling the saved so that they grow more and more like Jesus. Those who preach are all about bringing the good news to others and, when done rightly and for God's glory, this work truly is beautiful.

 Application: You may not be a preacher, but how can you get more involved in spreading the good news of Jesus?

2. Bold Proclamation (Acts 2:14-21)

The birth of the early church in Acts offers many good examples for the church today. The first believers faced great opposition and yet continued preaching and teaching about Jesus. This also displayed the way these people had been changed by Jesus. Shortly after the arrest and trial of Jesus, where Peter denied Jesus three times, he preached one of the most powerful recorded sermons in the Bible.

With great boldness, Peter demonstrated the effect of a Holy Spirit-empowered sermon. This happened at Pentecost, just after the Holy Spirit manifested among the believers and caused an uproar within the community at large. The environment was hostile, but instead of cowering in fear and again denying his Savior, Peter spoke boldly with confidence and determination. Failure is not final with Jesus, and the restoration of Peter is a powerful reminder that our God gives second chances. This instance was not Peter sitting with a few people as he taught them; he stood with courage in front of as many people possible to preach the good news of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus had changed Peter, and the Holy Spirit equipped him to share this with others.

 How can you use this second chance as a way to share about Christ to your friends? (Make it part of your story)

Peter started his sermon by going back to Old Testament Scripture. He quoted from the prophet Joel and essentially started a Bible Study right there. He wanted the people to understand what the Bible says and how it applied to them. That is exactly what we should be doing in the church today. It is the church's responsibility to teach God's Word and help people understand how it applies to their lives. The Bible was never meant to only be a book that fills our heads with knowledge; it is living and active and transforms our lives as we apply it.

The passage of Joel that Peter focused on was a promise from God to pour out His Spirit on all people (see Joel 2:28-32). Considering the events at Pentecost, Peter made a connection between the Old Testament writings and their present experience. Joel's words regarding the last days referred to the time of the Messiah, including His humble beginnings and His triumphant return. The first Christians believed Jesus could return at any moment, so they wanted to be prepared and found obedient when it happened. That is the same type of urgency we should live with regarding Scripture, preaching, and teaching. Jesus could return at any moment, and we should live in a way that we are always ready.

 **How often do you reflect on the fact that Jesus could return at any moment? How does this affect your daily life?**

After declaring and pointing people to the promise of God to pour out the Holy Spirit, Peter clarified who the gospel is for. For the religious leaders and those raised as devout Jews, to hear that everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved was a game changer. Although it would be some time before the gospel spread to the Gentiles, this sermon pointed directly to that coming reality.

 **Application: Who is God calling you to share the truth of Jesus with today?**

3. Preaching Jesus (Acts 2:22-36)

Once he had the attention of the crowd, after explaining the things they had witnessed and laying out the mission of the gospel, Peter moved to the main point—Jesus. Peter’s words about Jesus were delivered with purpose and meaning. Peter’s actions were an example of how to talk to people about faith. He started with what the crowd already knew. They were not unfamiliar with Jesus. He had just been tried and crucified. When we want to have gospel conversations with others, it is good to start with what they already know.



What are some ways you try to bring up Jesus around unbelievers? Why is it good to start with what they know?

Peter was also honest with his listeners in pointing out their role in Jesus’s death. The gospel message is personal for all people. While we may not have physically put Jesus to death as the people present that day had, we have all sinned against God, making it necessary that Jesus die to pay our penalty. All played a role in His death, and all can share in His resurrection power by accepting Him as Savior. Helping people see the personal nature of the gospel message is vital when sharing about Jesus, whether in a gospel conversation, sermon, or Bible study.

Peter also pointed out that Jesus never sinned yet bore the full weight of the sin of the world. Peter’s quote of Psalm 16, referring to Jesus as the Holy One, emphasized the point that Jesus remained sinless even unto death on the cross. Only Jesus could have fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, and He is the only true savior.

Peter referenced Psalm 110 to make the point that even David had written about Jesus’s coming and pointed to Him as superior than even David was as Israel’s greatest human king.

Peter ended his message by declaring that even though they crucified Jesus, God had declared Him both Lord and Christ. Consider the courage it took to stand before that hostile crowd and boldly let them know where they went wrong. Peter did this out of love for his people and faith in Jesus. He cared enough about the people present that he wanted them to know the truth and see where they were wrong before God. He also made clear the forgiveness available through trusting in Jesus Christ (see vv. 38-39). Do we care enough about the people around us to proclaim the same?

? Application: How will you share with someone and point them to the grace and forgiveness available in Jesus?

Conclusion

Preaching and teaching God's Word is the mission of the church. God made it clear that we are to spread the gospel message to everyone possible. We see in the early church examples of how to be bold in our faith and speak to those we meet so they can also know the saving power of the resurrected Christ.

? How has today's study challenged you to be bold in your faith and speak up about Jesus?

? How can we support and encourage faithful preaching and teaching of the Word in our church and through local mission efforts?

? Who do you need to have a gospel conversation with based on today's lesson?

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).



FOR NEXT WEEK

Give

Main Passages

- Acts 4:32; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Session Outline

1. An Example of Generous Giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)
2. Encouragement to Give (2 Corinthians 8:6-8)
3. Giving like Jesus (Acts 4:32; 2 Corinthians 8:9)

Memorize

*And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.*

- Romans 10:15, CSB

References

¹Staff, "What Drives the Decision for Those Who Switch Churches," Lifeway Research, March 30, 2007, <https://research.lifeway.com/2007/03/30/lifeway-research-finds-major-decision-makers-for-those-who-switch-churches/>.

Prayer Prompts:

Reflect on these thoughts in your prayer time.

- How can you pray for the preachers and teachers in your community?
- Who can you boldly share the gospel with? Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you to share.
- Where can you partner with God to help teach and disciple others?