

Preach

June 11, 2023

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

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

Session Outline

1. Preaching Is Necessary (Romans 10:14-15)
2. Bold Proclamation (Acts 2:14-21)
3. Preaching Jesus (Acts 2:22-36)

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.





Leader Guide

Preach

Introduction

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?

Israel's Unbelief

Paul argued that only a remnant of Israel ever believed (9:27-29). In rejecting Christ Israel was following a precedent already at work in earlier days. The Jews' zeal was commendable but nevertheless misguided. The only way of acceptance before God was faith in Christ and was (and is) within the reach of all. Those who believe in their heart and confess with their mouth "Jesus is Lord" will be saved. People cannot believe unless they can hear, and they cannot hear without a preacher. Though Israel heard, they still rejected God's message.

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?

Prayer of Response

Thank Jesus for being the perfect sacrifice for your sin. Ask for boldness like the early church had so that you can be part of reaching the world with the gospel.

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?

Additional Resources

- *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* by Jimmy Scroggins
- *Exalting Jesus in Acts* by Tony Merida
- *Be Dynamic* by Warren Wiersbe

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

1. What does this passage say?
2. What did this passage mean to its original audience?
3. What does this passage tell us about God?
4. What does this passage tell us about man?
5. What does this passage demand of me?
6. How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
7. How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

For Next Week

Session Title

- 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

Historical Context of Romans

Purpose

Paul's purpose in writing Romans can be identified from his direct statements in the text and inferred from the content. He expressly wrote that he wanted to impart spiritual strength to the believers at Rome (1:11–12; 16:25–26). He asked for prayer for the difficult task he was undertaking (15:30) and that he might be able to come and see them (15:32). He hoped to enlist the Roman churches to support a mission to the west (15:23–29). The content of the letter shows that the churches experienced tensions between believers from different backgrounds. Paul wanted them to be united and to avoid dissension and false teaching (16:17–18). The content also reveals his exposition of what is essential Christianity and what are matters of indifference.

Author

Paul the apostle is the stated and indisputable author of the book of Romans. From the book of Acts and statements in Romans, we learn that Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth and on his way to Jerusalem in the spring of AD 57, to deliver an offering from the Gentile churches to poor Jewish Christians (Ac 20:3; Rm 15:25–29).

Setting

All of Paul's writings grew out of his missionary/pastoral work and were about the problems and needs of local churches. The book of Romans is also of this genre, but it is the least "local" in the sense that Paul had not yet been to Rome. This letter was his opportunity to expound the good news message (the gospel). He could discuss the essence of sin, the salvation accomplished on the cross, the union of the believer with Christ, how the Spirit works in the Christian to promote holiness, the place of the Jewish people in God's plan, future things, and Christian living or ethics. Though Paul did not write Romans as a systematic theology, his somewhat orderly exposition has been the fountain for the development of that discipline.

Special Features

Paul's letter to the Roman house churches has been preeminent among the New Testament writings for its theological and pastoral influence. It focuses on the doctrine of salvation, including the practical implications for believers as they live out the salvation given to them through Jesus Christ.

Extended Commentary

Romans 10:14-15

What must occur for someone to call on the name of the Lord? Someone must first be sent to proclaim the gospel message, and then listeners must pay attention and believe. In the absence of any one of these factors, no one can call on the name of the Lord.²

Acts 2:14-36

2:14–15 Acts is primarily a narrative punctuated by numerous speeches. Most of the speeches are summaries rather than word-for-word accounts. Just as he did in the Gospel that bears his name, Luke relied on “the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word” to report the essentials of speeches and events for which he was not present (Lk 1:2).

2:16–21 In his reply to the jeering crowd (v. 13), Peter cited three OT passages to demonstrate the biblical basis for the events of Pentecost. The first passage he cited was from Jl 2:28–32. The quotation follows the Masoretic Text version almost verbatim. Peter identified Joel’s prophecy with the last days and said those days had now arrived with the coming of the Spirit. There may also yet be a future, ultimate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

2:23 Peter’s declaration articulates a major paradox of the Christian life: Jesus’s death occurred as a result of the plan and foreknowledge of God, but it was the free (and sinful) acts of human beings that executed that plan. The Bible often affirms the reality of both divine sovereignty and genuine human choice without explaining how the two can possibly work together without conflict (e.g., 4:28; Gn 45:5).

2:24 The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental event of Christianity and the basis of the gospel. Peter made several important statements about the resurrection in this verse. First, it was God who raised Jesus from the dead. This pictures the resurrection as God the Father’s vindication of God the Son. Second, Jesus was literally dead before the resurrection, not simply injured. Thus his resurrection was no mere resuscitation. Notice also that Peter personifies death as an actual force that holds the deceased in its embrace. Third, death’s power was overcome by the resurrection, which means that believers should no longer fear it.

2:25–28 The second OT passage Peter cited is Ps 16:8–11. He recognized that Jesus was the one about whom David had prophesied, one who would not see the decay of death (also in v. 31).

2:29–30 Peter identified David as a prophet because he had prophesied through his psalm about the Messiah. David would have treasured this God-given foreknowledge because it entailed Israel’s eventual salvation through his own progeny. David would have a victorious descendant on his throne. Peter saw all of this as having been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is now seated at God’s right hand (v. 25; Eph 1:20).

2:31 The citation is from Ps 16:10, referred to by some as a typico-prophetic psalm, in which the meaning of the words describe more than just David’s experience.

2:32 Throughout this passage Peter has affirmed the reality and significance of Jesus's resurrection. Now he states most clearly the basis of his claims: he and the rest of the apostles were all witnesses to the risen Jesus. They had seen the risen Christ for themselves.

2:33 This verse describes the relationship of the Father and the Son to the coming of the Spirit.

2:34–35 The third and final OT passage cited by Peter is Ps 110:1. Peter cited David as the authority for his seeing Jesus as seated at God's right hand, with all of his enemies in full subjection. The basis of this victory and exaltation was Jesus's resurrection.

2:36 Peter addressed his words specifically to Jews (the house of Israel) and affirmed that Jesus whom they crucified was both Lord and Messiah. By calling Jesus "Lord and Messiah," Peter was staking the biggest possible claims. "Lord" is reserved in the Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint or LXX) for God (Yahweh). Thus Peter says Jesus is God. Peter further noted that Jesus was the Messiah (anointed one), Israel's hope for salvation.³

References

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2. Paige Patterson, "Salvation in the Old Testament," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1798.
3. M. David Sills, "Opportunities and Challenges in Global Missions," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1720-1721.

Author Bio

Jimmy Scroggins (Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations)

Jimmy Scroggins serves as the Lead Pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, FL. Jimmy is married to Kristin and they are blessed with eight children – James, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaac, Stephen, Anna Kate, Mary Claire and Caleb. Jimmy earned his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. Jimmy is dedicated to building families in South Florida through a network of neighborhood churches. His vision is to see each Family Church campus on mission to help people in their community discover and pursue God’s design. The Family Church Network has a vision to plant 100 churches in South Florida.

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Tony Merida is lead pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, NC, and associate professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC.

Warren Wiersbe (Be Dynamic)

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of Back to the Bible, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.