

## ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP:

### PREACHING

Within recent years some have questioned the need for preaching in the worship service of the Lord's church. Many wonder why it is necessary and they wonder why they cannot "get more" out of the lesson. We shall attempt to offer biblical direction upon these questions:

The word "preach" or derivations thereof, occur over 150 times in the Bible, all but eleven times in the New Testament. Closely related is the word "proclaim" which occurs over 40 times, mostly in the Old Testament. A third word or concept is that of "teaching" which is found 178 times in Scripture. In a sense, everything we do has preaching and teaching as its basis. Nothing we do, nothing we know comes without teaching and preaching.

The purpose of preaching is found in one of the first passage to use the term (Psalm 40:9,10):

*I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

Isaiah, that grand prophet of Old spoke of his task as a preacher of God Almighty (Isaiah 61:1,2):

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*

Clearly, one purpose of preaching is to declare the righteousness of God to a lost world.

Preaching is done as part of the worship services (Acts 20:7-12) but may also be done whenever people wish to hear (Acts 13:5, Romans 1:15).

Jesus Himself was a preacher. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17 c.f. Mark 1:14,15). It is also evident from these verses that preachers may call upon people to make changes in their lives. Jesus told these to "repent" that is, to change the course of their lives and begin to live for God.

We might ask: What should be preached? We have already shown that repentance is a proper topic. Also we should preach the gospel (Luke 20:1); remission of sins (Luke 24:47); resurrection (Acts 4:2); Jesus (Acts 5:42); the word (Acts 8:4); things concerning the kingdom (Acts 8:12); and forgiveness of sins (Acts 13:38). This list is not exhaustive but gives some idea of what should be preached.

There are some things that should not be preached, namely the "wisdom of men" (1 Corinthians 2:1-8). So many of my dear preaching brothers should take this lesson to heart: Stop preaching man's word and get back to the book, preaching the things of God!

Preaching is judged solely upon content. It should never be judged based upon smoothness of speech, finery of clothing or technical preaching skills. In fact, the best preacher is the one you never notice, for he is only a transparent communicator of truth.

Bryant Evans

**NEXT WEEK: MUSIC**