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We preach not ourselves

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

Building Kingdom Centered Sermons.



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2 Corinthians 4:1-7

⁴ Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

² But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

⁴ In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

*⁵ **For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;** and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.



Introduction

The time in which we live here in the United States is probably the most Bible accessible moment in history. We have access to preaching/teaching like never before. Just fifty years ago, many Churches shared a circuit preacher. That circuit preacher traveled between multiple Churches. Those respective congregations waited their turn as the preacher made his rounds. During those times you may not have a worship service at your local Church but every other Sunday or even once a month.

Fast forward to 2017 and almost every Church in America has worship service weekly. Many Churches have multiple Sunday services. The average Church has at least one or more Bible studies/ small groups a week. Add in electronic and social tools such as pod casts and Apps and we literally can access Biblical teaching anytime we like. Seems Christianity would be experiencing rapid growth in our country right? Wrong.

To the contrary, The Church in America is actually shrinking. Southern Baptist researcher, Thom Rainer, in an article entitled “13 Issues for Churches in 2013” says between 8,000 and 10,000 churches will likely close their doors permanently each year. Meanwhile the Church is experiencing its greatest growth in areas

where the gospel of Christ is suppressed and Christians are persecuted such as China and majority Muslim nations.

If the Church is going to regain its ability to make and impact in America, we must acknowledge the missteps of the past and get back on message. We must preach Kingdom centered sermons. That will be our goal for this session. The power of our message is not in our ability or personality; it must be of God and not of us.

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. **2 Corinthians 4:7***



The History of The Misuse Of Christianity

Most Of What Is Called Christianity In History Is Not Christianity At All! It has been more a concoction of the speakers' culture, motives and agenda than it has been the Gospel. The Gospel has never wavered since the time when God first entrusted it to humans. It has always meant the same from day one. The "Church" however, has been all over the map on where it stands

over the years. Techniques change but Gods' word never changes. What he meant then, He means now and every year in between.

⁴ *Now there are **diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.***

⁵ *And there are **differences of administrations, but the same Lord.***

⁶ *And there are **diversities of operations, but it is the same God** which worketh all in all.*

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to **profit withal.***

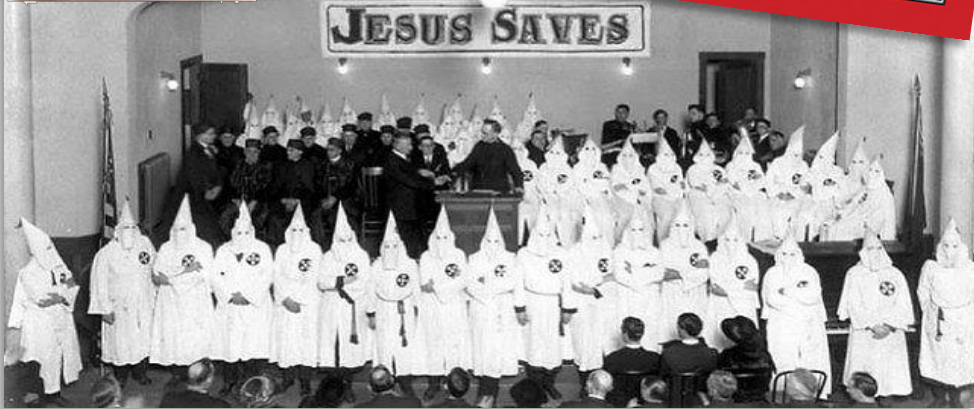
1 Corinthians 12:4-7

In other words, we should take advantage of tools that help us propagate the gospel as times change. Everybody is not going to operate or administer the Gospel/ gifts the same however the truth of God does not change to fit the latest fancy or trend, nor does it adapt to appease the culture or the majority in power at any given time. The reason the Church has changed its stance so many times is because it has failed through the years to realize, **we do not preach ourselves.**



Religion has been **MISUSED** to inflict all sorts of atrocities on humanity (i.e. slavery in America, prosperity preachers, Unsavable Oligarchy leadership in Churches, European Christian crusades, Catholic condolences, Oppression of Women and Jesus with European features).

We Preach Not Ourselves (Own Agenda)



The Message That We Preach

We preach not ourselves.

We do not use deception

Acts 8:9

*⁹But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and **bewitched the people** of Samaria, giving out that **himself was some great one**:*

¹⁰To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.



Bewitched:

Existēmieks (ē'-stā-mē)

To throw out of position,
displace

To amaze, to astonish,
throw into wonderment, to
be amazed, astounded, to
be out of one's mind,
besides one's self, insane

Check your motives



Philippians 1:15-17

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

1 Timothy 6:4-6 NIV

⁴ they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions

⁵ and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain

Emotionalism, who is it really for?



Often lots of preachers rely on emotionalism because it makes them feel better. They brow beat the people and whip them into a lather because of their own insecurities. Many preachers fear rejection so they need constant reinforcement from the crowd but “We Preach Not Ourselves”. There is nothing wrong with getting excited but make sure you’re not a Hype addict.

2 Timothy 4

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.



Basic Hermeneutics: The Integrity of the text

Hermeneutics- The Methodology of Interpreting Scripture

2 Timothy 2:15NLT

*¹⁵ Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who **correctly** explains the word of truth.*

If we are going to have Kingdom Centered Sermons, It is important to know what the king of the Kingdom is saying to us. As servants of the most high, we have an obligation to interpret the scripture correctly and **CONTEXT IS CRUCIAL**.

There are a lot of schools of thought on how to correctly interpret scripture. I am not going to try to cover all those. People go to seminary for two years and still cannot get it all covered so we are certainly not going to do an exhaustive study in three days. I would however like to discuss some basic principles for scriptural

integrity. When I was in grade school they taught us to always ask five questions about any narrative in order to get a full understanding: **Who, What, When, Where and How**. For scripture purpose I would like to add **culture, context and audience** into that simple equation. Let us take John 12:32 as an example. This is one of the most misquoted scriptures in the black Church. Well-meaning people have taken this text and interpreted it to be solely about praise. It is always good to praise the Lord but if we take the “praise” interpretation of the text, we really miss the power and impact of what God is really saying. Notice the text.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

John 12:32

Who is talking? Jesus the Christ

What is being done? Talking about his fate (Context John 12:33)

When is He speaking? During the Triumphal Entry /Palm Sunday
(context verses 12-14)

Where is this taking place? Jerusalem

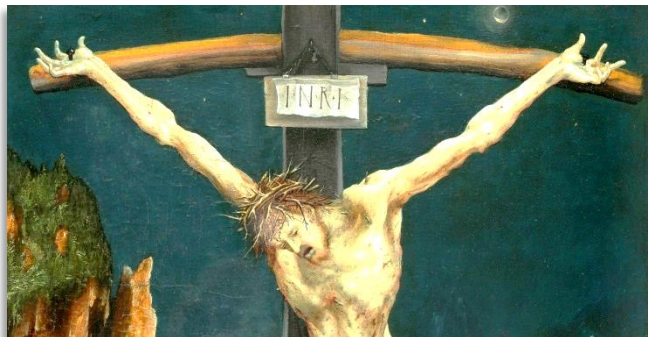
How is it being done? Publicly (In context John 12:29-32)

Who is the audience? Disciples (verse 16), Jews (verses 12-13), Pharisees (verse 19) and Certain Greeks\Gentiles (verse 20)

What is the culture? Multiple Cultures

Because we now see that Jesus was speaking to believers and non-believers, it really doesn't make good sense that he was referring only to praise, not to mention in verse 33 it explains that he was referring to the cross. Now we can deduce that what Jesus was trying to convey was significant to Jews, Gentiles, believers and non-believers. It was broader than the moment because it was predicting a future event (The Cross) and fulfilled prophesy concerning the Messiah.

The text is telling us that Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross goes beyond praise from believers. It affects all men (I will draw all men unto me). We will pick back up with this same text in the next section on Homiletics (Sermon structure).





Basic Homiletics: The Effectiveness of the message

Homiletics - The methodology of sermon structure.

Homiletics is just a big word to describe a process of arranging the elements of your message to achieve **maximum effectiveness**.

You may have a great message but unless it is communicated in a way that can be clearly understood, it may not reach its intended audience.

*Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer **plainly** on tablets, so that a runner can **carry the correct message** to others.*

Habakkuk 2:2

*⁸ For if the trumpet gives an **uncertain sound**, who shall prepare himself to the battle?*

*⁹ So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue **words easy to be understood**, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.*

1Corinthians 14:8-9

Some of you may say homiletics is unnecessary and even unbiblical. You may be tempted to say those that spoke for God in the Bible did not organize their message to fit the audience. On the contrary, all of those who spoke for God as recorded in the

Bible spoke with their audience in mind. Let's take for example the writers of the Gospels.

The Gospel of Matthew was written to a Jewish Audience. Therefore he refers to Jesus as the son of David. It also traces Jesus' human lineage back to Abraham.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham **Matthew 1:1**

The Gospel Mark was written to a Gentile/ Non-Jewish Audience. He refers to Jesus as the son of God because he hearers would not be familiar with Jewish religious history.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God **Mark 1:1**

We use homiletics all the time whether we know it or not. You would not preach a text the same at a funeral as you would at a Revival. Nor would you preach a text at a Women's conference as you would at a Men's retreat or at a Nursing home the same as you would a Youth conference, Folks, that is homiletics. The Apostle Paul stated.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 New Living Translation

¹⁹ *Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ.* ²⁰ *When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law.* ²¹ *When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.*

²² *When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to **find common ground with everyone**, doing everything I can to save some.* ²³ *I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.*

You must be able to adapt to reach your intended hearer. If you only have one gear, that may be a problem in your ministry.



Finally, let's talk about structure and style. There are numerous styles of sermon preparation and we could never cover them all in such a short amount of time. Four popular examples are:

Topical Sermons: A topical message is a sermon where a preacher uses passages to support a particular topic (i.e. How to Have Joy).

Textual Sermons: A textual message is one where a singular passage of the Bible is used (i.e. John 3:16 God's love for the world)

Narrative Preaching: One of the newer styles of preaching that focuses on taking the hearers on a journey with the speaker. The Thesis (Main point) is not even given at the beginning (Think Joel Olsteen).

Expository Sermons: An expository sermon systematically excavates the meaning of the passage. Exegesis is technical and grammatical exposition is important, a careful drawing out of the exact meaning of a passage in its original context.

There are also hybrid styles where some of these distinct styles are blended.

One of the best books on effective preaching is called “A Certain Sound of the Trumpet” by Samuel D. Proctor. He offers the following format to organize the sermon for clarity and effectiveness.

Antithesis: What is the Current Situation?

Thesis: What is the Ideal Situation?

Relevant Question: Also called the “So what” question. How is your Thesis (Main Point or Proposal) relevant to the hearer?

Synthesis: The body of the sermon (The supporting points).

Conclusion: Summation of your Thesis (Main Point or Proposal).

Let us revisit the text we used earlier in the section on Hermeneutics and view it homiletically.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

John 12:32

Antithesis: The world is reeling under the weight of humans trying to solve their own problems.

Thesis: Action is needed from Heaven that changes things on Earth for all humanity.

Relevant Question: What difference does it make that Jesus was lifted up on the cross to the world we live in today?

Point 1: The Action Taken by the Father to reach us

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that...*

Point 2: The Action Taken by the Son to save us

Hebrews 12:2 *For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross...*

Point 3: The Action needed by us to receive it

Romans 10:9 Believe on and confess Jesus...

Conclusion: Because of the atoning death of Christ on the cross, all mankind has an invitation to have a relationship with God the father through his son Jesus Christ.

Recommended Reading

