

# **How Past Worthies Preached the Gospel**

## **Part 1 – Introduction**

*And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel. Mark 16:15*

The purpose of our lecture is to remind us of the primacy and the importance of preaching the Gospel. The way that I've been asked to go about it is to bring before you some examples from the history of preaching, quoting extracts from the sermons of great preachers, showing a whole variety of styles of preaching and showing that the best preaching was personal, specific and evangelistic.

First of all we remind ourselves that preaching the Word of God is the first priority of a Gospel Church. In Matthew 18:20 we are told that, where Christ is, there is His Church, as he Himself said "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" To this Church, in virtue of His authority, he gives a great commission and responsibility saying:

*"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in to the name off the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and, lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*

Matthew 28: 18 - 20

Paul the apostle, the chief of the apostles, certainly did not misunderstand the nature of this commission when he subordinated the symbolic ordinance of baptism to the evangelical

proclamation of the Gospel, boldly declaring, *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.* 1:Cor 1: 17)

They held a very high view of the Gospel because they rightly understood that it reveals God's highest glory and provides man's highest good. As the hymn writer puts it; *In his highest work, redemption, see his glory in a blaze.*

## **The Great Confessions of Faith**

At the time of the Reformation the Protestant church, in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, carefully defined the nature and the functions of the Church as follows, for example:

John Knox in the Scots Confession of 1560 declares,

*'The notes of the true Kirk of God, we believe, confess, and avow to be - First the true preaching of the Word of God, in which God has revealed himself to us. Secondly, the right administration of the Sacraments, which must be annexed to the Word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. Lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered as God's Word prescribed, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished'.*

In the Augsburg Confession of 1530, Luther and the German Reformers defined the church to be:

*"The congregation of Saints (or general assembly of the faithful) wherein the Gospel is rightfully taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered."*

The 29th Article of the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England states:

*"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's appointment in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."*

Even though this is stated clearly in the Articles of the Church of England and though it has been the practice of many faithful men within that church it has not always been the case that she has set the chief priority to be the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. This was certainly one important issue between Puritans and Anglicans in the 17th century. The first mark of the Church and the first responsibility of the Church amongst the Puritans was always the true preaching of the Word of God.

## **Prophesying**

Another characteristic of early Puritanism that we might notice here was that known as "prophesying" which was a regular feature of church life in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1st. From about 1563 until it was prohibited in 1576. At these gatherings a number of preachers and others would come together. Sometimes only preachers were present, and sometimes larger congregations were allowed. Each preacher was given the same text and each one had to expound this text. The younger men went first and there might have been four or five men preaching on the same text at the same meeting. It was a kind of school of the prophets and the idea of it was to train men to preach. Prior to the Reformation preaching had been at a discount and there were very few preachers left in the country. All the emphasis was put on the sacraments, and on the priests and on the various ministrations of priest craft. We all know that the coming of the Reformation swept away the medieval "mystery plays" and all such dramatic performances in the churches. The Reformers themselves were great preachers Luther, was a great preacher, Calvin was a great preacher, John Knox was a great preacher,

but preachers in the main were rare. At the time of Edward VI to make up for this deficiency the Anglican Book of Homilies was issued. These were sermons which could be read by ministers who had little experience in preaching truth of God's Word. But though this was an improvement it was no substitute for real preaching, hence the Prophesyings the training ground for preachers. Queen Elizabeth 1st. objected to these meetings and they were eventually suppressed.

## **Central Pulpits**

Another way in which the Puritans emphasized the importance of preaching was that when they came to erect their own buildings for public worship they put their pulpits in the centre. Even up to Victorian times some Anglican churches in the evangelical tradition had central pulpits. For the Puritans the chief focus of attention in the worship of God was the pulpit with the open Bible resting upon it. Indeed the preaching of the Gospel was the central and climactic act of worship. The whole service progressed towards the climax. The hearing of God's Word in believing reverence and obedience was the very height of worship. The story of Daniel Rowland the famous Welsh preacher preaching in Haverford West on the text, "*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" and the congregation responding with their hallelujahs has always been to me one of the best illustrations of this fact.

(The event by the way is said to have been the inspiration for Handel's famous Hallelujah Chorus, George Frederick Handel being present on that occasion.)

The recognition that preaching is the first priority of the Christian Church is either forgotten or widely challenged today. From one point of view "worship," sometimes including many of those pre-Reformation elements such as theatricals is given priority over preaching. From the other end of the spectrum come those who

advocate the practical living of the Christian life as the best method of propagating Christian truth. In this connection the text, "*the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power,*" (1Cor. 4:20) is sometimes quoted, as if the apostle Paul had never said that the preaching of Christ crucified was and indeed is the power and wisdom of God.(1 Cor. 1:24).

### **Plain Direct Preaching (Painted words only beget painted grace)**

It is true that in the history of the Christian church preaching has sometimes degenerated into being more like the giving of a literary essays or an elocutionary display. We might quote the example of John Donne. (1571-1631)

*John Donne was one of the most popular preachers London has ever know. He was over 40 years old when he was converted. He was an aristocrat and was converted from a very worldly life. He was a poet also. His preaching style was ornate and eloquent and oratorical full of classical allusions, and often included lengthy quotations in Latin or Greek. Fashionable people turned out in large numbers to listen but it was largely because of the style of preaching and not so much the content.*

Bishop Lancelot Andrews also preached in a similar way. Richard Baxter once made this comment on the preaching of Andrews and those like him: '*When I read such a book as Bishop Andrew's sermons and such kind of preaching I felt no life in it; methought they did but play with holy things*'. Samuel Taylor Coleridge passed this judgment on the sermons of Jeremy Taylor: he described him as a '*ghost in marble*.'

The Puritans as we know believed in plain, direct, experimental, saving preaching, preaching that was simple, honest and faithful. This did not mean however that it was to be simplistic, repetitive,

predictable, or without illustration, anti-intellectual or without energy. I hope some of the following examples will give ample evidence of this.

Let me emphasize the fact that the Bible clearly teaches us that preaching is the primary task of the Church. Let me add the history of the Church clearly illustrates this fact, that the decadent periods of church history are always those periods when preaching has declined or been neglected. Those periods that we recognize as periods of Reformation or Revival have been and always will be times when preaching is renewed.

## **Foundational Principles of Preaching**

1. The supreme object of preaching is to glorify God and is the climax of worship.
2. The only power that can ultimately do the work of conviction and conversion is the Holy Spirit.
3. The one and only medium through which the Holy Spirit works is the Word of God.
4. The fourth principle, therefore is that the true desire to evangelize must come from apprehending these principles, and, therefore, from a zeal for the honour and glory of God, and a love for souls.
5. There is a constant need to be on our guard against false zeal and the use of unscriptural methods. There is also a

need to be on our guard against laziness on the one hand and despair on the other. *In due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

## **Part II – The Seven Lamps of Preaching** **(Main Part)**

The Seven Lamps of Preaching (Suggested by John Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture).

**This arrangement I hope will help us cover the ground required by the title of What the past worthies preached, How they preached, to whom they preached to whom they looked to enable them to preach etc.**

### **I. The Lamp of Truth**

The one and only method through which the Holy Spirit works is through the Word of God: We see this very plainly in the New Testament. Take for instance the sermon preached by Peter in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. He did not get up and speak about his own personal experiences but he expounded the Scriptures. His method was to open the Bible and preach what it said.

This was also the method of the Apostle Paul, '*He reasoned out of the Scriptures.*' When he dealt with the Philippian jailer we read that, '*he preached unto him Jesus Christ and the Word of the Lord.*' Or remember his words in the Second Epistle of Timothy, where he says that it is the will of God that, '*all men should be saved, and brought to a knowledge of the truth.*' The medium used by the Holy Spirit in the conversion of men and

women boys and girls is the Truth.(Lloyd Jones The Presentation of the Gospel pp. 7 and 12)

### **The Three basics Principles:**

We are not advocating that we keep rigidly to this order be these aspects must always be in our minds when preaching.

**First and foremost** we must show men their condition by nature in the sight of God. We are born in a state of condemnation; guilty in the sight of God. We all born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. Original sin.

**Secondly** we must show the enormity of sin. That does not just mean that we showed the wrongfulness of certain sins. There is nothing so vital as the distinction between sin and sins. Far too often we spend our time in calling attention to particular sins, whereas our real businesses is to convict of sin, the thing itself which destroys us, and which shows itself in the form of particular sins. Then we must call upon our hearers to confess and acknowledge their sin in the sight of God off the spigot and attachments with some they are of the men.

**Thirdly** we must go on to present the glorious and the wondrous offer of free salvation which is to be found only in Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The Presentation of the Gospel D M Lloyd Jones p. 12-13

That are other elements in presenting the Gospel and we now go on to look at the way some of the past worthies presented the Gospel, under our heading the lamp of truth, the truths presented are not in any particular significant order of progression .

**A. There is a Need to emphasis the truth of man's fallen and lost estate. We need to say why man is as he is.**

Christmas Evans - Welsh Baptist, 1766-1838)

It was said of his descriptive power in the pulpit that once when preaching on the Prodigal Son he pointed to a distant mountain as he described the father seeing him yet a great way off, upon which thousands in that vast open air service turned their heads expecting to see him coming down the mountain.

Listen to Evans preaching on the Fall and Recovery of man from Romans 5:15.

*"Let us consider, first, the corruption and condemnation of man. To find **the cause of man's corruption and condemnation**, we must go back to Eden.( **We will find the answer to why man is as he is as we turn to the opening chapters of the Bible**). The eating of the forbidden tree was the 'offence of one', in consequence of which 'many are dead' which brought 'death into the world', and all our woe.*

***This depravity is universal. Among the natural children of Adam, there is no exemption from the original taint. The whole world lieth in wickedness. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags. The corruption may vary in the degrees of development, in different persons; but the elements are in all, and their nature is everywhere the same; the same in the blooming youth, and the withered sire; and the haughty prince, and the humble peasant; in the strongest giant, and the feeblest invalid. The enemy is come in like a flood. The deluge of sin has swept the world.***

***( Add, extracts from modern writers to illustrate this. See for example William Golding's, Lord of the Flies.He has***

***uncovered in his novel the deeply rooted malice which lurks in the heart of every one of us. The basic problem of today is man, enslaved to his own self centred nature, and lust greed, jealousy, and pride which rise up within his being.***

*From the highest to the lowest, there is no health or moral soundness. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is nothing but wounds, and bruises, but putrefying sores.... **the blood sacrifices, and various purifications, of the pagans, show the hand writing of remorse upon their consciences;** proclaiming that sense of guilt, and their dread of punishment. **None of them are free from the fear which hath torment, whatever their efforts to overcome it,** and however great their boldness in the service of sin and Satan. Mene! Mene! Tekel! It is written on every human heart. Wanting! wanting! is inscribed on heathen fanes and altars; on the laws, customs, and institutions of every nation; and on the universal consciousness of mankind.*

The World's Great Sermons Vol. III p. 185-6

It would be comparatively easy to develop this theme on modern lines. There are plenty of examples of this kind of thing in the daily papers.

The Puritans could be very imaginative in that pressing home to their listeners the true state of their fallen hearts. For example take a sermon by Thomas Adams, entitled *Mystical Bedlam; or The World of Madmen*. He describes sin as a form of self destructive madness that has overtaken mankind.

His text was:

*'The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live: and after that they go to the dead.'*  
Eccles. 9: 3

*i.* He begins; The subject of this discourse is man; and what is said of man is marked in this text by the three points:- the comma, the colon and the full stop.

*( Note how clearly he breaks up the message)*

Up to the comma the text says the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil. Up to the colon the text tells us that madness is in their heart while they live. Then comes the full stop, the text tells us, that after that they go to the dead.

*ii.* So then he says, here this man's life he starts out pursuing evil, his continued course is marked by madness, his journey's end is the grave, he goes to the dead suddenly his sinful madness is put a stop to.

*( The pursuit of sin and evil leads to the grave)*

**( Man in such a state cannot be contented or happy. A fictional writer I heard a few months ago on Desert Island Discs admitted that he found it almost impossible to live in a world, as he put it, that did not make sense and ended in death. So he wrote stories and created a world in which he could live.)**

**The Main Section.... There are Many Different Types of Madmen.**

The beginning of man's race is full of evil, as if he stumbled over the threshold of life. The further he goes, the lower he goes; madness is joint tenant in his heart with life.

*( A reiteration of the same point in a different form. Man without God is on the downgrade.)*

### **The Third Section.....Death soon devours these Madmen Fleeing From God.**

In this section he gives character sketches of the inhabitants of the spiritual Bedlam. **The Epicurian**, ie. **the man who lives for selfish pleasure**, the proud, the lustful, the hypocrite, the avaricious, the usurer, the sinfully ambitious man, the drunkard, the idler, the swearer, the liar, the busybody, the flatterer, the ingrate, the envious, the contentious, the impatient, the vainglorious the follower of false religion.

*(Shows the contemptibleness and unreasonableness which characterizes sin and the dissatisfaction and misery it brings.)*

The third part describes the sinner's frantic flight from God and truth, and then when not looking to his feet, not considering the path he is treading, the life he is living, the madness he is engaging in he drops into the pit of a lost eternity.

This sermon lends itself to contemporary adaptation in a society that is madly destroying itself.

Art of Exposition. H. Jeffs p.168

Another imaginative description of mans fallen and lost condition is given in a sermon by John Howe (1630-1706) in a sermon entitled: **The Ruined Temple**.

The text is taken from Psalm 14:1 , and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:16.

*"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."*

*"Know ye not that ye are temples of the Holy Ghost?"*

**Here God once dwelt...** enough remains of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man, to show that the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; at the same time more than enough of a vicious deformity, evidences the fact that He is now retired and gone. **The lamps are extinguished, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished,** which did once shine with so heavenly brightness, and such pious fervour. **The golden candlestick is displaced and thrown away as a useless thing,** to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness. **The sacred incense,** which sent clouds of rich perfume upwards to heavenward, is exchanged for a poisonous hellish vapour; and here is, instead of the sweet savour, a stench. **The comely order of this house is turned into confusion; the beauties of holiness into noisome impurities;** the house of prayer into a den of thieves, and that of the worst and most horrid kind; for every lust is a thief, and every theft a sacrilege.

**(The wreckage of modern secular life and civilization of which the daily newspaper affords ample evidence and illustration.)**

**The noble powers which were designed and dedicated to Divine contemplation and delight are** alienated to the service of the most despicable idols, and employed unto vilest intuitions and embraces, to behold and admire lying vanities, to indulge and cherish lust and wickedness. **How have they broken down the carved work thereof,** and that to "with axes and hammers"; the noise whereof was not to be heard in building, much less in the demolishing of the sacred frame. (*Broken hearts, broken homes, broken lives, broken society.*)

**Look upon the many fragments of the curious sculpture which once adorned the palace of the great King; the relics of "common notions," the lively prints of some undefaced truth, the fair ideas of things, the yet legible precepts that relate to practice. Behold! With what accuracy the broken pieces show these to have been engraved by the finger of God, and how they now lie torn and scattered, one in this dark corner, another in that, buried in heaps of dirt and rubbish.**

a. He then goes on to describe the rebuilding of this ruined Temple.

b. He speaks of the work of the Spirit of God in the New Birth.

He speaks of the foundation of the building. "*We are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.*" Adding "*In whom all the building, fitly framed together, grow unto a holy temple in the Lord.*" 1 Cor 3:16

c. This temple is a humble and contrite heart. It is a heart that rests on Christ for salvation and lives for His glory.

p. 172 The Art of Exposition H. Jeffs

## **B. We will need to expose the personal and individual sins of Men and Women.**

Charles Bridges in his famous the Christian ministry reminds us that in preaching we preach to all sorts and conditions of men. Many and varied are the types of sinners and many and varied are the types of saints. These various types are recognized in the New Testament, Gregory the Great in his famous Regula Pastoralis identified 36 cases, Martin Bucer the

Reformer produced a similar but much better work. Bridges identifies the sensual sinner, Imitative sinner that is people who imitate and copy the opinions and modes of behaviour of other sinners, one might call them copy cat sinners,, the shrewd sinner, what Bridges means is the proud sinner who refuses to believe what his own puny intellect cannot at first understand, the ignorant and careless sinner, the self righteous sinner, or false or self deceived sinner. (See also Dr. Masters' Physician of Souls p.97)

Thomas Brooks has a sermon entitled, Hypocrites Detected and Anatomized. I am just using this sermon which was on a national theme ( Preached before the Parliament of England)to show how thoughtfully Brooks sets to work to expose the hypocrite.

***1. That of all sorts of sinners God will be most severe in His judgments against hypocrites.***

***1. Because of all sorts of sinners, hypocrites are most dangerous to human society. And hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour. Prov. 11:9 the breath of the hypocrite is poisonous, he breathes out nothing but poison. ( What sin does to society)***

***2. There is none so hardened against the Lord Jesus Christ as hypocrites are. Christ comes to the harlots hearts door, and to the wicked man's hearts door, and they opened to him, and receive him but as for the hypocrite, though Christ does knock and call, and cry out to him, yet he will not hear; nay, though he take his soul and hang it over the scorching flames of hell, and say to him Ah hypocrite! Is it good to dwell in everlasting burnings? Yet he will not yield and though he take him and show him the glory of heaven, and the happiness of sincere souls, yet he will not yield and***

*open to Christ, though he miss of heaven. And be cast into the lowest place in hell.*

**3. Because hypocrites yield the greatest assistance to Christ's grand enemy, that is, Satan**

**4. Because hypocrites are the very worst of sinners.** *A hypocrite will hold on to religious duties, and yet hold on in a resolved way of wickedness Jer. 7:9; Ezek 33:30-32. I hypocrites will sin and pray, and he will hear and swear at center I hypocrites have two hands, the one to embrace, and the other to stab with, as Joab; he has two tongues, with Judas, the one to salute Christ, and the other to betray Christ; he has two faces, with Janus, one looks backwards, and the other forward. A hypocrite has two hearts with the Israelites, he can cry, " hail King Solomon, and hail King Adonijah."*

**5. Hypocrites fight against Christ with his own weapons. Will fight against God with his own gifts that he has bestowed upon them, as David fought against Goliath with his own sword.** *Sometimes hypocrites use Godliness is to run away from Godliness. Hypocritical Godliness to avoid the true Godliness. A clever man may use his gift of cleverness to argue against the God who has given him the gift.*

**Brooks then goes on to describe the subtlety and deceitfulness of the hypocrites heart.**

Brooks Vol VI p. 371

**C. Many examples could be given of sermons directed to particular types of unbelieving individual.**

Take this example from Whitfield Sermon *The One Thing Needful*. (i.e. Their salvation.)

*"Let me address those that are entirely unconcerned about the one thing needful."*

*Brethren, I have been stating the case at large, and **now I appealed to your consciences, are these things so, or are they not?** God and your own hearts best know for what the care of your soul is neglected; but be it what you will, the difference between one grain of sand and another is not great, when it comes to be weighed against a talent of gold whatever it is, you had need to examine it carefully. **You have need to view that commodity on all sides, of which you do in effect say, for this will I sell my soul; for this will I give up heaven and venture hell,** be heaven and hell whatever they may. In the name of God, brethren, **is this the part of a man, (Is this the way a thinking man should respond)** of a rational creature -- to go on with your eyes open towards the pit of eternal ruin, because there are a few bright flowers in the way; or **what if you should shut your eyes, will that prevent your fall? It signifies little to say I will not think of these things, I will not consider them:***

*(Are you closing your eyes to reality)*

*God has said "in the last days they shall consider it perfectly," (Jeremiah 23:20). Pardon my plainness if it was a fable or tale I would endeavour to amuse you with words, but I cannot do it where your souls are at stake.*

***B "I would apply my words to all, who are in some sense, convinced of the importance of their souls, and yet are inclined to defer that care for them a little longer, which, in the general, they see to be necessary.***

***I know, that you that are younger are under a peculiar temptations to do this; Methinks, if there were the least***

degree of uncertainty, the importance is to weighty to put matters to the venture. **But here the uncertainty is great and apparent. You must shortly know that there are critical seasons of life for managing the concerns of it, which are of such a nature, but it once lost, they may never return; here is a critical season; " now is the accepted time now is the day of salvation,"(II Cor 6:2)."**

Choice Portions from Whitfield pp. 258, 259

#### **D.The Truth about God's Perfect Nature and Holiness.**

Here we could mention Charnock's sermons on the Attributes of God. See also Jonathan Edwards famous Sermon, *Sinner's in the Hands of an Angry God*. 'Their foot shall slide in due season.' *Duet 32:35*

#### **E.The Truth in respect of the Mercy and Grace of Christ.**

While we speak of the terror of the Lord we must also speak of His mercy.

*A Christian preacher will always preach Christ. The special work of our air share ministry is to lay open Christ, to hold up the tapestry and unfold the mysteries of Christ. Let us labour therefore to be always speaking somewhat about Christ, or tending that way. When we speak of the law, let it drive us to Christ; when of moral duties, let them teach us to walk worthy of Christ. Christ, or something tending to Christ, should be our theme, and mark to aim at. "*

Sibbe's quoted in introduction to Spurgeon's *Saint and his Saviour*.

We will note also these remarks from Spurgeon in a

remarkable early sermon of Spurgeon's not printed until included in the 1898 volume of sermons p.154.

*Nothing can so strongly lead a man to come to God as a sense of pardoned sin: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44: 22.*

*Enthusiastic divines have thought that men were to be brought to virtue by the hissings of the boiling cauldron; they have imagined that, by beating the hell -- drum in the ears of men, they should make them believe the Gospel; that, by the terrific sights and sounds of Sinai's mountain they should drive men to Calvary. They have preached perpetually, "do this, and thou art dammed." In their preaching, there preponderates a voice horrible and terrifying; if you listen to them, you might think that you sat near the mouth of the pit, and heard the "dismal moans and sullen groans," and all the shrieks of the tortured ones in perdition.*

*I sometimes preach, "the terror of the Lord," as Paul did when he said "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" but I do it as did the apostle, to bring them to a sense of their sins. The way to bring men to Jesus, to give them peace, to give them joy, to give them salvation through Christ, is, by God the Spirit's assistance, to preach Christ, -- to preach a full, free, perfect pardon.*

*Oh, how little there is of preaching Jesus Christ! We do not preach enough about his glorious name. Some preach dry doctrines; but there is not the unction of the Holy One revealing the fullness and preciousness of the Lord Jesus. There is plenty off "do this, add live," but not enough off "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*

*You have no doubt that the old figure, borrowed from John Bunyan, all of a certain army that was inside the city, and which*

was attacked by another host. The king outside said, "give up the city directly, all I'll hang everyman of you." "Nay," said they, "we will fight to the death and we will never give up." "I will burn your city," said he, "and utterly destroy it, and raze it to the ground, and slay your wives and children." "I will wholly cut off the race, and exterminate you." "Ah they said, "then we will fight till we die ; we will never open the doors." Seeing that threats were of no avail, he sent another message, "If you will only open your gates, and come out to me, I will let you go away, bag and baggage; I will give all of you your lives and liberty; and what is more, I will let you have your lands again on a small tribute and you shall be my servants and friends for ever." "Straightway," say is the parable, "they unbarred the gates, and came tumbling out to the monarch directly." That is the way, by the Spirit's help, to get a sinner to come in penitence to Jesus, and tell him that the Lord says this, "by the blotted out, as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Come alone, beloved! Why are you afraid of Jesus Christ? He says, "return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Come alone, brother, to the Lord Jesus, if thou art a sinner. I speak to that long who feels himself to be a lost and guilty one. Come with me to Jesus, who has blotted out by transgressions, as a thick cloud, and as a cloud, thy sins; and he has redeemed thee. "Oh!" says one , "I dare not come in; he will frown upon me." Come and try Him. He saves he has forgiven you; come you in at the door, and you will find it is true that Christ has forgiven you. Methinks I see you standing and looking at your self, and saying, "Oh! Once I know worse than 10,000 fools to be afraid to come in, -- to be afraid to trust Him, when he had pardoned me before hand? Was I know worse than ignorance, to stand back from my best Friend, as if He had been a lion, -- to stock away from the dear Jesus who had purchased my ransom, as if he were my foe? One would think, dear friends, when you are so loth to come to Christ, that you were coming to receive

*condemnation instead of coming to be saved. Men come unwillingly to execution; and must they come unwillingly to Christ as they do to the slaughter? You think in some angry judge; you have bad ideas of my sweet Jesus, or else you would not keep away from Him when He is continually saying, "return unto Me," "returned unto Me;" but you would so love Him, and rejoice in Him, that you would feel the greatest pleasure in the world in coming to Him."*

Spurgeon's Sermons 1898 p. 154-155

## **F. Still under the same heading of Truth... Preaching the Truth in answer to popular objections to the Christian Faith and exposing the thread-bear poverty of anti-Christian Philosophies**

A second element for which I think today there is a place in our evangelistic preaching sermons is that of dealing with popular objections to the Christian faith and those which expose the thread-bear and inadequate nature of some current philosophies of life. One example of this is taken from Carl F.H. Henry, (Note latter to become one of the leaders of the New Evangelical Movement, we do not concur with the direction this movement is going), however this early sermon of Henry's has something to teach us on showing Christ to be the answer to our disintegrating society. It is based on the first part of John's Gospel Chapter I

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

From this verse we derive the answer to the question, What is

the true religion, what is the answer to the riddle of life, where can we find pardon and forgiveness, he shows the failure of human systems including science and politics to answer such questions. He derides modern man for sinfully turning his back on the only answer to the human predicament.

*"Once the West knew all this -- that Jesus Christ is the key to the nature of the world and man, the key to our moral predicament and to the religious quest, the key to the whole sweep of historical events. In her finest hour, the West recognized that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord, and in this commitment found the rational and ethical integration of all of life's experiences. The theologian, the scientist, the moral philosopher and the historian travelled the same road; they referred to the yearnings of the soul the secrets of nature, the proddings of conscience, and the pattern of history to one and the same principle, indeed, to the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Western culture found its unity and its elevation from paganism in the recognition of the eternal Logos become incarnate - the key to the universe, the key to nature and to history."*

Best Sermons 1962 p.116

### **G. Preaching the Truth of why Man is as He Is from a slightly different angle.**

An older sermon I often have in mind in regard to evangelistic sermons is James Stalker's, Christ and the wants of humanity. Based on I Cor. 1:30 It can be found in his book of sermons entitled *The Four Men*.

*"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*

In this sermon Stalker indicates that there are basic needs in the hearts of all men: that is the need for wisdom I need to know what man is? what life is? etc. the Gospel alone can answer man's need for this basic wisdom. The need for righteousness: that is the need for justice. The Gospel answers the great question, of how God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. How a man can be right with God. Sanctification the answer to the question how can I live a holy life? Finally the need for redemption, how can I be saved from guilt and shame, how can I be saved from the destructive and corrupting power of death. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is of course the answer to all these fundamental questions and needs. ( The Four Men James Stalker. p.3..)

Others have seen the fundamental need of man in terms of the need for love to be loved and to love, the need for purpose, the need for understanding, the need for forgiveness.

## **H. Preaching the Truth.. Doctrinal Sermons**

. We will need to preach doctrinal Sermons. A lost generation as well as the people of God need to be taught the great doctrines of the Faith. We must not shy away from doctrinal sermon because we think that they will be too heavy, and we certainly must not make doctrinal sermons heavy, Christian truth is truth on fire.

### **Redemption**

**Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield's sermons** were often intended for college students and can therefore, be quiet demanding, but take this introduction on the theme of The Redeemer and Redemption.

*There is no one of the titles of Christ which is more precious to Christian hearts than "Redeemer." There are others, it is true, which are more often on the lips of Christians. The acknowledgments of our submission are Christ is our Lord, the recognition of what we owe to him as our Saviour,- these things, naturally, are most frequently expressed in the names we call him by. "Redeemer," however, is a title of more intimate revelation than either "Lord" or "Saviour." It gives expression not merely to our sense that we have received salvation from him, but also to our appreciation of what it cost him to procure this salvation for us. It is the name specifically of the Christ of the cross. Whenever we pronounce it, the cross is placarded before our eyes and our hearts are filled with loving remembrance not only that Christ has given us salvation, but that he has paid a mighty price for it.*

*It is a name, therefore, which is charged with deep emotion, and is to be found particularly in the language of devotion Christian song is vocal with it. How it appears in Christian song, we may see at once from old William Dunbar's invocation, "My King, my Lord, and my Redeemer sweet." Or from Christina Rossetti's.*

*Up the hill of sorrows  
Thou all alone,  
Jesus, man's Redeemer,  
Climbed to a throne.*

*He then goes on to quote an impressive array of well-known hymns sung great truth about our Redeemer in the redemption he has **won for his people.***

The Person and Work of Christ. p.325

**Certainly none could preach on the the great doctrines of justification by faith alone, or the doctrine of the**

## **atonement, or the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ like C. H. Spurgeon.**

Take for example his sermon entitled Faith's Sure Foundation. The text is taken from I Peter 2:6 '*He that believeth shall not be confounded.*'

It basically after the introduction has three simple headings.

1. **The foundation of the believers faith**, in other words, what is it that I'm supposed to believe in order to be saved? Answer I must believe on Him.

As God's appointed Saviour of men.

As the divine Son of God and perfect man in one Person.

2. As the one who has done all that is necessary for our redemption.

Read from p. 460 Vol XXIV 1878.

3 .As the one who ever lives to support us in the faith and bring us safe at last to heaven.

4. The Manner of Believing. What does it mean to believe in Him for salvation?

Cont. pp 461...

**I. Another important element of the truth of course which must be proclaimed is the message of repentance and free salvation which is to be found only in Jesus Christ and him crucified.** I only touch on this here as we are going to look more closely at method of Gospel preaching in the next part of the lecture. We must show that He only can remove the guilt and

power of sin; that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, bore "our sins His own body on the tree," and that it is only as we call upon Him to be our Saviour that we are made right with God, and able to live a life that is well pleasing in His sight.

**As we speak of the origin of man so we need to preach on the final destiny of man and all the great doctrines of the faith. See, Samuel Davies on the General Resurrection page 199 Great Sermons of the World. See also Alexander Whyte's sermon on The Cross.**

*The cross of Christ is "my Gospel," Paul proudly and constantly claims, in the face of all comers. The Cross of Christ, he declares, is the one and the only Gospel that he preaches that he always preaches, and that he alone. The Cross of Christ was profitable to Paul for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: and nothing else was of any real interest or any real profit to Paul. The Cross of Christ was the alpha and the omega, the beginning, in the middle, in the end, of all Paul's preaching. Paul drew all his doctrines, and all his instructions, and all his reproofs, out of the Cross of Christ. He drew his profound and poignant doctrines of the sinfulness of sin, and the consequent misery of man, out of the Cross of Christ. He saw and he felt all that in himself, and in the whole world; but the cross of Christ gave a new profundity, and a new poignancy, to all that to him. He drew his incomparably magnificent doctrines of the grace of God and the love of Christ out of the Cross of Christ: those doctrines of his in the preaching of which he bursts out to do such rapturous doxologies. The whole of the life of faith also, in all its manifoldness, and in all its universality, and his own full assurance of everlasting life, -- all that, and much more than all that, Paul, by his splendid genius, and it's all so splendidly sanctified and inspired, drew out to the Cross of Christ. Take away the Cross of Christ from Paul, and he is as weak as any other man. Paul has nothing left to preach if you take away from him the Cross of Christ. His mouth is shut. His pulpit is in ruins.*

*His arm is broken. He is of all men most miserable. But let God revealed the Cross of Christ in all, and, straightway, he can both do, and endure, all things. Once revealed the Cross of Christ in Paul, and you thereby lay a life long necessity upon him. Yea, woe is unto him, ever after, if he preaches not the Gospel of the Cross of Christ.*

Bible Characters Stephen-Timothy p.138

### **The Preaching of God's Word should bring Light and Truth**

The preaching of God's Word should bring light and truth it should be instructive. The great French preacher Dupanloup said to preachers in his day, ***Vos estis lux mundi***. *How grand a thing that its gentleman, and how useful it is to meditate upon it! Being then ministers of the light, you ought, then to enlighten by your word. That is your mission. For what is it but a word which enlightens, which carries light into the mind? Preach instructively, and I call instructive preaching that which is definite and precise, exact and complete.*

### **Preach the central doctrines**

And we can add preach the great central doctrines, the great themes of life and death of creation, the Fall, redemption, atonement, being born again, and justification and sanctification.

*The themes of preaching.... they should be great themes..... these are many. They'll such as move the feelings. The great questions which have agitated the world.... which agitate our own hearts... which we should like to have settled before we die... which we should ask an apostle about if he were here. The use of the general Scripture truths, what great mountains are in geography. Some anxious to avoid hackneyed topics*

*omit the greatest. Just as if we should describe Switzerland and omit the Alps. Some ministers preach 20 years, and it never preach on judgment, hell, the crucifixion, or the essence of saving faith.... no on those great themes which in all ages affect children, and affect the common mind, such as the Deluge, the sacrifice intended up Isaac, the death of Absalom, the parable of Lazarus. The Methodists consequently pick out these striking themes, and herein gain a just advantage over us.*

Thoughts on Preaching W .Alexander p. 7

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## **II. The Lamp of Sympathy or the Pleading note in Preaching**

Every preacher is an apostle of truth, and no man has any right to stand in the pulpit unless he has the strongest possible conviction that he has not merely something true to tell the people, but a truth of the utmost importance that he is longing to make known.

Perhaps the most well known examples of this are those very familiar words of Evangelist in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress note them also as an example of this utter earnestness.

*"Then said evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, do you see yonder wicket gate? The man said, no. Then said the other, do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think, I do. Then said evangelist, keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto: so shalt thou see the gate."*

One can feel the sincerity and earnestness of Bunyan in these words.

Or another example. Then said the *Interpreter*, Come in I will shew thee that which will be profitable to thee....he had him into a private room, and bid his man open a door: the which when it was done, Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hang up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it. He had eyes lift up to heaven, the best of Books in his hand, the Law of Truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back; he stood as if he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head. Then said Christian, what means this?

*.Interpreter.* The man whose picture this is is one of a thousand; he can beget children, travail in birth with children, and nurse them himself when they are born. And whereas Thou seest him with his eyes lift up to heaven, the best of Books in his hand, and the Law of Truth writ on his lips: it is to shew thee, that his work it is to know and unfold dark things to sinners even as also thou seest him stand as if he pleaded with men.

Have we the same confidence in the truth and power of the Gospel that would enable us to put an entry in our diary of the type John Wesley often put in his journal ie. *Went to the condemned felons in Newgate, and preached to them free salvation.* Do we have the same confidence in the truth of the Gospel that will stand a test like that? Is there anything in our Gospel for felons in the condemned cell?

John Newton once said: "*I was once a wild thing on the coast of Africa, but the Lord caught me and tamed me, and now folks come to see me as they go to see the Lions in the Tower.*"

As if to say to you doubt that the Lord can convert the hardest sinner look at me I'm living proof that He can.

This was the same confidence that the apostle Paul had in the truth of the Gospel.

*“Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners... and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”*

Sense the earnestness and sympathy of George Whitfield as he here preaches on repentance:

*“Look back into your lives, called to mind thy sins, as many as possible thou canst, the sins of thy youth, as well as of thy riper years. See how you have departed from a gracious Father, and wandered in the way of wickedness, in which you have lost your selves, the favour of God, the comforts of his Spirit, and the peace of your own consciences. Then go and beg pardon of the Lord, through the blood of the Lamb, for the evil thou hast committed, and for the good thou hast omitted. Consider, likewise, the heinousness of thy sins; see what very aggravating circumstances thy sins are attended with, how you have abused the patience of God, which should have led you to repentance; and when thou findest thy heart hard, beg of God to soften it, cried mightily unto him, and he will take away thy stony heart and give thee a heart of flesh.”*

*Resolve to leave all thy sinful lusts and pleasures: renounce, forsake, and bewail thy old sinful course of life, serve God in holiness and righteousness all the remaining part of life. If you lament bewailed past sins and do not forsake them, your repentance is in vain; you are mocking God, and deceiving your own soul. You must put off the old man, with his deeds, before you can put on the new man, Christ Jesus.”*

*Resolve to cast thyself at the feet of Christ in subjection to him, and throw myself into the arms of Christ for salvation by him.*

*Consider, my dear Reverend, and many invitations he has given you to come on to him, to be saved by him. God has "laid on him the iniquity of us all"( Isa. 53:6). Oh let me prevail with you, above all things, to make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ, resigned your selves unto him, take him, oh take him up on his own terms; and whoever thou art, however great a sinner thou hast been."*

Great Sermons of the World pp. 180, 182. I

Find a similar sort of thing in Wesley, for example as he preaches here on Justification by Faith. ( *Note also a good sermon ending here*) Having answered such questions as; what justification is; who are they that are justified? And on what terms are they justified? He brings his sermon to an end with these words: note the challenge to respond.

*Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these words! Thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner! I charge thee before God the Judge of all, go straight unto him, with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thy own soul by pleading thy righteousness, more or less. Go as as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and thou shalt then find favour in his sight and know that he justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling: as an undone, helpless, damned sinner. Thus look unto Jesus! There is the Lamb of God: who taketh away thy sins! Plead thou no works, no righteousness of my thine own! No humility, contrition, sincerity! In no wise. That were, in very deed, to deny the Lord that brought thee. No: plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful soul. Who art thou that now seest and feelest thine inward and outward ungodliness. Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord! Thou who feelest thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance His glory; the glory of his free grace justifying the ungodly and him that worketh not. Oh come quickly! Believe in the*

*Lord Jesus, and thou even thou, art reconciled to God.*

John Wesley's Forty Four Sermons p. 61

John Rogers, Dedham in Essex was one of the most forceful and awakening at preaches of his age. His complete self forgetfulness in the pulpit led him into occasional extremes turbulent, tempestuous and even desperate delivery (His packed congregations never forgot the occasion when he imitated the screams of the souls in Hell!), but the solid substance of his material and the transparent earnestness of his manner rescued his preaching from the merely eccentric.

John Rogers, though a rugged preacher, was a great soul - winner and reduced many, including, on one unforgettable occasion, the great Thomas Goodwin (then a young man) to helpless tears of repentance and gratitude toward God.

In latter years Goodwin was to tell a story about Rogers to the renowned John Howe. Howe recorded the story as follows:

*Mr. Rogers was on the subject of the Scriptures. And in that sermon falls into an expostulation with the people about their neglect of the Bible.... He personates God to the people telling them, Well, I have trusted you so long with my Bible: you have slighted it; it lies in such and such a house all covered with dust and cobwebs. You care not to look at it. Do you use my Bible so? Well you shall have my Bible no longer. And he takes up the Bible from its cushion and seemed as if he was going away with it and carrying it from them; but immediately he turns again personates the people to God, falls down on his knees, cries and pleads most earnestly, "Lord whatsoever thou dost to us take not thy Bible*

*from us; kill our children, burn our houses, destroyed our goods; only spare us thy Bible, only take not away thy Bible," And then he personates God again to the people, "Say you so? Well, I will try you a little longer; and here is my Bible for you, I will see how you use it, whether you will love it more, whether you will value it more, whether you will observe it more, whether you will practice it more and live more according to it."*

Howe continues to recall the effect of all this:

*"By these actions he put all the congregation into so strange a posture that he never saw any congregation in his life; the place was a mere Bochim the people generally deluged with their own tears; and he told me that himself when he got out and was to take horse to be gone was fain to hang a quarter of an hour upon the neck of his horse weeping, before he had the power to mount, so strange impression was that upon him and generally upon the people upon having been thus expostulated with for neglect of the Bible."*

No one who is intimate with the sermons of the Puritan divines needs to be protected from the oft -- recurring charge that they were fanatical and "abandoned" in their preaching, but we do well to remember, on the other hand, but the absence of emotion and coldness in delivery was no mark of their pulpits. Rogers is singular by any standards, yet he was revealing a fervour and an imaginativeness that was not at all untypical of his fellow Puritans in the pulpit.

The Genius of Puritanism p.22

Preaching must be rich in tenderness. The people always demanded pathos in their preachers. Sympathy makes a preacher to be "*King in Jerusalem*." The people have a hard battle to fight, every one of them. They have tragedies within and without.

When Andrew Bonar told Robert Murray McCheyne he had been preaching on "Eternal Punishment," he asked significantly, "*did you preach it tenderly?*" Our tenderness brings the Gospel home to men far more surely than our strongest arguments.

See Popular preaching Dinsdale Young p. 45 ,46

We might consider a striking example of this in the ministry of our Lord, when we read of the woman taken in adultery in John 7: 8 and 8:2. There, when the woman is surrounded, by her self - righteous accusers, from Christ the lamp of sympathy shines with dazzling brightness, but when the woman and he are left alone there is no making light of her guilt on his part, and there is a stern note of warning in the command "*go, and sin no more.*"

For an example of this sympathetic preaching, let me refer to **The Redeemer's Tears over Lost Souls**. John Howe (1630 – 1705).

Howe is preaching on Luke 19:41 - 42. Christ's tears over Jerusalem.

He begins by pointing out that Christ's sympathy here is the pattern of the preacher's sympathy and fellow feeling that should be evident for those to whom he brings God's Word.

1. Christ's tears says Howe signified the real depth and greatness of misery into which sin brings men. The Son of God did not weep vain tears, or for a light matter; nor did he for himself either spend his own or desire the profusion of others tears. "Weep not for me, oh daughters of Jerusalem." He knows the value of souls, the

weight of guilt, and how low it will press and sink them; the severity of God's justice, the power of his anger, and what the fearful effects of them will be when they finally fall. If thou understandest not these things thyself, believe him that did. At least believe his tears.

2. They signified the sincerity of his love and pity, the truth and tenderness of his compassion. Canst thou think his tears deceitful, his who never knew guile? And remember that he who shed tears for you, from the same fountain of love and mercy, shed blood, too. Consider what love and compassion thou art sinning against, what mercy thou spurnest. If thou perish, is under such guilt is the devils themselves are not liable to, who never had a Redeemer bleeding for them, nor, but that we ever find, weeping over them.

3. They show the remedilessness of thy case, if thou persist in in penitence and unbelief till the things of thy peace be quite hid from thine eyes

4. They signified how very intent he is to save souls and how gladly he would save thine, if yet thou wilt accept of mercy while it may be had.

The love that wept over them who were lost, how will it glory in them who are saved. And thou also, instead of being involved with the unreconciled sinners of the old Jerusalem, should be enrolled among the glorious citizens of the new, and triumph together with them in eternal glory.

**Take another example this time from Richard Alleine.**

*Will you be persuaded, will you be prevailed upon, thus to prepare and bring over your hearts to the Lord? Thus to preserve and keep them faithful to him? And so trust to his faithfulness? Might*

*I prevail with you in this, I had done my work and having puts you thus into safe custody should there be bold to leave you in this confidence, that you should be thenceforth "all kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation."*

Meet the Puritans p. 29

On a general note from time to time it doesn't do any harm to gently remind our listeners that we too ourselves often need sympathy. I think perhaps it might be thought of ministers at times that they have such a walk with God that they'll be on the common pressures and anxieties and despondencies of this life.

**R. W. Dale of Birmingham rarely used illustrations in his preaching** and certainly hardly ever made personal references. He did however give this one on the power of a little word kindly spoke.

*"There are times when the most buoyant sink into despondency, when a grey, chilly mist creeps over the soul of those who have the largest happiness in the service of God, and when they feel as if all their strength has gone. Not very long ago -- if I may venture once more to speak of myself -- one of these evil movements was upon me; but as I was passing along one of the streets of Birmingham, a poor but decently dressed woman, laden with parcels, stopped me and said "God bless you, Dr. Dale!" Her face was unknown to me. I said "thank you, but what is your name?" "Never mind my name," she answered; "but if you could only know how you have made me feel hundreds of times, and what a happy home you have given me! God bless you!" The mists broke, the sunlight came, I breathed the free air of the mountains of God."*

Fellowship with Christ p. 301

**J. C Ryle makes this comment about Whitefield's preaching:**

*One more feature in Whitefield's preaching deserves special notice; and that is, the immense amounts of pathos and feeling which it always contained. It was no uncommon thing with him to weep profusely in the pulpit. Cornelius Winter, who often accompanied him in his latter journeys, went so far as to say that he hardly ever knew him get through a sermon without some tears. Of all the ingredients of his success in preaching, none, I suspect, was so powerful as this. It awakened affections and touched secret springs in men, which no amount of reasoning and demonstration could have moved. It smoothed down the prejudices which many had conceived against him. They could not hate the man who wept so much over their souls. "I came to hear you," said one to him, "with my pocket full of stones, intending to break your head: but your sermon got the better off me, and broke my heart." Once become satisfied that a man loves you, and you listen gladly to anything he has to say."*

Select Sermons of George Whitfield Ed. J.C. Ryle p. 27

I am not here advocating emotional manipulation in preaching, we may preach with feeling and pathos without shedding any outward tears. Preachers are very different in temperament, compare Jonathan Edwards closely reasoned sermons, every word read, the preacher standing motionless with candle and manuscript in hand. But genuine love for those to whom we preach and genuine love for the Lord whose ambassadors we are; is essential.

**Let me hear quote Dupanloup again.** He speaks about fishermen who cast their lines where there are no fish on sand banks or even on the opposite shore. Then he goes on to say;

*To preach without seeking an entrance into souls, without speaking directly to them, without seeking to understand the faults which possess them, the temptations from which they are suffering, and which they complain about, is to expect, and to deserve no response from them.*

**Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones** used to like to observe people, we need to know people before we can preach effectively, sympathetically and with understanding to them. One way of knowing people is to know our own hearts; we always as it were need to be preaching to ourselves. The trials and temptations the ups and downs of life that we go through we may be sure other people are experiencing as well, often to a far greater degree. Campbell Morgan said; "*My people, are my sermon notes.*"

**Another preacher illustrated the same point like this:**

Paul had a thorn in the flesh. A lover of gramophone records once made a little experiment with a friend. He said, "*I'm going to play the same record twice. Listen carefully and tell me which rendering you prefer.*" When the two were played over the friend said quite positively "*I prefer the second playing. It was, sweeter. What was the difference?*"

"Just this," came the answer. "The first time I played it with a needle..... the second time with a thorn."

W.E. Sangster The Craft of Sermon Illustration p. 5

**Lionel B. Fletcher** the well known Congegationalist at the

**first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century wrote;**

*“In it all let great tenderness runs through the severest messages. A scolding preacher, a fault finder, is never effective. A man who gets a grievance and takes it into the pulpit with him, had better get a delivery van and move his furniture elsewhere. There are people in every congregation who have as much to put up with as the minister, and his duty is to forget himself in thinking of them. There is no need for softness or sickly sentiment, but tenderness is strength shot through with love.”*

The Effective Evangelist p. 216

**Or look again at the example of Joseph Alleine** the famous author of *The Alarm to the Unconverted*. It has been said of him: *“Never did the evangel of Jesus Christ burn more fervently in any English heart.”*

Ian Murray quoted in Meet the Puritans p. 25

He is preaching to them from his prison cell.

*You are a people much upon my heart, whose welfare is the matter of my continual prayers, care, and study. And oh that I knew how to do you good! How it pities me to think how so many of you should remain in your sins, after so many and so long endeavours to convert you and bring you in! Once more, oh beloved, one hear the call of the most High God unto you. The prison preaches to you the same doctrine the pulpit did (Alleine was imprisoned for the Gospels sake), hear oh people hear the Lord of life and glory offers you all mercy, and peace, and blessedness. Oh why should you die? Whosoever will let him take of the waters of life freely. My soul yearns for you. Ah that I did but know what arguments to use with you; who shall*

*choose my words for me that I may prevail with sinners not to reject their own mercy? How shall I get within them? How shall I reach them? Oh, that I did but know words that would pierce them! Oh that I could get between their sins and them.*

Ibid p. 25

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### **III. The Lamp of Courage**

We should all be better preachers said one, (Edward G Nightingale) if we read Ezekiel 3: 16 -- 21, once a month.

I suppose you're all wondering what Ezekiel 3:16 - 21 says.

It say's:

*"And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me.*

*When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

*Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; thou hast delivered thy soul.*

*Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die*

*in sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

*Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered by soul."*

Many of the accounts of the courage of faithful preachers. Many of these can be found in the series Wesley's Veterans or CH Cruickshank's History of Methodism in Ireland.

*Thence the missionaries went to Loughrea, and as they approached their destination, with the intention of preaching in the market, Ouseley suddenly reined up his horse, and said, "I feel as if the atmosphere were crowded with devils. We'll be attacked in the town." Before entering, he therefore rode to the house of a magistrate to ask for protection, the gentleman was not at home meeting a sergeant in the Army, he requested him to accompany them to the street, which was so crowded that they were obliged to ride single file. A hideous yell soon arose, which in Irish mob means blood; and execrations followed by missiles, were hurled against the missionaries. At length the guard -- house was reached and Ousley halted, and faced the crowd they pelted him with what ever came to hand, till the sentry, being struck with a big cabbage, levelled his musket, and the crowd flinched. The fellow who hit the soldier was cold, and the missionaries rode off; the mob attacked the guard - house, and would have torn it down had not their comrade been liberated.*

*In Westport while Ouseley addressed the crowd in the market, he was assailed by a priest named Judge who also instigated another man to strike the missionary with a heard black peat, rendered all the more hurtful being frozen, which almost knocked them down, leaving a severe bruise on the side of his face. All the rest of the people, however, were quiet if not friendly.*

Vol IV p 84 – 85

Martin Luther said:

*"When at the last day we shall live again, we shall blush with shame, and say to ourselves, Fie on thee, in that thou hast not be more courageous, bold and strong to believe in Christ, and to endure all manner of persecutions, seeing his glory is so great."*

Precepts for Preachers p. 213

A famous pictorial representation of fearlessness in preaching is painting by Sir David Wilkie, entitled *John Knox Preaching before the Lords of the Congregation*. The scene depicted took place in the month of June, 1559, during the Regency of Mary of Guise, in the parish church of St. Andrew, Fifeshire. They're a fearless reformer, having just arrived in Geneva, after an exile of 13 years, appeared in the pulpit, in defiance of a threat of assassination, and while an army in the field watching the movements of his party. He preaches before many of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of that day. But such was the influence of the sermon that the provost, bailey's, and inhabitants unanimously agreed to set up the Reformed worship in the town. It is said fourteen priest were converted by that sermon.

See also p. 214 218 211 168 Precepts for Preachers W. Grffiths

**George Whitefield had a favourite hymn which helped him not to be afraid in the face of hostile opposition:**

We need the same kind of courage in our day, courage to hold fast that which is good and courage to defy that which is evil; courage to speak out the Gospel plainly in spite of people's sneers or contempt or open hostility.

Shall I for fear of feeble man,  
The Spirit's course in me restrain?  
Or undismayed, in deed or word  
Be a true witness for my Lord?

Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I  
Conceal the Word of God most High?  
How then before thee shall I dare  
To stand, or how thine anger bear?

Shall I to soothe the unholy throng  
Soften Thy truths, or smooth my tongue,  
To gain earths gilded toys or flee  
The cross, endured, my God, by Thee.

The love of Christ doth me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the open grave.

For this let men revile my name,  
No cross I shun, I fear no shame  
All hail, reproach, and welcome pain  
Only thy terrors Lord restrain.

Charles Wesley

Or we might remember the example of Latimer preaching before Henry VIII in the king's most sullen and bitter days, Latimer, *Oh Latimer remember, that thou art before the King of England. And*

*Latimer Oh Latimer remember that thou art before the King of Kings.*

Also Samuel Davies before George II

I think some good examples of everyday courageous preaching can be found in J. C. Ryle's work entitled, *The New Birth*. Here he asks a series of searching questions, these questions form the titles of his sermons. One is on Genesis 3:9, *Where Art Thou?* Based on the question of God to Adam and Eve after the first sin, and he goes on to ask his listeners such questions as "*Where are you in the sight of God?*"

*We live in strange times. The world seems to be getting old and shaking. The shadows are long drawn. The evening appears to be coming on the night will soon be upon us, when no man can work. Oh, that we would consider our ways. Oh, that each would ask himself the question .Where am I? Where am I going? What am I? What will be the end of my present course? What is the hope of my soul?*

p. 68

Other sermons are entitled, *Are you Regenerate? Do you pray? Are you Wheat or Chaff? Are you an Heir of Heaven.* These titles would probably need to be modernized but the examples of the clear and direct preaching of former generations.

When Hugh Latimer preached before Henry VIII

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## IV The Lamp of Humility

Of John Bradford it was said," *He was a master of speech, but he had learned not to speak what he could speak, but what his hearers could hear.*" Aim low if you mean to hit your mark' that is the speakers first law. At the same time do not do what some moderns do and insult their hearers intelligence.

Edward Nightingale principal of the Methodist Bible College in Abadan, made this comment to his students back in the 1920's.

*"There is probably no defect so damaging to a preachers work as bumptiousness, arrogance, pride, complacency, self-satisfaction, or whatever name we choose to describe the effect upon a man's bearing of a wrong idea of his own importance. Paul spoke of himself as least of all saints; can we do that sincerely? Yet Paul knew how to assert himself when the interests of Christ's kingdom demanded it."*

As an example of humility and as we might say simplicity at its best (I think there is a great difference between being simplistic and being simple), let me quote from a volume entitled, Modern Minor Prophets, it dates from the early part of the 20th century and is a collection of sermons preached by itinerant preachers, lay preachers, local preachers: call them what you will,

Listen to this sermon outline of Mr J. R. Crookes of Sheffield, on, Proverbs 3:6 "*in all thy ways acknowledge him.*" p129

1. First point, Acknowledge our need of Him in Salvation.
2. Second point, Acknowledge Him in your Daily Location.

*"President McKinley advised the young men of America never to*

*apologize for their religion never try to be a secret disciple. The apostle John called those young men strong who had overcome the evil one. Let your strength be felt; learn to hate that which is evil. When necessary, speak out, straight and clear; but use discretion. There are many times when silence is to be preferred. It may be that there are those needed, deep down in his ops that is a longing for a better life; even now they're not far from the kingdom, your life is being watched; a word in season may win them for Jesus Christ."*

3. Third point, Acknowledge Him in your Determination to Succeed.

The question has sometimes been asked whether ambition is a vice or a virtue? Much may be said for and against; nevertheless, it is true that every young man should seek to make most of his life. It is the bounden duty of every Christian young man to make the utmost of his gifts and opportunities. Why should high and exalted positions be filled by men who were unprincipled and unscrupulous, men who neither fear God nor regard man? Let every Christian young man, for the sake of his Master and for the sake of his fellows, rise to the full height of his privileges and advantages, and seek to fit himself for a position where he may influence others for good; but be sure this is your chief purpose. I emphasize this because selfishness is the characteristics in this age and further because if that be his chief aim, it will save him from stooping to methods adopted by some that are mean and despicable.....

Further, never sacrifice principle for the sake of expediency. It may cost you something. It will also put a principle that is not worth suffering for is not worth having see to it that all you do will bear investigation. Godliness first: promotion, finance, second. The man who is true to God, he fails neither his employer nor his

fellows.

2. Acknowledged Him in all your Recreations.

3. Lastly, acknowledge Him when Success and Prosperity come. In all thy ways acknowledge Him.

Anybody could understand this sermon it is full of that humility and wisdom and winsomeness that comes from a long time of walking with God and experience in life and dealing with people.

Ryle says of Whitfield;

His preaching was singularly lucid and simple. It's here is, what ever they might think of his doctrine, they never failed to understand what he meant. His style of speaking was easy, plain, and conversational. He seemed to abhor long and involved sentences. He always saw his mark and went directly at it. He seldom troubled his hearers with abstruse argument and intricate reasoning. It was a wise saying of Archbishop Usher, "*To make easy things seem hard is every man's work; but to make hard things easy is the work of a great preacher.*"

Select Sermons p 25

Paul the Apostle was a humble preacher he tells us in first Corinthians chapter four that whatever gifts people credited him for possessing were given to him by the Lord.

## V The Lamp of Imagination

Surely another practical element in effective Gospel preaching or any kind of preaching is the need to be interesting and to hold people's attention.

**In J. C. Ryle's introduction to Whitefield's Select Sermons he makes this comment on Whitfield's descriptive power:**

*A striking feature in Whitfield's preaching was a singular power of description. The Arabians have a Proverb which says, "**He is the best orator who can turn men's ears into eyes.**" Whitfield seems to have had an amazing faculty for doing this. He dramatized his subject so thoroughly that it seemed to move in walk before your eyes. He used to draw such vivid pictures of the things he was handling, that his hearers could believe that they actually saw and heard them. "On one occasion", says one of his biographers, "Lord Chesterfield was among his hearers. The great preacher, in describing the miserable condition of an unconverted sinner, illustrated the subject by describing a blind beggar. The night was dark, and the road dangerous. The poor beggar was deserted by his dog near the edge of a precipice, and had nothing to aid him in groping his way but his staff. Whitfield so warmed to his subject, and enforce it with such graphic power, that the whole auditory was kept in breathless silence, as if it saw the movements of the poor old man; and at length, when the beggar was about to take the fateful step which would have hurled him down the precipice to certain destruction, Lord Chesterfield actually made a rush forward, exclaiming aloud, "**he is gone! he is gone!**" The noble lord had been so entirely carried away by the preacher, that he forgot the whole was a picture.*

Select Sermons p. 26

Take another example of the way the old preachers used to gain the attention and interest of their congregations. **Montague Augustus Toplady's famous illustration from the National Debt.**

Or take for example a typical Victorian so I almost unknown minister Reverend J. Jenkinson of Oakham he is preaching on Revelation I vv. 8 and 11. His title, *Christ the Alpha and Omega.*

He begins by explaining that these words are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He goes on to tell us that Christ in the text takes up these words to illustrate the all comprehensive nature of his work and Gospel.

1. Introduction. All worlds, all systems of worlds are made by Him. All events, whether past, present, or future ordered by Him. He is from everlasting to everlasting. *His goings forth have been from of old; even from everlasting. From everlasting unto everlasting he is God.*

First point.

He is the Alpha and Omega of creation in Providence. *All things were made by Him, and without him was not anything made that was made.* John I : 3. Providence too is but the development of His purpose. All things were created not only by Him, but also for Him. We cannot understand the world or life without Him.

Second point.

He is the Alpha and Omega of the inspired Scriptures. As in the beautiful parallelism which so extensively pervades the sacred pages, the Tree of Life is presented to our notice in the early part of the Book of Genesis and again, in the very last chapter of

Revelation, so from the first word of the Bible even to the last, everything relates, either directly or indirectly to Christ and his mission of mercy to a fallen world. Histories, laws, types, ceremonies, poems, proverbs, prophecies, promises threatenings, sermons, miracles, visions, epistles, exhortations, cautions, all recognize him as their Author and, to a great extent Him and his work as their subject, and all of them His glory as their end.

Third point.

He is the Alpha and Omega of the work of redemption. Without his wondrous love, self devotion, and his voluntary engagement to become a surety and our substitute, that work could not have been originated, carried on or accomplish. Salvation from beginning to end is of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord, He is the author and founder of our faith.

Fourth point.

Christ is the Alpha and Omega in the experience and affections of his people. He doeth all things well. None can separate us from his love.

Fifth and final point.

Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the feelings, the blessedness and the employments of all the saints in heaven.

The Baptist Messenger or Evangelical Treasury 1857 p. 84

**Moody used a lot of personal illustrations in his preaching.** He relates examples of those who have been touched by the Gospel. Real-life experiences fresh experiences contemporary

experiences. Some men can use this method very effectively. Some find illustrations very hard. R W. Dale of Birmingham said "An illustration is my despair." Dean Church and F. W. Robertson used very few illustrations in their sermons. It is possible for a sermon to burn with earnestness and have no illustrations in it at all and yet be very effective. Yet the best sermons are full of windows and the sermons of Thomas Watson are good illustrations of well lit sermons.

**See also, Latimer's Sermon on the Plough.**

**Thomas Watson 216 Body of Divinity  
Spurgeon's Feathers for Arrows**

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## **VI The Lamp of Earnestness and Expectation.**

**Similar to the section on sympathy**

Having spoken about making our sermons interesting and the need to hold attention I ought to balance this out with this comment:

*"I cannot imagine the congregation at the Foundry ever thanked Wesley or his "interesting" sermons, or that David told his friends afterwards that Nathan was a clever preacher, and that they really ought to hear him. Let us lay it down quite definitely but when people go away from our services saying "what a good sermon!" "What a clever preacher!" We have failed in our endeavor. We have succeeded if a man says "God be merciful to me a sinner."*

The Seven Lamps of Preaching p. 41

Spurgeon was asked by a young preacher why he hardly ever

saw any one converted under his ministry. Spurgeon replied, "You do not expect someone to be converted every time you preach, do you?" "Oh no " replied the young preacher." Well sir that is the problem." Replied Spurgeon.

**Listen to these lines from the famous poem and by F.W.H Myers St. Paul.**

Oft, when the Word is on me to deliver,  
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare,  
Desert or throng, the city or the river,  
Melt in a lucid paradise of air.

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,  
Bound, who should conquer, slaves, who should be kings,  
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,  
Sadly content with a show of things.

Then with a rush, the intolerable craving,  
Shivers throughout me, like a trumpet call,  
Oh, to save these, and perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all.

Paul said, *Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.*

**Let us turn back to Ryle on Whitfield;**

**Another leading characteristic of his preaching was his tremendous earnestness.** One said of him that "he preached like a lion." He succeeded in showing people that he at least believed all he was saying, and that is heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, were bent on making them believe it too. His sermons were not like the morning and the evening gun at Portsmouth fired off as a matter of course, a kind of formal discharge, fired off as a matter of course, that disturbs nobody.

They were all life and fire. There was no getting away from them. Sleep was next to impossible. You must listen whether you liked it or not. There was a holy violence about him which firmly took your attention by storm. You will then be carried off your legs by his energy before you had time to consider what you would do. This, we may be sure, was one secret of his success. We must convince men are we are in earnest ourselves, if we want to be believed. The difference between one preacher and another, is often not so much in the things they say, as in the manner in which they are said.

**See page 26 Select Sermons**

**Next note Melancthon's description of the preaching of Martin Luther:**

*Luther is complete in everything, a very miracle among men whatever he says, whatever he writes, penetrates the mind... always all that in his pursuits, his discourse is a peculiarly energetic; in the discussion of this subject he never wavers, is always to the point. Fired with an affection for Scriptural truth, he pursues his reasonings with a vigour and illustrates them with a boldness of allusion, which at once astonishes and confounds his adversaries.*

Thirty Four Sermons of Martin Luther p. IV

**Read example of Luther's preaching from page 114 ibid**

Or take for example Joseph Alleine author of the famous *Alarm to the Unconverted*.

It has been said of him; "*Never to did the evangel of Jesus*

*Christ burn more fervently in an English heart."*

Iain Murray

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## **VII The Lamp of Industry, Preparation, Prayer**

"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman but we do not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

II Timothy 2 : 15

We must study to be clear in what we say.

The preacher who is afraid of simplicity in his utterance will never be effective. The clearest evidence of culture is the gift of putting great thoughts into the most easily understood language. The words of Christ were so wonderful in their depth of meaning that they have kept the world thinking ever since, and still yet their greatness has not been fully comprehended. Yet he taught in such simple language that all could understand. This should be the aim of those who desire to help the world. It's far easier to use the phrases of the textbooks or the classroom and than to put illuminating thoughts into everyday speech. When this is lacking, education is far from complete, but education is something more than the teaching of the schools.

The Effective Evangelist Lionel Fletcher p. 218

Jonathan Edwards attributed a great part of his own success in life to the constant use of the pen, and always carried writing materials about with him; but whether it was out walking or riding he made notes for future use. Such a practice not only provides a

man with materials, but helps to make you thinker.

Poets, and novelists, and writers of all kinds, have found a great advantage in making notes for future use. Dr. Johnson says of Alexander Pope:

From his attention to poetry, he never suffered himself to be distracted. If a conversation offered him a feature from which he hoped to derive some advantage, he took a note of it; if a thought, if even an expression which appeared to him happy rose in his mind, he wrote it immediately.

**Charles Simeon said that it could take him up to twelve hours to prepare a sermon, sometimes twice that time.**

Prepare early. R.W. Dale spoke also of sermons standing in the sun slowly maturing and clarifying. Henry Ward Beecher spoke of sermons that were waiting to ripen.

Add the preparation of prayer study and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We talk of the preparation of the preacher and the sermon. Both are vital.

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## **Footnote on Sermon endings (if time)**

**See Able to the Uttermost Spurgeon**

**William Conner McGee on The Prodigals Return**

**Jonathon Edwards Application**

*Now, if you have any sort of prudence for your own salvation, and have-not a mind to go to hell, improve this season! Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation... do not harden your hearts at such a time as this!*

**Spurgeon in The Saint and His Saviour p. 131**

**St. Paul**

***Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.***

**II Timothy 4:2**