

What is Preaching?

Just what is “preaching?”

Today, everything from politics to plays to reciting poetry is classified as “preaching.” The modern pulpit is used to tell people how to manage their money, raise their kids, be involved with the community, showing movie clips and sound bites from sitcoms, to giving lectures about the evils of trans fat.

Is preaching simply reading some Bible passages, nothing more and nothing else?

When our Lord told the disciples to “go unto all the world and **preach** the gospel...” (Mk 16:15) what was He asking them to do?

The early Christians “...went about **preaching** the word” (Acts 8:4). Just exactly what did they do?

Acts 20 says that Paul **preached** until midnight (20:7). What was it that Paul did?

Preaching was as much a part of the early church as praise and partaking of the Lord’s Supper was.

Consider some examples from the Bible that helps us to define “what preaching is.”

1. Preaching is explaining and bringing understanding to Bible passages. In Nehemiah we find, “*They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read*” (8:8).

The preacher Philip asked the Ethiopian, “*And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him*” (30-31).

2. Preaching is using the Bible to prove the will of God. This is what Paul did. “*And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ”* (Acts 17:2-3).

3. Preaching is using the Bible to persuade people to conform to God’s will. Acts 18:4 “*And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.”* 2 Cor 5:11, “*Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.”* Acts 26:29 “*And Paul said, “I would to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.”*”

4. Preaching is using the Bible to encourage, to warn and to correct. Timothy was told, “*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction*” (2 Tim 4:2).

This is what preaching is. It is not entertainment. It is not current events. It is not politics. It is not story telling. It is not role playing. It does not compete with TV. It is preaching the word of Christ.

