

We cannot identify “good preaching” if we do not understand the purpose and vocation of the preacher. **Neh 8:8** *So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.* The very words of God are to be explained such that the will of God is understood by repeating these words, explaining them, and insisting on them as our obligation. The lack of use of explicit (read aloud, exposit, and illustrate) Scripture makes for bad preaching.

**2Tim 4:2** *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.* Paul wanted Timothy to preach the Word of God. This is what we was to use as his text and for the content of all “good preaching.” Our introduction of “other things” has to be stopped. There is no profit in them according to God.

**Mat 7:21** *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* There will be a great number of ministers, pastors, and preachers in the final judgment that have preached all their lives, and Jesus will reveal that they were never even saved! They will go to hell because their preaching because their own personal life, ministry, and very importantly, their message (preaching) did not focus on “doing the will of God” and causing others to walk in that holy will.

### Healthy Doctrine

**1Tim 6:3-5** *3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

Paul explained to Timothy that there is a “good” and “bad” doctrine which ministers teach. The good doctrine is “healthy” (wholesome) because it causes spiritual health, life, and not spiritual death and spiritual problems or sickness. This good doctrine produces piety in those that hear and receive it. Paul commanded Timothy to “*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me*” **2Tim 1:13**. Bad doctrine causes contention, confusion, and sin.

**2Ti 4:3-4** *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.*

The people of a church are equally responsible to attend and support their pastor in all this, especially supporting economically a pastor with sound preaching. When God's people are not faithful people under a faithful preacher's ministry, the church suffers. What they “like” and react to should be only good preaching.

### Good Doctrine produces Piety

Paul warned Timothy that the sign of the last times was going to be “*seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” **(1Tim 4:1)**. He adds that this works through the hypocrisy of men “*having their conscience seared with a hot iron*”. In **2Tim 3:5** he further indicates that these men will have “*a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*” They will preach one thing and personally do another (hypocrisy). These are the types of people like those who “*creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.*” **(2Tim 3:6)** These are the types of people who are like men that frequent prostitutes, their wild, unhealthy desires dominate their lives. These people are “*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” **(2Tim 3:7)** They deal with the spiritual, but they themselves never come to grips with it in their own lives, but rather they are hypocrites. They are people who “*so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate*

*concerning the faith*” **(2Tim 3:8)**. Perhaps they are best speakers and Bible teachers in the world, but you see a big blank in their life as far as their own practice of what they speak of. In contrast, Timothy was to teach something else, “*nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*” **(1Tim 4:6)** He was to “*refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*” **(1Tim 4:7)** **Good preaching and good doctrine produces godliness first in the preacher's life, then in the hearer's life.** Without that “first in the preacher's life” there are no lasting results in the hearer's life. All is in vain.”*be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*” **(1Tim 4:12)** “*Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.*” **(1Tim 4:15)** Satan's strategy is to use excellent preachers that are hypocrites to undercut anything spiritual that might be accomplished for God. “*wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness*” **(1Tim 6:3)**. Preached from a pious preacher, causing piety in his congregation.

### Bad Doctrine and Preaching

Paul began his first epistle to Timothy with an exhortation “*charge some that they teach no other doctrine,*” **(1Tim. 1:3)**. Paul worried that Timothy would err from wholesome doctrine, so he mentioned “*Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*” **(1Tim. 1:4)** A fable is a story, fiction, made up stuff. This is the same common material in sermons of today. A biblical illustration makes a statement of Scripture clearer, whereas a story (fable-fiction) entertains the hearer and may or may not have anything to do with the Scripture at hand. Paul refers to the tight binding of an illustration to the making clearer of a clear principle of Scripture along with its biblical text. Paul prohibited subjects that are arguments, disputes, controversy, or division causing topics. In **2Tim 2:14** Paul exhorted “*Of*

these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they **strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.**” The spiritual benefit of the hearer is always what rules in a sermon, banishing entertainment or haughty knowledge which does not spiritually correct and guide the hearer to walk in Christ's example. We are warned against preaching that “subverts” or causes loss to our hearers. Paul exhorted Timothy to “**rightly dividing the word of truth.**” (2Tim 2:15), so there is a right and wrong way of using God's Word. The wrong use includes “**profane (pagan or evil) and vain babblings (useless discussions): for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker**” (2Tim 2:16-17) These sermons are like an ulcer, that destroys itself because of its bad effect. “**But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.**” (2Tim 2:23) “**From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling**” (1Tim 1:6) Strong explains this concept as random chat (wanderings without a fixed course and plan). This is the famous “rabbit trail” so many preachers go off on. This is the jumping around, dancing, shouting, and in general, acting like an idiot to entertain the congregation. God disapproves of this! These seek approval from the congregation in the form of “amens” and “feedback” for “**their wanderings**”. God's focus is on “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**” (1Tim. 1:15) “**Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth**” (1Tim. 2:4). This message is not central in a man's preaching and ministry as Paul affirms (1Tim 2:7). Ability to teach is a requirement for the ministry (1Tim 3:2), because the church should be “**the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**” (1Tim. 3:15) For Paul, the gospel is God manifest in the flesh (1Tim 3:16).

### Strong Reproof

1Tim 5:20 **Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.** Jer 23:22 **But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.** Biblical preaching is

something that strongly reproofs sin, by presenting God's view on it, examining and explaining God's very words on the matter. Repentance is the goal of every preaching. This totally works against popularity, and only spiritual people will like, return, and financially support this kind of preacher. “**For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**” (2Tim 1:7) In this same passage, Paul identified himself as a herald (preacher) of God 2Tim 1:11, y in 1Tim 1:12 he says, “**suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed**” and all who preach well will suffer, so endure.

### Entertaining Preaching

2Tim 4:3-4 **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.** It is understood that the majority of people hearing a sermon do not want to be rebuked, but this is exactly what “good preaching” does. Apostasy entertains with stories and fables instead of the powerful Word of God correcting our lives. They do not explain clearly what God has said, but sidetrack to scratch itching ears.

### Beneficial Preaching.

2Ped 2:12-15 **12 But these... speak evil of the things that they understand not; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time.... sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;** God rebuked those whose preaching is directed towards acceptance and wages instead of spiritual confrontation of sin, seeking repentance and justice. Poor preaching entertains, seeking approval and wages. “**Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**” 1Tim 6:5

## What should we preach? The ministry of the Word

Por David Cox

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### What is “biblical preaching”?

1Ti 2:7 **Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.** The word “preacher” is a herald, somebody that repeats loudly the words of the king. Eze 3:17 **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.**

It is important that preachers concentrate in their preaching on what God has commanded us to preach (nothing more, nothing less, nothing else, completely). In our day, many pulpits have sidetracked into sermons, content, and non-biblical elements such as jokes, stories, and current events. In this tract we examine what we are, and are not, to preach.