

What is “Expository Preaching”? Who needs that?

12/27/02 Bill Vaughan

Jim and I were recently discussing our ministry distinctives (those areas of ministry that we see as distinct from many other Christian churches) and Jim noted that our preaching qualifies as a “distinctive” among the churches in this area. So, I went back and read our ministry distinctives page to determine where to fit preaching in. What I came to realize was that the way we preach at Grace Bible is not only a distinctive, but it is also the only possible way to preach with our foundation in the all sufficient, inerrant Word of God. The inerrant word of God necessitates the way we preach.

One of the key passages supporting the inerrancy of Scripture is Paul’s writing to Timothy in 2 Tim 3:16-17. Paul told Timothy, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” If you know that “all Scripture is inspired by God,” then it logically follows as Paul states, that Scripture IS “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” So, why don’t most pastors let this truth drive their preaching? Why don’t all Christians insist on accurate, thorough Bible teaching? Doesn’t Peter command us to crave the pure milk of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:2)?

In other words, SINCE EVERYTHING pertaining to life and godliness comes from the inerrant, God-inspired Bible, don’t you insist on knowing each passage ENTIRELY and EXACTLY as God has given it to us? You have to know the word of God in order to apply the word of God, right? If you are going to use God’s word for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness and equipping for every good work, you have to know the word of God as God intended to be understood, right? If you are going to obey God, you have to know exactly what He expects. And, if you’re going to help someone else learn to obey God, to please Him in all they do, you have to be able to show them, from the word of God, what God expects.

I earned most of my college tuition as a busboy in a top-rated restaurant. My job was simple. The chefs prepared a wonderful meal for the customer who was eagerly waiting to devour it! My job was to get that meal from the chef to the table ASAP! I didn’t change it one bit – just delivered it! God expects the same from every preacher of His word and He will judge each of us with a greater judgment because of the seriousness of our responsibility (James 3:1). The Word of God is what changes men and women’s hearts, not the preacher. To change a person, the word must be understood ENTIRELY and EXACTLY as God meant it to be understood. Hence, the God-ordained job of the preacher is to EXPLAIN His word – CLEARLY and CONCISELY – verse-by-verse so that everyone UNDERSTANDS what God meant in each passage of Scripture He inspired. We call this explanatory preaching “Expository Preaching.” “Expository” is a big word for “explain.”

I don’t claim to be the best storyteller nor have the cleverest illustrations nor the most captivating introductions or conclusions. I do promise to pour out every ounce of myself weekly in Spirit-led study to bring my best-possible Expository Preaching on

Sunday morning! And if you walk away not understanding the passage, please hold me accountable so that I can improve, because we both know that God will judge my teaching when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ!