

Why Expository Preaching?

As a pastor I have often been asked, “Why does the church in America today seem to be so ineffective in people’s lives and in the culture?” The answer is very simple; there is virtually no confidence in the sufficiency of God’s Word to change hearts and minds. The focus of the pulpit is on what is *relevant*, with a corresponding neglect of *revelation*. This prevailing attitude is typified in the following quotes:

“Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like it, but for every sermon we preach, they are asking, “Am I interested in that subject or not?” If they aren’t, it doesn’t matter how effective our delivery is; their minds will check out.” Bill Hybels, *Mastering Contemporary Preaching*, 27.

“The wise interpreter begins with a human need today, and chooses a passage that will enable him to meet that need.” Andrew W. Blackwood, *Expository Preaching for Today*, 13.

Much of the church has attempted to cater to this consumer mind-set, with the result that preaching centers on what people want to hear rather than what God wants proclaimed (2 Timothy 4:3). Our commitment to expository preaching is grounded in the apostle Paul’s command to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:1-5), and in the confidence that God’s Word is still living and active (Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 4:12) and is the means God uses to draw sinners to Himself, sanctify His saints, and grow His church (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16).

A great deal of Bible study is prefaced with the question, “What does this mean to me?” In biblical exposition, the preacher begins with the question, “What did this text mean to the original author and the original recipients?” The preacher studies the historical and grammatical context of a passage so he can correctly interpret the author’s intended meaning to the original recipients. He then clearly communicates this meaning to a contemporary audience in an engaging manner so that they too understand the meaning (Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 8:8; Acts 20:26, 27).

The true meaning of Scripture *is* Scripture. If one does not have the true meaning, then one does not have Scripture, and consequently the message has no life transforming power. Many books can influence a person’s life, but only one Book can transform a person’s life. We believe that when Scripture is accurately interpreted (2 Timothy 2:15) and faithfully proclaimed (Colossians 1:25; Acts 20:26, 27), the Holy Spirit will work through His word to transform hearts and minds and equip believers to serve others for His glory (Jeremiah 23:29; 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5).