

Biblical Answers to Difficult Questions: How do I make the most of the preached Word?

July 31, 2022

Jeremiah 1:4-19

Preaching the Word of God: is **not** experience driven, it is **not** my own interpretation. It is **not** charismatic preaching that is “me” centered. It is **not** analogical, meaning I don’t use a Bible illustration to prove my point. It is **not** sentimentalism, meaning it is **not** for the purpose of appealing to emotions, feelings, and be seeker sensitive.

The Listener’s Responsibility: it is done in a setting to be heard with others. A listener is accountable to one another to listen and hear. Secular psychology is a religious belief system focusing on the individual and their needs vs. the truth of the Gospel and our response to it. Not forgiving yourself but being forgiven by God. Not trying to understand the past, but pressing ahead. Not accepting ourselves but instead denying ourselves. Not being a victim, but suffering wrong, if necessary, 1 Cor.6:7.

2 Facts About Preaching:

>>**Fact 1: Preaching matters to God: Proof 1:** God initiated the preaching of His Word: Jer. 1:9, “I have put My words in your mouth.” V5, God “**formed**” or created Jeremiah for His purpose. V5, God “**sanctified**” or set Jeremiah apart. V5, God “**appointed**” or ordained Jeremiah to preach His word. V6, God **calls** us when He wills. V7, preaching is by God’s **authority** and **command**. V8, God would **protect** Jeremiah as long as wants Him to preach. V9, the **source** of the message comes from God, it is all His ideas.

Proof 2: God empowers the preaching of His word: V11-16, Jeremiah’s 1st vision is of the almond branch. The word “almond” in Hebrew sounds like and derives from the word “awake.” V12, God is awake and His word will accomplish what He wills. God empowers “text” driven preaching according to the original intent of the text. God’s method of proclaiming the Gospel is the preaching of His word. Examples: Mk. 1:14-15, Jesus preached, “the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.” Mk. 1:38-39, “that I may preach there also.” Luke 4:18, “to preach the gospel to the poor,” “to proclaim liberty,” “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” The Gospel of Matthew is centered on 5 sermons preached by Jesus. **Preaching is God’s ordained method to bring about eternal life in those who hear the Gospel.** God’s Word is magnified above all His name, Psalms 138:2.

>>**Fact 2: God has explained how to listen to a sermon:** V10, God uses agriculture and construction language to explain Himself. **God uses 6 images of preaching.** He uses: “pluck out,” “break down,” “destroy,” “throw down,” “build,” and “plant.”

- 1) **Like pulling a Weed:** V10, “pluck” to remove, tear up. V14-15, calamity was coming because they didn’t listen. Ask from the preaching: What is the Lord wanting me to pluck up and remove from my life?
- 2) **Like tearing down an idol:** V10, “break down” means to pull down. Same meaning as in 2 Kings 23:12, to break down altars. God warns His people of idols: Deut. 5:7, 6:14, 8:19, 1 John 5:21, “keep yourselves from idols.” An idol is something that I will sin to get and something I will sin if I don’t get.
- 3) **Like demolishing a building:** V10, “destroy,” means to make a ruin, unusable. It isn’t a makeover of our heart but destroying it. Taking a wrecking ball to it. Disciplining your child is an area of obedience where the world doesn’t decide for us, Pro. 13:24, 23:13, 29:15.

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4) **Like beating an opponent:** V10, “throw down,” is a metaphor for causing conflict and violence. Heb. 12:4, 1 Pet. 5:8-9, James 4:7, the word “resist,” is to beat an enemy. Step 1 is to obey the preached Word of God, Jam. 1:19-20. Step 2: If you get angry, receive with eagerness and study the Scriptures, Acts 17:11-12. Anger stops my sanctification.

What are not good Bible study methods? My experience, emotions, history, and what others believe.

>>First part of preaching is demolishing my heart.

5) **Like building a house:** V10, remodeling and rebuilding comes next. Acts 2:37-38, they were cut to the heart and then repented and obeyed. Hard preaching leads to a soft heart and a genuine affection for the Lord.

6) **Like planting a seed:** Col. 2:6-7, “rooted and built up.” Why planting is the last thing? Because the ground needs to be prepared in order to receive the Word of God.

How to prepare? Long before the sermon: read or re-read “Expository Listening,” by Ken Ramey. **At sermon’s beginning:** be humble, engage your mind. **At sermon’s middle:** stay focused, it is a sanctifying event. **At sermon’s ending:** don’t check out, receive the last words preached to you. **Long after the sermon:** discuss the sermon with the family, join a sermon-based small group, look up the cross-references and notes you have taken and share them.

Further Discussion and Application

What other responsibilities does a listener of God’s Word have? Read James 1:19-25. What happens if you hear but don’t do the Word you are taught? Is that a warning to you?

What should be the results of the preaching of the Word of God? Read Hebrews 4:12-13. From V13, what is the promise of God to those who hear His word? Can you run from the power of the Gospel? What happens if you run or reject the Words of God? Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and 2 Tim.4:1-5, what happens to those who only want to hear words that make them feel good about themselves?

What is God’s role in preparing, executing, and demonstrating His power and authority of the preaching of His words (Jer. 1:4-9)? Why is God confident in His power to save us through the preaching of His word?

Idols are many times revealed to us at the least expected times. Consider the statement, “An idol is something that I will sin to get and something I will sin if I don’t get.” What things in your life meet this definition? How might you destroy this idol in your life? Why wouldn’t you destroy it today by confessing it and then removing it from your life? How might you accomplish that task and become more like your Savior?