

The Sermon of Sermons

(Adapted by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. A sermon about sermons, or the place of sermons in scriptural worship

I. SERMONS IN THE SCRIPTURES

- A. Acts 20:7 - Traditionally a text used to authorize communing every Sunday, it also authorizes preaching when disciples assemble for worship
- B. 1Cor. 14:19 - Paul reveals that the purpose of preaching is enlightening, edifying, and instructing the assembly
 - 1. Preaching isn't about floor time for brethren who cannot edify. While there is an expected period of training and development, if one cannot edify others, he should not preach
- C. 1Cor. 14:26 - Indicates that even in a time of inspired gifts, men came prepared to present lessons
 - 1. Preparation is absolutely essential - 1Tim. 4:15-16

II. WHAT IS A SERMON?

- A. Bible names are sermon, lesson, teaching, preaching, all representing the same concept: a religious message presented in an instructive and persuasive lecture format; one person speaks while others listen
- B. Not many directives given regarding format, subject, age or type of person preaching in the Scriptures
 - 1. 1Tim. 2:9-10 - women are not to preach to men
 - 2. 1Cor. 14:26 - any prepared, capable man can present a lesson
 - 3. 1Tim. 5:17 - Elders can preach lessons
 - 4. Most often the one who preaches the lesson is the evangelist, one who follows in the steps of Paul, Timothy, and Titus.
 - 5. 1Tim. 4:11, 4:16, 5:7, 6:2; 2Tim. 1:11, 2:2, 2:24-26, 4:1-2, 5
 - 6. Titus 2:1, 2:15, 3:14
 - 7. Make the message relevant for the needs of the audience and occasion

III. WHY A SERMON?

- A. Edification and encouragement of Christians - 1Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:24-25
- B. Worship services are for the disciples, designed for the saint's edification; any visitors to the assembly are incidental
 - 1. That's what Bible studies and gospel meetings are for
 - 2. To gear the sermon toward a visitor is to miss the point of the assembly according to the Scriptures -- the edification of one another
 - 3. We do not redirect the communion, offering, prayers, or singing for the benefit of visitors; fellowship in worship is with one another
 - 4. If an unbeliever is convicted regarding a lesson, wonderful! But that is not the point or purpose of sermons in the assembly

IV. WHAT TYPES OF LESSONS ARE TO BE PREACHED?

- A. Report of work in other places - Acts 14:27

- B. Exhortation to remain in the faith - Acts 14:21-22
 1. Exhort: To incite by words or advice; to animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action.
 2. Exhortations are best when phrased positively and accompanied by love and encouragement; too much beating up on brethren or errorists will lead to calloused hearts
- C. Instructing one another - Rom. 15:14
 1. Instructions can be anything from interpreting a passage for the benefit of brethren, to explaining a topic, or making difficult passages clear
- D. Reproving and rebuking - 2Tim. 4:2
 1. An unpleasant lesson necessary to correct things that are not right
 2. Rebukes are inherently negative, and do not lead to obvious encouragement, but are necessary to keep the faith for the long run
 3. Don't take a rebuke of an individual to the pulpit, ever - Matt. 18:15-17
 4. Rebuking should be gently with the utmost respect - 1Tim. 5:1; Gal. 6:1

V. WHAT THE SERMON IS NOT

- A. The sermon is not entertainment
 1. Our nation is addicted to entertainment; too many preachers think they must cater to the childish impulse on entertainment over edification
 2. The quality of the lesson is in content, not in presentation
 3. What makes a good sermon according to your judgment?
 - a. Feel good, feel motivated, feel corrected
 - b. Admire the presentation, the speaker's talent, the organization
 - c. 2Cor. 10:10
 4. Just as with singing, the presentation of the lesson should not distract from the message; it is to complement the lesson
 5. Presentation can interfere in two ways: poorly done and over the top
- B. The sermon is not designed to be the time of the assembly where one person gets up and talks and everyone waits patiently for him to be done so they can go home
 1. I do not get up and preach for my own benefit; I've already received the benefit of the study preparing the lesson
 2. The lesson is designed for the benefit of everyone else, so that you can acquire the same understanding
 3. You can only get from the lesson what you invest in it in terms of focus
- C. The lesson is not designed to always please people
 1. If you want a preacher that always speaks the truth, understand that he is eventually going to say something you don't like or don't agree with
 2. What you do after he does says far more about you than him
- D. The sermon is not perfect and infallible
 1. 1Cor. 1:12-13 and "preacheritis"; Acts 17:11
 2. No teaching is right just because the preacher says it; it is only right if God says it. But if God said it, don't make the self-destructive mistake of dismissing it as the ramblings of an overly conservative preacher.