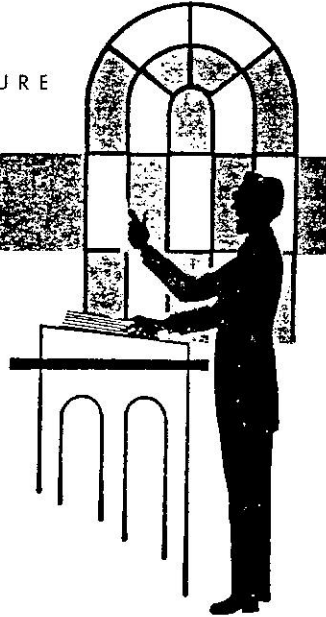


... the same heights of peace and good will.

J. C. GOODPASTURE

Pioneer Pulpit

More About the Kind
of Preaching Needed
Today



Conditions have changed very materially since the first century of the Christian era. A new civilization has arisen with new problems to be solved; new countries and climes have been discovered and settled since the apostle Paul preached the gospel; new educational methods have been discovered and new scientific investigations have revealed many things that were not known when the New Testament was written. But the needs of the human soul have remained the same. Sin in its various forms still exists, and the same remedy for sin is needed. The gospel and gospel truths have remained the same and are needed by the present generation as much so as they were in the early days of Christianity. Hence, the same kind of preaching is needed. We should not forget this, and preachers should preach as they did in New Testament times.

There were certain fundamental truths that were emphasized by the apostles and Spirit-guided teachers. The need of a Savior; the curse of sin; Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God; salvation only through Christ; the edification of God's people—these were general themes which were preached by the apostles. The death, burial resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Jesus were preached; the church as the body of Christ, and all God's people members of that body, was preached: the church as the kingdom of God on earth, and all the Lord's people members of the body, or citizens of the kingdom, was preached; and how to live in the kingdom of God was emphasized then. The two great lessons of Christianity were taught then—namely, how to become a Christian and how to live the Christian life. These fundamental facts and

truths are as vital today as they were then; they need to be taught today as they were needed then; and preachers should preach these today as the apostles and Spirit-guided teachers preached them then.

Much attention is given today to themes and Bible subjects which are not as vital as others. Preachers should learn the fundamental facts and truths of the gospel and put the emphasis where the Holy Spirit put it. The preaching should be adapted to the hearers; it should be simple and definite enough to help the hearers; it should be specific enough to bless all who hear. Too illustrate: Why should a preacher consume an hour on the conversion of Cornelius, when all of her hearers are converted people, but are not faithful to the Lord? Again, what is the use of wasting an hour in discussing the possibility of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, when ninety per cent of the hearers need to return to God? Why should a preacher speculate about the fulfillment of prophecies, when his auditors do not appreciate the promises made through Jesus Christ? Why should a preacher deal in glittering generalities about society, when the hearers are corrupt in their moral and church life? The preacher should take hold of the vital subjects that directly affect his hearers in conscience, in heart, in business, and in social life. The preacher should lift up his voice like a trumpet and show God's people their transgressions and exhort them to return from their sins unto God, that they

may live. A preacher should understand the general degeneracy of society and the irreverent attitude toward the marriage bond of today and preach what the New Testament teaches concerning these subjects. The fearful multiplication of divorces is alarming, and the plain, simple, and direct teachings of the New Testament should be emphasized on these subjects. Preachers should know what the New Testament teaches on the domestic relations, marriage, rearing children, family government, and good citizenship. The teaching of the New Testament on these subjects needs to be preached today. In this age of reckless speculation in money affairs, questionable dealings with our fellow men, and corruption of business morals, the principles of common honesty and righteousness should be preached.

There is a need of directness and boldness in preaching the gospel today. There is needed a plain, searching, and bold teaching of the truths of the gospel, and at the same time a rebuke for the sins of the age with humility and courage. The churches need to be awakened to the vital teachings of Christianity, and the preachers must do this. Men need to be followed into all their subterfuges and alibis of sin and chased out of all their hiding places; they need to be made to feel their need of repentance and return to God. Some think that such plain and direct teaching will ruin the church. A good man, but a misguided man, who has large holdings, and is responsible for the work and life of a large congregation, was heard to make the remark that such teaching had almost ruined that congregation. He does not know that the

vital truths of the gospel are stern and unrelenting in their opposition to error and sin. Many guilty members will squirm for a time under the fire of the gospel truth, but will finally see their error and come to repentance. The church will be saved and God honored by such preaching.

cu
h p

All preaching must be done in the kindness, love, and gentleness of the spirit of Christ; yet it must be done with courage and directness. "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taking captive by him unto his will." (2 Tim. 2: 24-26.) The preacher must not be fierce or abusive; he must, in following Christ, as with all others, "speak the truth in love," with gentleness and courage. If all who preach the gospel have the spirit of Christ, we need not fear that good will be done by the direct preaching. If the churches today are to continue their mission, they must be taught and led by preachers who are clothed with the humility of Christ and have the courage of their convictions. All the churches should be praying that God will give us God-fearing, truth-loving, earnest, faithful men for preachers and teachers of his word. (H. Leo Boles, GOSPEL ADVOCATE, April 7, 1932.)

nths